Awareness towards Social Advertisements: A Comparative Study among Urban and Rural Respondents

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ABSTRACT

Social marketing refers to the planned process for influencing change. It can be helpful in many ways in bringing the desired changes in the society. The most fundamental principle underlying change is to apply a customer orientation to understand what target audiences currently know, believe, and do. The first step towards change is to generate awareness among the respondents about the various social issues. This paper takes a look at the awareness of people towards various social advertising campaigns. This study caters exclusively to the urban and rural divide that exists prominently in India. A sample of 400 adult respondents from different districts of Punjab has been taken to know the awareness of respondents towards various advertising campaigns. . The advertisement campaigns chosen for this purpose are 'AIDS awareness', 'Eye Donation', 'Save Water/Oil/Electricity', 'Pulse Polio', 'Blood Donation', 'Girl Child Education', 'Against Drunken Driving', 'Family Planning', 'Stop Female Feticide' and 'Breast Feeding'. It was found that there is a huge gap between the sensibilities and levels of awareness of the urban and rural population, social advertisements need to cater to them.

Keywords: Social Marketing, Social Advertisement, Society

1.   Introduction

The relationship between society and advertising has always come in for a lot of flak. All over the world, marketing system has been accused of adding evils in the society at large.

A long time back, a question was raised by Weibe (1952) that why can't brotherhood be sold just as we sell soap. He meant that if advertising is successful in selling products it can also be used to promote socially viable ideas and beliefs. Taking cue from this, social marketing was born as a discipline in the 1970s when Philip Kotler realized that the same marketing principles that were being used to sell products to consumers could be used to sell socially beneficial ideas, attitudes and behavior.

Today, the world is plagued with many ills. Social advertisements can be helpful in many ways in bringing desired changes in the society. At the core of any social marketing campaign are the individuals, groups and the population who are intended to be consumers of the campaign's products and ideas. They are called target adopters, because they are specific people whose acceptance and adoption of a social product would fulfill the objectives of the campaign (Kotler, 2002).

The first step towards change is to generate awareness among the respondents about the social issues through social advertising. Thus, the focus in this paper is to gauge the basic awareness among respondents about various social advertising campaigns. The advertisement campaigns chosen for this purpose are 'AIDS awareness', 'Eye Donation', 'Save Water/Oil/Electricity', 'Pulse Polio', 'Blood Donation', 'Girl Child Education', 'Against Drunken Driving', 'Family Planning', 'Stop Female Foeticide' and 'Breast Feeding'.

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There is difference in rural and urban population in terms of beliefs, values and cultural dimensions. The rural people lag behind their urban counterparts in terms of education, awareness and emancipation. There are a few studies carried out in India regarding social advertising. Out of which, most of the studies focus on the sensibilities of the urban residents. It is ironical because the majority of Indian population resides in rural areas. The present study focuses on this gap that exists between the two and tries to determine where sensibilities of the two differ.

2.   Review of Literature

Weibe (1952) concluded that more the campaign resembles the product campaign, the more successful it is. He found that the more the conditions of the social campaigns resembled those of a product campaign, the more successful the social campaign.

Shaffer (1964) states that the advertisements are very influential and compares their influence to that of a church or a school. Thus, advertising should be used in the most beneficial manner putting it to the best possible use so that lives of all are enhanced.

Kelley (1971) observed that the traditional role of marketing and its scope has changed. To the marketers he suggests that everyone would benefit if they designed advertisements for social ideas in an appealing manner so that they can be adopted by the people for their betterment readily.

Kotler and Zaltman (1971) in their groundbreaking article introduced the term 'Social Marketing', which has been in use since. Social Marketing like generic marketing is not a theory in itself, rather it is a framework or structure that draws from other bodies of knowledge such as Psychology, Sociology, Anthropology and Communications theory to understand how to influence people's behaviour., The same formula of generic marketing can be used by social marketers when forwarding a concept for the betterment of people and society.

