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Cell : +91 98247 02127, 8866 00 3636

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Research Paper | Marketing

Social Marketing: Towards a new horizon

Dr Partha Sarkar Assistant Professor, Dept of Mass Communication, Assam University, Slither

ABSTRACT

Sentiments, emotions, feelings are elements which can be targeted to sway anyone towards a desired action. We are living in a world which is escalating in different areas namely economic, social, and political, science & technologies. It is been recognized that people need information for self development and the medium and mechanism to carry, store, process the information and using these mechanism for better transparency in order to make infoiillation available for development. This gives birth to social marketing as an important element in present marketing scenario.

Social marketing targets the social ethics. It mainly helps in upliftment of the society. Social marketing is used to promote the acceptance and adoption of those activities which some way or the other improves the wellbeing of the society and nation as a whole. It is a combination of social ethics & marketing. It is a professional approach which reflects on the development based on marketing strategy. It is not merely selling a product, it is much more than that. The acceptance and approval which it receives from the society distinguishes it from other branches of marketing. It changes one's outlook towards life, needs, wants, attitude and desires. Thus a study was conducted in Silchar town in Assam , India to examine the effectiveness of social marketing among the masses .

KEYWORDS:

The Problem:

Social marketing at large contains messages of social development and the target areas are mainly under developed rural or urban areas which need social awareness and much more. Various marketing campaigns have been carried out and here public relation plays a vital role is promoting them. Public relations is one such factor without which we can not have an effective marketing process. Public relations is such a profession which do not make you consent without your consent. Likewise, advertising too is an important tool of social marketing. The purpose is to spread awareness and to prompt people to adopt the message. There are many areas where social marketing with public relations and advertising have induced awareness and compelled society to adopt it. Social marketing helps in providing the long term social benefit of the product to the community. We can say that social marketing is either marketing of social development ideas/ product or the social dimensions of marketing or a combination of both. There are many areas where social marketing had played an important role.

Review of Literature

Andreasseen (2002) Kotler and Zalman (1971) view social marketing as, "the design, implementation and control of programmes calculated to influence the acceptability of social ideas and involving consideration of product planning, pricing, communication and marketing research. "Social marketing is the systematic application of marketing along with other concepts and techniques to achieve specific social behavioural goals for a social good. The primary goal marketing is social good. According to wikipedia, social marketing is defined as having two parents- 'social parent- social science and social policy and a marketing parent- commercial and public sector marketing approaches.

The vast researches conducted in the past on achieving developmental goals confirmed that communication support is imperative for the success of social development programmes and it needs to be handled more professionally and in a planned and scientific manner. Thus it suggests the concept of social marketing as the most effective scientific communication technique for social change.

Need for Social Marketing

Social marketing stresses on the selling of the social ideas, like development of children, women, nutrition and health education, literacy, family planning and others. Social marketing approach attempts to influence and persuade the societal people bring modifications in the behaviour to improve the knowledge of people regarding above mentioned concepts and to observe the attitudinal changes in them. To see these changes in the society the adoption of concepts of marketing carries great potential. Both the programme for social change and the adoption of marketing methods have few things in common.

- Both work on modifications in knowledge attitude and behaviour of people.
- Both have to deal with rigid target groups.
- Both face lot of resistance to change.

Evaluation of Social Marketing Programme

In social communication programmes, the final impact is evaluated where as in the social marketing programme, the entire process is evaluated. Quarashi (1996) have given following points of evaluation of social marketing programmes.

- Impact of message. Communication strategy used. Efficacy of community institutional and other external support. Attitudinal changes due to awareness.
- Extent of reflection of attitudinal changes in actual practice.

Essential Elements of Social Marketing

As social marketing is used synonymously with advertising or mass media campaigns, seeking to shape attitudes, increasing awareness and encourages either the use of certain services or changes in persons and collective behavior. Walsh, Rudd, Barbara, Moe kens and Moloney (1993) have described the Social Marketing Process Elements as follows:

Phase-I Research and Planning

- Planning
- Consumer analysis
- Market analysis
- Channel analysis

Phase-II Strategy Design

- Development of marketing strategy
- Communication

Phase-III Implementation and Evaluation

- Implementation
- Process evaluation
- Outcome evaluation

International Efforts in Adopting Social Marketing

An extensive research project was undertaken by UNAIDS. AIDS Social marketing was used as a tool in global response to HIV/ .Social marketing has become increasingly popular among governments and donors as a way of addressing serious health issues in developing countries. While the concept has its roots in family planning, much of the attention has been due to the use of social marketing to respond to the HIV/AIDS epidemic. In countries where the health infrastructure is both underdeveloped and -under funded, a social marketing approach makes the product available and affordable, utilizing commercial marketing techniques, while linking it to a communication campaign geared to sustainable behavior change.

In response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic, social marketing programs have made condoms accessible, affordable and acceptable to low-income

populations and high-risk groups in many of the world's developing countries. In several of these countries, this approach has been expanded to incorporate other essential health products and has become an important component of efforts to improve national health.

The effectiveness of such program in a variety of economic, political, and cultural environments has led to an active debate over what exactly constitutes social marketing and what should be the role of program as well as the public health system. The long-term sustainability of social marketing program and their effect on the existing commercial sector are issues of particular concern.

