

SOCIAL MARKETING AND ITS EFFICACY IN CREATING RESPONSIBLE AND RESPECTFUL SOCIETIES

Rasiya Nazir Mir

Faculty of Marketing & e-commerce, Jazan University

Minister of Higher Education, Jazan, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

rasiyamir38@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper attempts to draw a wide range of information about social marketing, and particularly reviews the effectiveness of social marketing in eradicating the social evils. It begins with discussing the concept of social marketing and its applicability for meeting the objectives of social good cause and social well being. It then tries to draw attention towards myriads of social problems that are ailing the society and realizes that broader social changes are required to build more socially responsible and respectful societies. These social problems & evils (such as Drug abuse, Crime and violence against women, child labor etc) are complex in nature and require complex approaches to overcome. This paper aims to document social marketing as an effective tool in fight against social evils. Social marketing through its package of well-knitted techniques and strategies is equipped enough to address various social evils that are ailing our societies. It further attempts to signify the effectiveness of social marketing in overcoming the social evils by applying social marketing techniques, strategies to various present day social evils of the society. In support of the discussion examples of various Social Marketing Programs (SMP's) have been cited that are reporting positive results.

Keywords: Social marketing, Social marketing programs, Social evils, Drug abuse

INTRODUCTION

The concept of social marketing can be effectively applied for meeting, promotion of social objectives (examples: poverty, environmental hazards, saving of energy resources, eradication of drug abuse, safe driving, crime against women etc). Social marketing can be applied to promote merit products and services or to make a target audience avoid demerit products and

services, thus helping the cause of well being of the society. This paper discusses the applicability of social marketing concept in creating the positive social changes in the society and its effectiveness in eradicating social evils.

Notably, it has been seen that various organizations, (Non-Governmental Organization) NGO's & Non-business institutes have generally been in effective in achieving their goal of promoting the social causes, as when compared with the business organizations promoting its commercial commodities. For this, G.D.Wiebe (1952) had raised a question "Why can't you sell brother hood like you sell soap?". This statement implies that seller's of commodities such as soap are generally effective, while seller's of social good cause are generally ineffective.

Wiebe examined four social campaigns to determine what conditions and characteristics accounted for their relative success or lack of success. He found that the more the conditions of social campaign resembles to those of product campaigns, the more successful the social campaign is. Based on various such observations and examinations, Kotler & Zaltman (1971) began with the discipline of social marketing and defined it as "an adaptation of commercial marketing techniques to programs designed to influence the voluntary behavior of target audience to improve their personal welfare and that of the society of which they are part of". Social marketing uses many of the successful techniques of the commercial marketing. However rather than being product oriented, social marketing is people-oriented. Put simply, social marketers sell positive behaviors and changes. Social marketing concepts and its programs are essentially designed to influence the voluntary behavior of the target audience. And this "influence" in the behavior is generally made in the form of inducing the change (behavioral change). A commercial marketer selling a product may only have to influence or purchase the buyer to purchase the product whereas, a Social marketer is dealing with people and goals such as reducing cigarette smoking, reduce consumption of energy to save resources, awareness on HIV aids etc. thus have a uphill task of making potentially difficult and long term behavioral change in target audience.

In the present day world, an increasing number of Government organization, NGO's and non business institutes have been implementing social marketing concept as a means to furthering their goals of society welfare. And with the help of Social Marketing Programs (SMP's), they have been far more effective in promoting and establishing of their goals. The most recent example for implementation of social marketing concept is "Swachh Bharat Abhiyaan". Promoted by the Government of India, where they implemented their cleanliness & hygiene drive using SMP strategies,

SOCIAL MARKETING: AN EFFECTIVE TOOL TO ERADICATE SOCIAL EVILS

Our society has myriads of social problems which are complex in nature and require complex approaches -drug abuse, child abuse, child labor, violence against women , poverty are some of the many complex problems that are ailing our societies. Therefore, a complex, purposeful and comprehensive approach is required to overcome and eradicate these social ailments. Broader social change is required in order to build more socially responsible and respectful communities. Strategies that need to be implemented to bring about social change need to include various things like legislative and policy change, and effective criminal justice system, social marketing innovations, community mobilization etc.