Ansary and Kramer (1973) affirmed that there is a market place of ideas just as there is a market place of goods. The marketing of ideas, which are socially beneficial for the society, for example, anti-smoking and anti-drinking have been labeled as Social Marketing.

Fox and Kotler (1980) in this article they reviewed the first 10 years of Social Marketing. They stated that evidence from the first decade of Social Marketing is promising. In many cases people are aware of what is right or desirable but fail to find the motivation to adopt such practices.

Sheth and Frazier (1982) reported the model of planned social change. They suggested that for the model to be successful the behaviour to be changed should be identified properly so that it can be targeted exclusively and effectively.

Lefebvra and Flora (1988) observed that Social Marketing is more difficult than generic marketing. It involves changing intractable behaviour in complex economic, social and political scenarios, with often very limited resources. Furthermore, while for generic marketing the ultimate goal is to meet shareholder's objective, for the social marketer the bottom line is to meet society's desire to improve its citizen's quality of life. This is a much more ambitious goal to achieve, which if channelized in a proper way can be very beneficial for the society as a whole.

Kotler and Roberto (1989) recognized the importance of social advertisements in making for a better life. In their study, they found that it is a very important tool for enhancing lifestyles and ushering in behavioral changes. They found that most of such campaigns were not successful and failed to achieve the desired goals.

Wallack and Montgomery (1992) sought to highlight the role of advertising in Public health and its importance. The trouble in the case of developing countries is that due to its peculiar

conditions, health education remains a neglected area. The onus of making people aware of health hazards and benefits lies with the producers of the products themselves, which naturally results in a skewed representation of facts.

Murray *et al.* (1993) conducted a time series intervention analysis on anti drinking and driving advertising. There are two types of mass media campaigns:

1. Donated media campaign
2. Paid advertising campaign

Most Public Service Announcements (PSA) have not been successful because PSA are frequently aired in donated T.V time or during undesirable time slots that were not sold.

Andreasen (1994) says that to counter the failure of social marketing which can dishearten many, he proposes that social marketing should not be allowed to venture into spheres where its failure is almost certain. He contested the Kotler's concept of social marketing that focuses largely on behavioural change. But, he points out that there are some cases where behavioural change is not involved but the focus is on discouraging behavioural change. He cites the case of advertisements designed against smoking, drinking or use of drugs. In such cases, behavioural change is not involved but the intention is to discourage the target audience from changing their behaviour and attitude towards these harmful products.

Andreasen (1995) suggested that social marketers, like their commercial counterparts, must be aware of their competition. The most obvious source of competition in Social Marketing is the consumer's tendency to continue in his or her current behavioural pattern. Inertia is a very powerful competitor. Other sources of competition involve alternative behaviours. For example, time spent donating blood is the time which the consumer could spend doing other more enjoyable, more convenient and more personally beneficial activities. Competitive organizations include other health promoters, educators or government organizations trying to use similar methods to reach their target audiences.

Chauhan (1995) conducted a study dealing with social advertisement in India. In her study, she focused on health care, family welfare, child care, early childhood education, nutrition programme, dowry prevention, untouchability, literacy, women education, drug abuse, safety, national integration, energy conservation and girl child. She conducted a research into the awareness and likeability of the respondents regarding social advertisements. She also inquired about the frequency of viewing the social ads. The determination of reasons of likeability of social ads was also a purview of her study. She also investigated the truthfulness of the claims made by the social advertisements. She also determined the impact of social ads on the lives and behaviour of the respondents. From this impact, she gleaned the relative desirability of these ads. Also, she questioned the efficacy of the ad agencies involved in social advertising and identified areas which needed special attention for the future.

Jones *et al.* (1996) explores whether marketing campaign can be used to achieve public policy goals. He concluded that two immunization campaigns carried in Oklahoma had a positive effect on the number of children immunized. But the cost factor should also be considered. Although the campaign was successful it was not cost effective.