The results showed that there is a tendency to design reproductive health social marketing programme with management structure that matches local context. SES context clearly influences the effectiveness of some of the social marketing models, programme maturity and the size of the .target population as equally important. To maximize the effectiveness of social marketing programmes, it is essential that more efforts are devoted to ensuring such programmes are designed using the model or approach that is most suitable to local context.

Another attempt was "Recreating Communities to Support Active Living by Maibach (2003)"The lack of routine physical activity has become an all too pervasive health threat in the United States. Social marketing can be used directly to promote increased physical activity among people who have access to active living options. A second, albeit indirect, use of social marketing to promote physical activity - involves promoting behaviours that influence the built environment for the purpose of increasing people's access to active living options. This use of social marketing involves changing the behaviour of consumers, developers, distribution channels and policy makers. The approach offers public health and other organizations a disciplined, consumers - focused means of mobilizing their available resources in a manner that maximizes the odds of creating active living communities. These means include understanding the competition, understanding target markets, creating mutually beneficial exchanges, segmenting markets and targeting them based on anticipated return.

Killingsworth and Schmid have argued that social marketing approaches can contribute to these efforts both directly, by helping to enhance the perceived value associated with currently available active-living options, and indirectly, by helping to reshape communities so that more active-living options are available to every member of the community, regardless of socioeconomic status.

Adopting a marketing-based approach to program planning will not come easily for many organizations that currently plan their programs using other approaches. Social marketing, however, is neither mysterious nor counter intuitive once it becomes clear that the approach is based on developing programs that help all parties involved advance their own self-interests.

Findings and discussion:

Thus on the need of the social advertisements in our society to eradicate the social issues from the society a study was conducted in the department of mass communication, Assam University, Silchar with an objective to study the opinions of the citizens of Silchar city regarding the Occurrence, Presentation and content of Social Advertisements published in the newspapers and also to conduct the content analysis of the social advertisements of two selected Bengali Local newspapers.

The sample for the study consisted of 100 citizens of Silchar city and two newspapers respectively. The interview schedule was used for the data collection of data. The findings suggested that social advertisements are often published in the newspapers, but cater limited social issues. Focus group discussion (FGD) was also conducted to find out the views of both men and women on the presentation, occurrence and content of the social advertisements in the Bengali newspapers. While conducting the FGDs it was found that the low frequency of the social advertisements is a very important reason due to which citizens don't have a clarity regarding the social advertisements. Participants suggested that if occurrence of the advertisements related to Social issues will be more than only benefits of social advertisements can be analyzed. They are well presented and the messages are easy to understand. However the monotony in the presentation style and the content of the messages should be improved

Findings and implementation

Research in this newly emerging discipline is very meager. This case-study is designed to determine the extent of commitment of PR practitioners and corporations to social responsibility. It examines the response of PR practitioners towards several social responsibility issues. It compares the understanding of the concept by public and private sectors. An interview schedule was developed keeping in view the objectives of the study. The organizations selected for study selected from the Silchar town were:

ONGC , Cachar Forward Base ,Chairman and Directors of the organization met some leading local people and announced financial support to an NGO to procure and operate a mini bus for DISHA for transportation of physically challenged children for their needs of education and medical treatment. Echocardiography machine to Rotary Heart care Centre , Silchar for benefit of general public . ONGC has been providing a lot of support to local community development under its proposed social responsibility initiative

ONGC had given assistance of Rs 10.80 lakhs to the city administration for development of park in the city. ONGC has been a leader in community development in Barak Valley. Rs 1.5 core to Cachar Cancer Hospital for procurement of CT Scan Machine. First such unit being installed in Cachar region for benefit of Cancer patients .Rs 11.47 lakhs to Nivedita Nari Saghstha for construction of " Sishu Giiha' for the poor orphan children. .Rs 15 Lakhs to three colleges of Cachar for constructions , electrification and renovation.

The Indian Oil Corporation (Assam Oil Division) at Silchar donated an ambulance to Primary Health Center (PHC) , Borkhola. The donation was handed over to concerned authorities by Mr. B.K. Sarma , Executive Director , IOC , Assam Oil Division, Digboi

This ambulance will help those communities who are suffering from transport facility. Moreover, there is a plant in Barkhola where number of employees are residing . This will also help them.

The Cachar Cancer Hospital is dream come true of the people of the region . It now needs a little sympathy and concern of all those who care for the suffering and share their agony .The hospital society is confident it will continue to get inspiration l reaching the noble objective. Video scope Machine was donated by SBI. The cancer Hospital reveals many hopes to the people of Barak Valley and considering this the amount was given from Community service banking

Conclusions

Social marketing has been established as one of the potential tool for development. If well adopted this process can result into effective implementation of development programme and can bring desirable social change. Social marketing must be clearly positioned or branded as one of several social change options. Social marketing should be able to increase its share of the social change markets place if development practitioners are convinced of its much strength: Further the social marketers should collaborate with indirect competitors, that have complementary strengths in community mobilization and public policy like political leaders, religious leaders etc. Systematic audience research should be conducted to identify the correct focus of social marketing programmes.

To sum up , social marketing campaigns all over the world has now clearly established the potentials to bring positive social changes in the society. In India, efforts should be made more comprehensive and consistent in achieving the development goals through the approach of the social marketing.

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