Among various such strategies and techniques social marketing represents one strategy that is most effective to overcome these social ailments, as it focuses on the very source of the social problem which is the human mind. Social marketing through its package of well-knitted techniques tries to influence the very mindset of the individual. Bringing such behavioral changes that are beneficial to the individual as well as a society as a whole.

During the last few decades the application of social marketing has significantly contributed to the social good. To signify the effectiveness of social marketing in overcoming the social problems and promoting the social good cause, let us put forth certain examples of social marketing that have yielded the much desirable outcome.

Effectiveness of Social Marketing on Adolescent Issues such as Drug Use, HIV Aids

The social environment especially the influence of parents among pre adolescent children and peers among older adolescent, has a powerful influence on their health behaviors and this is utilized in social marketing. The association teens form among their immediate social environment, social images and exposure to media and marketing can explain adoption of their health behavior (Evans, Powers, Hersey & Renaud, 2006). For example, Tobacco brand marketing portrays smokers as cool, popular & being blessed with many friends (Aloise Young & Hennigan 1996). Because adolescence typically value these trades, therefore, they may be likely experiment with smoking once.

One key insight that social marketing gives to adolescent is providing social models and appealing imaginary, this is typically more effective than negative (“don’t do this behavior”) messages. It has been seen that adolescence need to establish personal independence and control, which leads them to react positively to peers who appear popular or are engaging in popular behavior. Social marketing has the capacity of feeding them with these imaginaries. Similarly adolescents have a need to rebel against external restrictions on their independence and self-control, potentially leading to opposing reactions to negative-“don’t do it” messages.

The social marketing program for adolescents is more effective as it encompasses the following goals:

- Promoting positive relationship with peers.
- Emphasizing youth's strength and potential to shape the society.
- Providing opportunities to learn healthy behaviors.
- Connecting with caring adults.
- Empowering youth to assume leadership roles in programs, and
- Challenging youth in ways that build their competence.

Social marketing incorporates these goals into messages and images, encouraging healthy behavior choices during this critical time period & keeps them away falling into prey of drug use. Few among various successful social marketing campaigns against adolescent issues are cited below:

The Truth Campaign

In Feb2000, the American Legacy foundation launched the National truth Tobacco counter marketing Campaign, the largest social marketing effort to prevent & control youth smoking ever undertaken in the United States. The Truth Campaign was based on the Florida truth campaign which reduced rates of youth tobacco use in Florida.

There have been several published studies demonstrating the effectiveness of Truth Campaign in achieving these three objectives. For example, Farrelly & colleagues found that from 2000-2002 U.S. adolescent smoking prevalence declined from 25.3% to 18.0% & that Truth Campaign accounted for approximately 22% of that decline. This study demonstrated that the campaign had a large and statistically significant impact on adolescent smoking, above & beyond & independent secular trend of declining smoking among this population. The campaign – attributable decline in smoking prevalence represent some 300 thousand fewer adolescent smokers during the study period.

Evans & colleagues found that adolescents had positive reactions to the Truth advertising & to the branded messages. This study demonstrated that the Truth Campaign reduced adolescent smoking by building adolescent identification with the Truth Brand.

Love Life Campaign

It was conducted in South Africa for prevention of HIV/AIDS. It aimed to reduce by half the rate of HIV infection among 15-20 year olds, as well as to reduce other sexually transmitted diseases & the incidence of teenage pregnancy. It promoted a lifestyle choice valuing

abstinence, delayed initiation of sexual activity, fewer sexual partners among already sexually active teenagers, and condom use.

The Study, "Monitoring and Evaluation of love Life's AIDS Prevention and Advocacy Activities in South Africa, 1999–2001" conducted by Stadler J and Hlongwa L. shows that the campaign increased adolescent & young adult awareness of HIV/AIDS prevention. It also increased awareness of HIV/AIDS health risks & intentions to use condoms.

Social Marketing is a behavior change approach that has proven effective across a wide range of health promotion and disease prevention subject areas. Indeed, many of the specific social marketing strategies (like discussed above) have proven effective in fields such as tobacco control, nutrition and physical activity promotion & HIV Aids Prevention.