Bang (2000) critically viewed the role of social marketing in areas concerned with issues related to health and those promoting responsible behaviour. He asserted that while social media is successful in many areas but when it comes to forwarding the idea of responsible behaviour it fails to achieve the desired results. This problem is further compounded by the fact that meagerly budgeted social marketing advertisements had to contend with lavishly produced company advertisements which promoted drinking.

Earle (2000) focuses on over 50 actual campaigns dealing with social ills and voiced that cause marketing - advertisements aimed at changing personal behaviour and attitudes – is one the most widely used tool for the enhancement of the individual and society.

Kotler *et al.* (2002) states that social marketing is a profound change agent as well as a successful method of management. In future, students of social change may look at the final decade of the twentieth century as a line when the balance of social change started to shift in favour of planned, persuasive and non violent change as against change brought in by violence. They state that more conscious and ethical behviour is required on the part of the people designing and executing Social Marketing initiatives. The authors correctly emphasise the need for analyzing the behaviour of target public and communicating as much as possible in a personal way.

Andreasen (2002) observed that social marketing is in its growth phase of its product life cycle. But he also noted that there are several problems that stand in the way of social marketing achieving its full potential.

Potter and Adam (2004) examined the relation between philanthropic tendencies like donating to charities and attitudes towards Social Marketing. They found that significant positive correlations exist between the two and that respondents expressed more concern for local causes.

O'Cass and Griffin (2006) noted that advertisements, especially on television, have become an important component of social marketing. But they pointed out that assessment of social believability has been largely ignored. They said that believability of the message is of vital importance in determining the success of the message. They concluded that there is a direct link between the attention paid to the advertisement and its believability.

Sanitow and Brennan (2006) contend that Social Marketing relies on three main factors i.e. Law, Enforcement and Advertising. But the problem herein lies in the fact that Social Marketing focuses only on law and enforcement but is more or less unconcerned with bringing about a change in attitudes.

Redmond and Griffith (2006) devised an experiment on a group of people to observe whether good eating habits and hygienic handling of food, could be inculcated among people. Without informing the sample people they installed security cameras to observe them. They found that for some period of the people observed the rituals of cleanliness but after the lapse of 4-6 weeks; it was seen that people reverted to their old habits. Thus, it was learnt from the experiment that if such habits were to be retained by the people these had to be repeated periodically.

Evans (2008) voiced that social marketing has been successful at changing a wide range of health behaviors. But social marketing faces a major challenge and is at disadvantage as compared with commercial marketing because social marketing lacks funds. It can succeed only if it develops more socially powerful and persuasive competing messages, multiple channels and focus on social and health policies that affect individual behaviour. Social marketing faces a daunting task in the light of rising media use by children.

Henley *et al*. (2011) suggested how commercial marketing principles can be applied to social marketing campaigns. They prove their point by applying marketing theory to a real life social marketing to make it more understandable. .

Bernhardt *et al.* (2012) examined the role of place in social marketing mix. Traditional modes of telecast were lumbered with the factors of cost, poor time slots and shoddy production values. All these limitations have been removed to a large extent with the aid of online sites and marketing. It is now not limited to a time slot but can be accessed at any time by any one at leisure. The traditional concept of place too has metamorphosed. Earlier it was

relegated to one's home but now it is available everywhere where the facility of internet is available. He advocates that social marketers should devise innovative ideas on how to make the most use of technological tools for better results.

Hypotheses of the Study

The broad hypotheses tested were that there is no difference between urban and rural respondents regarding awareness of social ads.

3.   Methodology

The present study is mainly based on primary data collected from 400 adult respondents, 250 urban and 150 rural. These adults were interviewed through a pretested, well-structured and personally administered questionnaire. The universe of the study comprises adults from urban and rural areas of Punjab. For choosing the sample a non-probabilistic judgment-cum-convenience sampling technique was used. The respondents belonging to different age groups, income groups, sex, and educational background have been selected. This study is confined to the three districts of Punjab namely Amritsar, Jalandhar and Ludhiana and their allied villages.

