EXPLORING FOSTERS AND FETTERS OF SOCIAL MARKETING CAMPAIGNS: EVIDENCES FROM INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Social marketing campaigns are used to urge people to behave in a way that would benefit others. While some people behave as desired, it is unclear whether the campaign has influenced the behavior or has been necessitated because of personal/ situational factors. This study, exploratory in nature, using both projective techniques and a survey questionnaire, studied the impact of seven campaigns communicating different social themes. The study found that some campaigns had a fair degree of recall, but none had any significant impact on changing the behavior. The reason for non-action included the perceived risk or effort associated with the behaviour. Movement along a 'risk-effort' matrix is suggested to improve their effectiveness.

Keywords: Social marketing, Advertising effectiveness, India.

INTRODUCTION

Social Marketing

Kotler & Zaltman (1971) introduced the concept of Social Marketing. Social marketing is about "*the design, implementation, and control of programs seeking to increase the acceptability of a social idea or practice in a target group(s)"* (Kotler 1975). Typically, social marketing campaigns are also treated as an endeavor that generally encourages people to do something that will be beneficial to more than just themselves (Lovelock, 1979 & Mustard 2007). Again, social behaviors tend to be highly complex and usually are associated with negative dispositions toward their offerings-the exact opposite of the situation faced by most commercial marketers. Moreover, as Rothschild (1979) has pointed out, these target markets are highly involved with their negative feelings, making them much more resistant to changing their views. Therefore, the social marketing paradigm holds that communication campaigns need to go beyond communicating knowledge because information alone will not change behavior (Bruce and Tiger, 2009). McKenzie-Mohr & Smith (1999) state that the campaign needs to target barriers that build to the desired behavior change. In addition, there could be other situational factors that impact behaviour.

Though effective social marketing programs need to have a different approach, many organizations apply conventional marketing approaches in social programs.

The conventional marketing strategies may not be successful as social marketing deals with products/ ideas that are (Bloom, 1981).

1. Less flexibility in shaping their products or offerings (Lovelock & Weinberg 1975).
2. They do not price their offerings to maximize financial returns but instead, try to price offerings to minimize any barriers that might prevent consumers from taking desired actions.

In this context, this paper aims to understand the different types of social themes and study the response of the existing campaigns and develop a framework for creating effective social marketing campaigns.

Social Marketing Themes

A review of the social marketing campaigns conducted in India found that the objective of the campaigns could be broadly divided into three categories; a) action for individual benefit, b) work for society, or c) donate for a cause. While there could be overlaps, the broad themes are given in Figure 1.

Campaigns for individual benefit could be urging people to give up some behavior such as smoking or using a cellphone while driving. Working for society campaigns focus on inculcating a sense of responsibility to the globe or to the nation or to improve the quality of society or someone else's life. Campaigns focusing on donation plead the audience to donate money, blood, or organs to protect individuals' lives or help society.
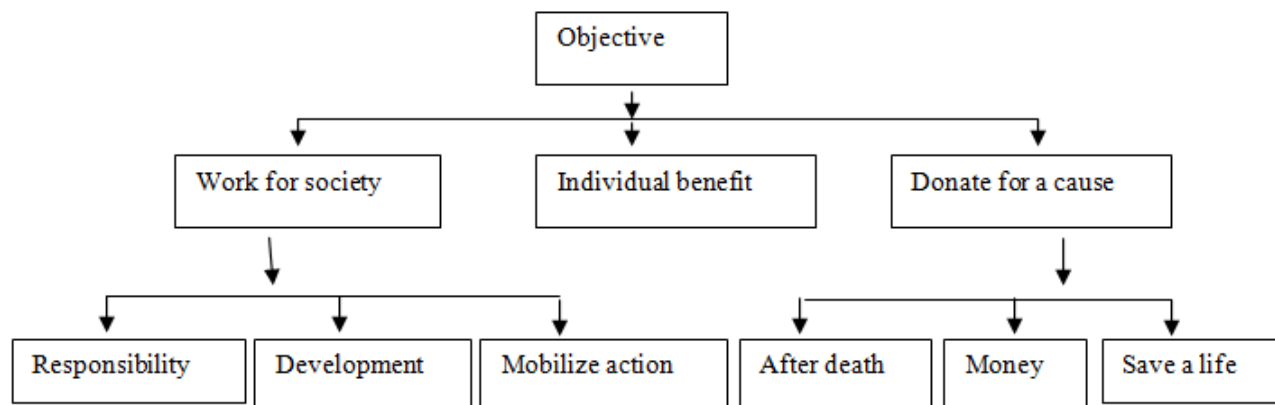