Role of Social Marketing In Reduction of Crime and Violence against Women

Social marketing has been growing popularity in the context of attempts to influence citizen's behaviors (Andreasen 2006: lacayo & singhal, 2008: Donovan, 2011). It employs marketing philosophy, tools and techniques to assist in enabling behavioral change and, whilst there are many communication processes and tools that can be effective to combat violence against women, this section concentrates on research and programs that use social marketing models to respond to the endemic issues of violence against women; we present several practice examples to display the strategies, theories, frameworks and methods used and the effectiveness of these campaigns for individual and social change.

The Vic-Health Review of Communication Components of Social Marketing / Public Education Campaigns Focusing on Violence Against Women by Donovan & Vlasis (2005) offers a comprehensive of over 30 campaigns, which had a significant outcome in prevention of crimes and violence against women. Here we provide an overview of some of these campaigns, as to give a jist about the social marketing strategies and their effectiveness in prevention of crimes and violence against women.

Violence Against Women: Australia Says No (Australia)

This Australian campaign, funded and delivered by the Federal Government, focused on two target groups:

- Women (experiencing violence)
 - to encourage them to phone the national helpline to seek help
 - to increase their understanding that violence is a crime and is not acceptable, is never their fault, and that, although seeking help can be and feel difficult, it is the right thing to do and can make a difference.

- Men (in general, including those engaging in violence)
 - to encourage them to stop using or not adopt the use of violence against women
 - to phone the national helpline to seek help if they are using violence
 - to seek consent for sexual activity
 - to take measures to stop other men from being violent towards women
 - to increase their awareness that violence against women is not acceptable and is a crime
 - to increase their awareness that women do not deserve violence
 - to increase their awareness that violence does not only include hitting

Know Your Power: Step In, Speak Up (USA)

The Know Your Power campaign was developed by a team of university students, staff and faculty. This marketing campaign is the extension of the larger Bringing in the Bystander Project campaign that was developed, administered and evaluated by University of New Hampshire researchers. The Bringing in the Bystander Project provides suggestions for specific roles to all community members, which they can identify with and adopt in preventing the community problem of sexual violence.

These roles include:

- Interrupting situations that could lead to assault before it happens or during an incident
- Speaking out against social norms that support sexual violence.
- Having skills to be an effective and supportive ally to survivors.

It is based community norms and bystander intervention platforms. The main message is that "Everyone in the community has a role to play in ending sexual violence" (Donovan, 2005).

We Can: End All Violence against Women (Canada)

The We Can campaign attempts to draw attention to the violence that ordinary people experience, witness or commit, while highlighting that violence against women is a public not a private matter. It attempts to provoke both women and men to think about their attitudes and behaviour and then encourages people to find their own solutions and make their own choices. It presents women and men as agents of change and not the former as powerless victims or the latter as all-powerful tyrants.

The campaign draws attention to the choices that ordinary people can make to accept or reject violence. It offers encouragement to reject violence by presenting a common platform: 'We can end all violence against women'.

Men Can Stop Rape: My Strength' and 'Where Do You Stand? (USA)

Men Can Stop Rape has two campaigns that use peer-to-peer contact to create new social norms reinforced by a supportive school environment, paid advertising and other social marketing. The 'My strength is not for hurting' and 'Where do you stand?' campaigns use social media (and other media) together with schools-based Men of Strength (MOST) clubs for young men and other strategies, to build norms of sexual consent, respect and nonviolence. The Strength Campaign is designed to raise awareness of dating violence among youth and highlights the vital role young men can play in fostering healthy, safe relationships (Donovan, 2005). An evaluation of the campaign documents that male students exposed to the campaign had slightly more respectful and equitable attitudes (Flood, 2010). The campaign theme 'My Strength is Not for Hurting' re-positions the concept of male strength to encourage, motivate and enable young men to take action to prevent sexual violence. Both campaigns reposition the concept of male strength to encourage, motivate and enable young men to take action to prevent sexual violence (Lee, Guy, Perry, Sniffen & Mixson, 2007).