To develop the questionnaire, previous related literature and other library material available on social advertising was reviewed. While preparing the questionnaire, cues and ideas were taken from available literature on social advertising (Bhaskar and Mann, 2001; Chauhan, 1995). To make the questionnaire more concrete, advertisements which were of prime concern in India were chosen.

4.   Data Analysis

The universal statistical package called 'statistical package for social sciences' (SPSS-11.0) was used for data analysis and data was organized/reorganized using MS Excel and SmartSuite.

Weighted Average Scores

The weighted average score (WAS) has been computed where the respondents were asked to rank or express their level of agreement with same statements. For example, in a five point Likert scale, the scale ranges from 1 to 5. The low score indicates disagreement, dissatisfaction or unimportant while high score indicates agreement, satisfaction or important. The WAS score was computed as below:

$$\text{WAS} = \frac{1}{\sum \text{fW}} \sum_{W=1}^{5} \text{w fW}$$

Where:

W = Weight given to a factor/statements and

fW = Number of respondents who attached weight 'w' to the factor/statement

Statistical Techniques Used

Students' Unpaired t-test

It assesses the statistical significance of the difference between two independent sample means. In order to compare two mean values, e.g. between urban and rural respondents, students' unpaired t-test has been applied as under:

$$t = \frac{\overline{x}_1 - \overline{x}_2}{\text{S.E.}(\overline{x}_1 - \overline{x}_2)}$$

$$\text{S.E.} = S\sqrt{1/n_1 + 1/n_2}$$

$$S = \sqrt{\frac{SD_1^2(n_1 - 1) + SD_2^2(n_2 - 1)}{n_1 + n_2 - 2}}$$

Where

$\bar{x}_1$	= Mean among urban respondents
$\bar{x}_2$	= Mean among rural respondents
SD_1	= Standard deviation among urban respondents
SD_2	= Standard deviation among rural respondents
S	= Common Standard Deviation
S.E.	= Standard Error of mean difference
N_1	= Number of urban respondents
N_2	= Number of rural respondents

Analysis of Variance

Analysis of variance technique (ANOVA) is used as a test of means for two or more populations. The null hypothesis typically is that all means are equal. ANOVA tells us whether there is a difference between two or more of groups.

ANOVA Table

Source of variation	d.f.	T.S.S.	M.S.S.	F-ratio
Categories (s)	n-1=a	s_1	s_1/a=x	x/y
Error (E)	b-a=c	E_1	E_1/b=y	
Total	N-1=b			

Where,

d.f.	= Degree of freedom
N	= Number of respondents
T.S.S.	= Total sum of squares due to categories/error
M.S.S.	= Mean Sum of squares due to categories/error
n	= Number of categories to be compared

If the F-ratio is significant then there is a significant difference regarding a advertisement campaign among urban respondents or rural respondents otherwise not.

In the present study it has been used to compare the mean ranking scores assigned to different factors, scores assigned to various social advertising campaigns and various campaigns within one category of respondents. These categories are total respondent, urban respondents and rural respondents. After getting the F-ratio, it was seen whether F-ratio was significant or not. If F-ratio was significant, Critical Difference (CD) was calculated to compare all the possible pairs of mean values. C.D. was calculated as under:

$$C.D. = \sqrt{\frac{2 * M.S.S._e}{No.of\ respondents}} * t_{at\ error\ d.f.}$$

Where M.S.S. is the mean sum of square due to the error, denoted by 'y' in the previous equation.

If the arithmetic difference in any two mean values is greater than or equal to CD, then it was taken significant, otherwise non-significant. The Critical Difference (C.D.) technique has been used to find out the level of preference and to similarities/dissimilarities of agreement on a particular campaign, . From the highest score of agreement, C.D. was subtracted and that becomes cut point for the set of similar statements with the highest agreement. Then from the highest score of the remaining statements, C.D. was again subtracted to get the second set of statements with similar level or second highest level of agreement and so on.

Chi-square test

The Chi-square test has been used to study the association between the rural and the urban population. It is helpful in determining whether a systematic association exists between the variables or not. The null hypothesis is that there is no association between the variables. Chi-square is helpful in measuring the statistical significance of the observed association.