FIGURE 1
CLASSIFICATION OF SOCIAL MARKETING THEMES

Research Objective

Social marketing programs do not typically lend themselves to evaluation for effectiveness and efficiency across time, space, and medium. It is difficult to judge how much is attributed to the program- starting with message delivery and ending with knowledge or behavior change. Therefore, the objective of this study is to understand the extent to which campaigns of different themes could garner awareness and desire to act.

Research Design

Seven social activities focused on different goals have been selected. The campaigns selected along with their theme, objective and intended action are given in Table 1.

	Table 1 THE CAMPAIGNS EVALUATED IN THE STUDY		
S No	Campaign	Objective	Need /Action
1	Respect the National Anthem http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7sn40JvmglE Theme: If you do not respect national anthem how will you respect the nation	Patriotism	Responsibility
2	Blood Donation http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fhoPEUXFcT4 Theme: A small girl with Thalassemia thanks everyone as she does not know who donated blood and helping her live.	Save a life	Donate blood
3	Traffic awareness http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XmLjACySSaU Theme: Driving while talking on mobile could lead to fatal accidents	Safety	Do not talk on mobiles while driving
4	How a single person can lead the mob http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ErbH7dT8prk&NR=1&feature=endscreen Theme: Public servants may be indifferent to the problems. Come together and solve the problems	Mobilize action	Solve your problems/ Attitude change
5	Donate eyes http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nhwIFbB5iuo Theme: Holi played by blind people	Provide sight to others	Donor and person acting are different
6	Veer Jawan http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EXCOwueEbGw Theme: Soldiers saying that they are ready to die for an unknown person and that person is 'you'	Donation	Donate money
7	Let's learn to Teach http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5P7lCYXGo7w Theme: The other half of you is in the poorer society. Help them develop.	Develop society	Spare time

Since the objective is to study short-term behavior change and understand the long-term change, the research design had to be designed accordingly Figure 2. The different steps in the design were:

1. Screen to filter respondents having an inclination based on Individual factors (need hierarchy or location). For example, it may be possible for people near Borders or a person whose children are in the armed forces to donate for armed forces.
2. Ensure sampling just before any special event planned for the social cause is avoided. For example, a blood donation survey should not be done when a blood donation camp has been announced.
3. Since action needs to be taken by someone else in few cases, the impact must be studied for the donor and the person responsible for taking action. For example, an eye donation is an act of donating one's eyes after one's death. So, the message's impact must be studied from the children of the donor also.
4. A predictive study was used to study the awareness, and projective techniques were used to study the motives behind action/nonaction for each campaign.
5. A sample of 100 respondents from the target group was selected for each campaign.
6. Care was taken to ensure that a respondent was exposed to only one campaign to avoid response bias.
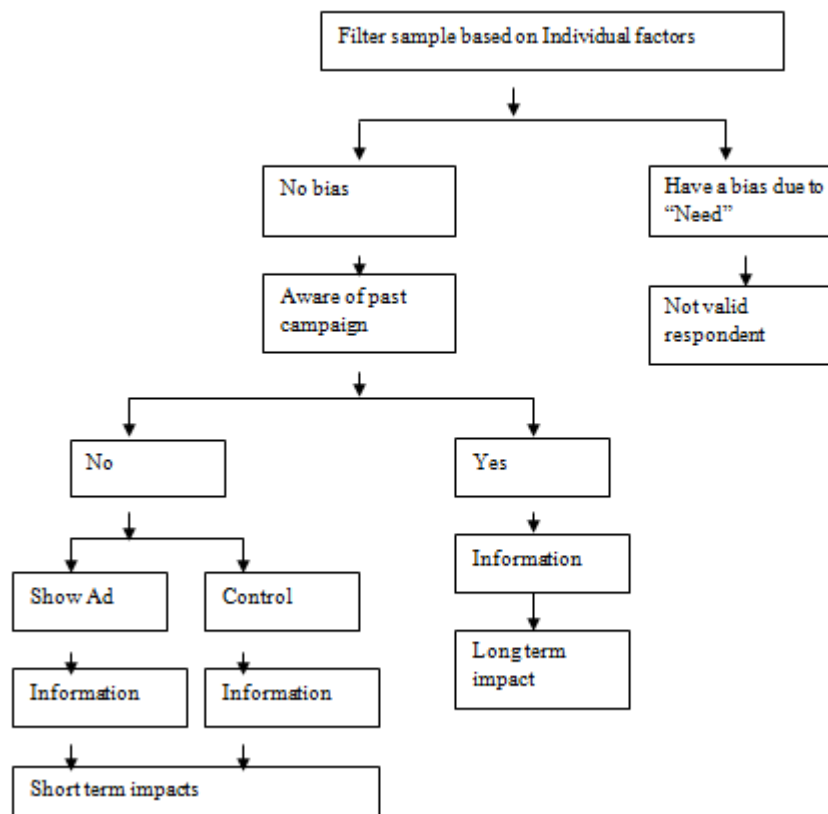
Figure 2
RESEARCH DESIGN AND SAMPLING METHOD