Some of the other campaigns are :

- Step Up: Real men don't rape
- The Violence Stops Here: Don't Be That Guy
- The Red Flag Campaign

Through several reviews of social marketing in the context of campaigns and projects to respond to violence against women (Donovan & Vlasis, 2005; Paluck & Ball, 2010) that have been undertaken, and we have referred to them above (Paluck & Ball;2010) provide a comprehensive report covering marketing campaigns of gender-based violence prevention social and programs implemented in developing countries. There is strong evidence to suggest that social marketing campaigns are effective in contributing to attitudinal and behavioral change of individuals and communities. Community norms are changing with comprehensive multi-sectoral and strategic response to the violation of women's integrity and their human rights.

Social Marketing against Domestic Violence

Like other social issues, family violence is a complex problem influenced by factors at all levels; individual, relationship, community, and societal (Heise, 1998; Krug et al., 2002; Wray, 2006). To make change, a multi-sectoral approach is needed that targets all levels of interventions (Bowen, Gwiasda & Brown, 2004; Flora, Maibach & Maccoby, 1989; Krug et al., 2002; Martin, Green & Carlson Gielen, 2007).

Social marketing campaigns can change attitudes and behavior related to family violence. These campaigns can increase awareness, affect attitudes, and empower people to act against issues such as family violence. With an integrated social marketing approach a gradual process towards behavior change can happen starting from a change in knowledge, greater awareness of the behavior /issue, a shift attitudes condoning the behavior, a shift in social norms, self and collective efficacy, help-seeking and help-giving behavior.

Lets us put forth few examples of social marketing campaigns to demonstrate that social marketing techniques have become a standard part of the tool-box in dealing with difficult social problems and that such techniques have been found to be effective in producing positive results on public attitudes towards family and relationship violence's.

New Zealand Police Family Violence Campaign (1993-95)

The campaign was targeted at women and children experiencing violence, the men that were being violent and the NZ Police. The goal of the campaign was to increase reporting and help-seeking behavior, to create safety for women and accountability to male offenders, and to the Police to increase the understanding of the severity of violence within families. Mass media activities included TV and print ads, documentaries, posters, music videos, bus advertisements and media advocacy. This campaign also included partnerships within the family violence sector including Police training. A helpline was also created. Evaluation of this campaign showed a significant increase in women seeking help, increase in the number of Police prosecutions, increase in self-referrals from men, decrease in the number of women murdered by an intimate partner.

Expect Respect (2001-2003; Northern Rivers, NSW)

Targeted young people aged 14-24 years to talk to about any unhealthy aspects of their personal relationships, including calling a helpline. A range of social marketing strategies were used including TV ads, posters, media advocacy, high school competition to design the TV ad and music festivals etc.

Evaluation findings (White, Newell and Graham, 2006) showed that campaign reached the target audience and that campaign awareness was significantly higher during and post the campaign. Increased awareness included knowing the signs of an unhealthy relationship and the need to seek help. The evaluation did show that actual help seeking behaviors did not change as women's confidence in their ability to seek help was not supported through the campaign.

Choose Respect (Current; 10 Major United States Cities)

Targeted young people aged 11-14 years. This campaign was designed to provide different strategies for young people to use to reduce dating violence and increase relationships based on respect. The campaign used a range of social marketing tools including comics, posters, TV ads and media such as 'rap sessions' and at Women's National Basketball games. Evaluation findings (CDC, Unpublished Report, 2008) showed that those young people that participated in campaign activities reported an increased understanding of what a healthy dating relationship looked like, to identify warning signs of abuse and the campaign increased young people's beliefs that abuse in relationships is not acceptable.

The aforementioned social marketing campaigns and their reviews, provide a good evidence to suggest that social marketing campaigns show efficacy in highlighting and preventing the issues of domestic violence, family violence, date violence etc.

CONCLUSION

Social marketing is a behavior change approach that has proven effective across a wide range of social issues. It has shown success at changing a wide range of social behaviors in the complex domain of social evils (like crime against women, poverty, drug abuse, child labor), where change is hard to get. It goes with the famous saying "it's hard to teach an old dog a new trick", perhaps this is tried and true.

It is there for "teaching an old dog that new trick" where the social marketing plays an essential role. It successfully induces good behavior change in lives of individuals that can have meaningful benefits both for those individuals and for the society as a whole.

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