5. Analysis and Discussion

Likeability to Watch Advertisements

The respondents were asked whether they like to watch advertisements. The responses in this regard are presented in Table 1. This was a dichotomous question with two options regarding likeability of advertisements being 'yes' and 'no'. It reveals that majority, i.e. 85 per cent, expressed their liking towards advertisements.

Table 1
Likeability to Watch Advertisements

Like	Urban	Rural	Total
	Number	Number	Number
Yes	212(84.80)	128(85.33)	340(85.00)
No	38(15.50)	22(14.67)	60(15.00)
chi-square value	0.02		

Figures in parentheses represent percentages.

The proportion regarding likeability came to be 84.80 per cent in case of urban respondents and 85.33 per cent in case of rural respondents. It indicates that the pattern of liking to watch advertisements is similar in urban as well as rural areas.

Knowledge of Respondents about Media Campaigns Known as Social Advertising

Further, the respondents were asked whether they are aware about the nature of these ads i.e. whether they know that these advertisement campaigns are social advertisements, the responses are elicited in the simple form of 'Yes' or 'No'. The responses are presented in the Table 2.

Table 2
Knowledge of Respondents about these Media Campaigns being classified as Social Advertisement

Knowledge	Urban	Rural	Total
	Number	Number	Number
Yes	192(76.80)	57(38.00)	249(62.25)
No	58(23.20)	93(62.00)	151(37.75)
chi-square value	60.06***		

*** Significant at 1 percent level; figures in parentheses represent percentages

The data shows that (62.25%) of the total respondents are equipped with the knowledge that these advertisements belong to the category of social advertisements. There is significantly different pattern of knowledge between urban and rural respondents. The proportion of respondents having knowledge about the category of these advertisements came to (76.80%) among urban respondents, which is significantly higher than the awareness among rural respondents (38%).

Degree of Awareness about Social Advertisements

In order to know the degree of awareness, respondents were asked to express their level of awareness about different social advertisements on a Likert scale. The Likert scale includes attributes like 'Fully Aware', 'Somewhat Aware', 'Can't Say', 'Partially Unaware' and 'Fully Unaware'. These attributes are assigned weights as 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. Further, mean level of awareness is computed and the per cent level out of the maximum level of awareness i.e. 5 is also calculated.

Table 3
Extent of Awareness among Respondents about Selected Social Advertisements (Overall Sample)

Social Advertisement	Total		
	Mean	**SD**	**%Mean**
AIDS Awareness Campaign	3.83	1.22	76.62
Eye Donation	3.60	1.28	72.00
Save Water/ Oil/ Electricity	4.06	1.21	81.18
Pulse Polio	4.52	0.69	90.45
Blood Donation	4.26	1.00	85.28
Girl Child Education	4.36	1.00	87.20
Against Drunken Driving	3.97	1.21	79.30
Family Planning	4.14	0.98	82.80
Stop Female Foeticide	4.14	1.05	82.70
Breast Feeding	3.51	1.36	70.25
F-ratio	1.43		
C.D.	NS		

Source: *Primary Data*

A perusal of Table 3 depicts that among respondents, the highest level of awareness of the order of 4.52 (90.45%) is secured by 'Pulse Polio', followed by 'Girl Child Education' 4.36 (87.20%) and 'Blood Donation' 4.26 (85.28%). For 'Stop Female Foeticide' and 'Family Planning' campaign the respondents have shown equal level of awareness i.e. 4.14 (82.80%) each. The lowest level of awareness among total respondents is for 'Breast Feeding' campaign with WAS 3.51 (70.25%).