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Veer Jawan campaign conducted to generate funds for Army had medium recall (about 40%) and drove the number of people donating towards armed forces. However, the campaign has not created any significant impact on the general perception of armed forces.

The traffic safety campaign had an unaided recall of 64.7%, which shoot up to 91.1% in the aided recall. However, the level of awareness and attitude towards unsafe driving habits has not changed positively.

National Anthem campaign, which had about 60% recall, had a low engagement, and 80% of the respondents who recalled the campaign believed that the advertisement was a 'tad too long' leading to low engagement.

Blood donation campaigns did not significantly improve the tendency, willingness to donate blood. The campaign resulted in only a marginal 4-5% increase in the overall behavior, and most blood donors were people who regularly donated blood. People have associated fear of needles as the dominant hindrance to blood donation. Friends and family were the most significant influencers towards blood donation.

The eye Donation campaign under the study had a low impact. Fifty-seven percent of the people remembered the previous campaign, which featured Aishwarya Rai (famous Bollywood actress), whereas the current advertisement revolving around Holi (a festival of colors, famous all over India) had only 24% recall. The desire to donate eyes was relatively low.

The dominant reason for people not donating eyes was not aware of the facilities. Lack of motivation and family apprehensions were the other prominent reasons for people not donating their eyes.

Subsequent interviews with doctors indicated that those who had donated blood are generally more aware and empathetic to this cause.

Lead a Mob advertisement effectively created awareness and interest about what is wrong with society but does little to induce interest or action towards taking corrective action.

Teach India campaign had a low top-of-mind recall, and only 43% recorded positive aided recall. Only 12% of recalling respondents said they had registered for the campaign. The reasons include lack of credible platform and lack of time.

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Campaigns with emotional messages or those communicated by celebrities had a reasonable amount of recall; however, only campaigns with low associated risk or low effort required (like donating money) positively impacted behavior. The study supports the finding of Mustard (2007) and Durkin, Bernnan, and Wakefield (2012). The non-action for campaigns (a) communicating individual safety using negative consequences could be attributed to individuals justifying that the consequences would not occur to them as pointed out by Rothschild (1979) and (b) campaigns requiring effort from the individuals or those associated with some perceived risk have a low response as people avoid stating that they are busy or by giving trivial reasons such as 'afraid of needles' and 'unaware of facilities.'

As identified in the interviews with doctors, it would be advisable to classify campaigns based on the effort required and risks associated and start inducing people towards actions with low perceived risk and requiring the least effort. Once a person starts responding to those campaigns, he/ she could be targeted to the next level. There is, therefore, a need to classify and target campaigns based on the risk and effort matrix. Table 2 gives a suggested risk effort matrix. The numbers in the quadrants indicate the sequence in which the people could be targeted.

Table 2 RISK EFFORT MATRIX			
Effort required	**Individual action**		**Group/ family action required**
	Low Perceived risk	*High Perceived risk*	
Low	Donate Money (1)	Personal safety (2)	Donate organs (5)
High	Teach others (3)	Donate blood (4)	Responsibility (6)

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