Extent of Awareness among Urban and Rural Respondents about These Social Advertisements

The extent of awareness among urban and rural respondents for the selected social campaigns is presented in Table 4

Table 4
Extent of Awareness among Urban and Rural Respondents about these Social Advertisements

Social Advertisement	Urban			Rural			t-value
	Mean	**SD**	**%Mean**	**Mean**	**SD**	**%Mean**	
AIDS Awareness Campaign	4.29	1.01	85.78	3.07	1.58	61.34	9.42***
Eye Donation	4.11	1.10	82.24	2.75	1.60	54.93	8.29***
Save Water/ Oil/ Electricity	4.51	0.98	90.28	3.30	1.57	66.00	7.37***
Pulse Polio	4.67	0.65	93.44	4.27	0.75	85.47	2.93***
Blood Donation	4.51	0.90	90.12	3.86	1.16	77.20	6.80***
Girl Child Education	4.56	0.93	91.28	4.01	1.11	80.13	4.67***
Against Drunken Driving	4.23	1.08	84.56	3.53	1.43	70.53	5.47***
Family Planning	4.35	0.88	87.07	3.79	1.14	75.87	5.50***
Stop Female Foeticide	4.38	0.98	87.52	3.74	1.16	74.80	5.90***
Breast Feeding	3.86	1.29	77.20	2.93	1.47	58.67	6.62***
F-ratio	1.31			4.01***			
C.D.	NS			0.3148			

*** *Significant at 1 per cent level*

A breakup of the respondents into urban and rural (Table 4) depicts that the highest level of awareness 4.67 (93.44%) is secured by 'Pulse Polio' campaign, followed by 4.56 (91.28%) for 'Girl Child Education' and 4.51 (90.20%) each for 'Save Water/ Oil/ Electricity' and 'Blood Donation' campaign. The lowest level of awareness to the tune of 3.86 (77.20%) came to be in case of 'Breast Feeding' campaign, followed by 4.11 (84.24%) in case of 'Eye Donation' campaign and 4.23 (84.56%) in case of 'Against Drunken Driving' campaign. This shows that there is not much variation in awareness level for different social advertisements

among urban respondents. The non-significant value of F-ratio calculated through ANOVA also conveys the same.

Among rural respondents, the highest level of awareness works out to be 4.27 (85.47%) for 'Pulse Polio' campaign, followed by 4.01 (80.13%) for 'Girl Child Education' campaign, 3.79 (75.87%) for 'Family Planning' campaign and 3.74 (74.80%) for 'Stop Female Foeticide' campaign. The lowest level of awareness is 2.75 (54.93%) for 'Eye Donation' campaign, followed by 2.93 (58.67%) for 'Breast Feeding' campaign, 3.07 (61.34 %) for 'AIDS Awareness' campaign and 3.30 (66.00%) for 'Save Water/ Oil/ Electricity' campaign. It can be seen that variation in the level of awareness about different social advertisements is there among rural respondents as compared to urban respondents. This is also supported by the significant F-ratio (4.01 significant at 1 per cent level) as shown in ANOVA results.

Thus, the difference in level of awareness about different social advertisements is found to be significant between urban and rural respondents. The level of awareness is significantly higher among urban respondents for all the advertisements as t- values are found to be significant for all the social advertisement campaigns.

6.   Conclusion and Implications

Thus, it can be said that there is a huge gap in awareness of urban and rural respondents regarding social advertising campaigns. There is a significant difference between rural and urban population about the knowledge that these media campaigns are known as social advertisements. The awareness level is found to be more in case of urban respondents for all the advertising campaigns. But the gap in awareness differs from campaign to campaign. The lowest gap is in the case of 'Pulse Polio' and highest is in the case of 'Eye Donation' campaign. But even in urban respondents, awareness is not 100 per cent even for a single social advertisement campaign.

In a nutshell, it can be inferred that generally people like to watch advertisements. They know about the social issues but do not know that these types of advertisements are called social advertisements, especially the rural population. The awareness level of urban people is significantly ahead of rural people. As there is a huge gap between the sensibilities and levels of awareness of the urban and rural population, social advertisements need to cater to them. But, the same types of advertisements are being broadcast for both the urban and the rural population. The advertisements should be framed in a manner that they spread knowledge about social issues among people in general and the rural people in particular.

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