



ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Dental Science

AN ANALYSIS OF THE MOST CIRCULATED PRINT NEWSPAPERS IN INDIA WITH REGARDS TO ORAL HEALTH. AN OVERVIEW

KEY WORDS: Newspaper, Advertisements, Food

Dr Sarah Paul*	Post Graduate Student, Department Of Public Health Dentistry, College Of Dental Sciences, Pavillion Road, Besides Bapuji Hospital, Davanagere, Karnataka 577004 *Corresponding Author
Dr Prashant G. M	Professor And Head, Department Of Public Health Dentistry, College Of Dental Sciences, Pavillion Road, Besides Bapuji Hospital, Davanagere, Karnataka 577004
Dr Sushanth V. H	Professor, Department Of Public Health Dentistry, College Of Dental Sciences, Pavillion Road, Besides Bapuji Hospital, Davanagere, Karnataka 577004
Dr. Mohammed Imranulla	Professor, Department Of Public Health Dentistry, College Of Dental Sciences, Pavillion Road, Besides Bapuji Hospital, Davanagere, Karnataka 577004.
Dr. Vivek H. P	Reader, Department Of Public Health Dentistry, College Of Dental Sciences, Pavillion Road, Besides Bapuji Hospital, Davanagere, Karnataka- 577004.

ABSTRACT

Back ground: News media are an important and influential part of the social environment, calling attention to certain issues by the amount and nature of their coverage. Among them newspaper is certainly the oldest and is still the largest of the major advertising mediums and it still plays an integral role in the Indian decision making regarding products buying preferences. **Objective and Methodology:** Top six newspapers that have the highest print circulation in India were analysed over a span of three weeks. This included a week of festivity and the two weeks that succeeded it in November 2020 to accommodate the changing trend in advertisements during festivities. A total of 2098 advertisements were analysed based on the advertisements of any products, which were further classified into food based, non-food based, general health and oral hygiene aids. The food based ads were further classified based on their cariogenic potential. Further the articles that were published with regards to health awareness were analysed and classified into those that included oral health awareness. **Results:** Of all the advertisements that were analysed, 39.2% of the ads were food related and 56.32% were food with cariogenic potential. Just 3.6% of the total advertisements were regarding oral hygiene aids. Also just a mere 6 per cent of the total health related coverage was given to the contents on oral health awareness. **Conclusion:** Across all newspapers, readers were exposed to high volumes of advertising for unhealthy foods, with high caries index. This study thus shows both the constraints and public education opportunities provided by this genre.

INTRODUCTION

Newspaper is the oldest and is still the largest of the major advertising media in India. India has the second-largest newspaper market in the world, with daily newspapers reporting a combined circulation of over 240 million copies as of 2018. Unlike the other countries around the globe, India shows an increasing trend in the readership figures. As per Indian Readership Survey data 2019, the overall readership has grown from 407 million readers in 2017 to 425 million readers at the end of 2019. Another survey by Avance Field and Brand Solutions¹, states the number of people reading the paper for over 30 minutes has shot up to 72% from 42% before lockdown. Indian government subsidizes the newsprint products, means on an average, newspapers in India cost less than your average expense on a cup of tea.

Even though the world is largely digitalised, internet is still lacking in its reach in many parts of India, and even though mobile revolution is underway, smart phones are still expensive for rural population, Newspapers in India are also read widely and the advertisers have realized that they are the dominant mode of reaching out to the masses and therefore, it would be wise for them to spend their advertising budgets on newspapers.

Despite many recent studies that link food based ads to obesity, a very high amount of marketing is still on high cariogenic food, which is further aided by minimal government regulations. Tatiana et al² in a study stated that soft drink and fat food advertising is associated with increased consumption of soft drinks. Though many content analysis on television based advertisements were done in the recent years, there is very few studies which analysed the content of newspaper based advertisements in this regard.

The objective of this study was

- To analyze and classify the products advertised into food based, non-food based and oral hygiene aids related.
- To classify the food based products into those that were cariogenic or non-cariogenic.
- To analyze the articles that where published on health awareness and to further classify them into those that promoted general health and oral health.

Methodology

According to Indian readership survey 2019, the following are the 6 newspapers with the highest print readership in India in the descending order:

1. Dainik Jagran (Hindi)
2. Dainik Bhaskar (Hindi)
3. Hindusthan (Hindi)
4. Amar Ujala (Hindi)
5. Malayala Manorama (Malayalam)
6. The Times Of India (English).

For the sake of homogeneity, the Delhi edition of these newspapers were analysed as most of these newspapers had multiple editions. The analysis was carried out over a span of three weeks: this included a week of festivities and the two weeks that succeeded it to accommodate the changing trend in advertisements during festivities.

The data were tabulated on excel sheet and analysed using SPSS software version 20.0

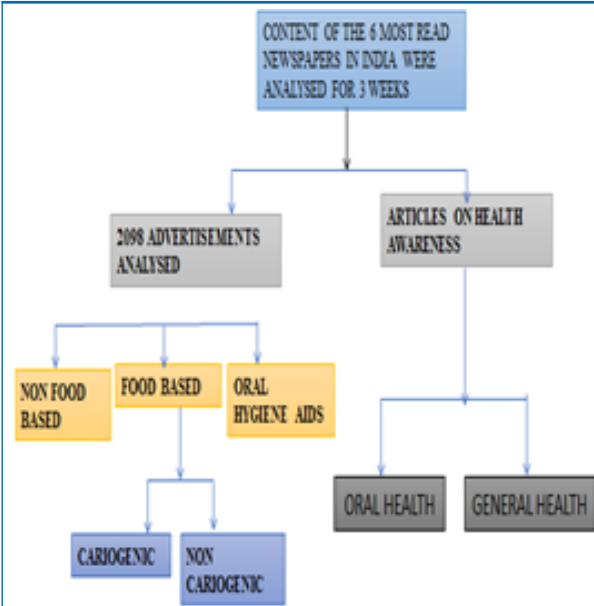


Figure 1: The Classification Of Advertisements.

RESULTS

A total of 2098 advertisements that were published in these newspapers in that given time period was analysed out of which 822 were food based that comprised 39.2 per cent of the total ads that were published. Out of the total food based ads 56.3 per cent of the food with cariogenic potential. The advertisements on cariogenic food mainly included aerated drinks, confectionaries, and low cariogenic foods such as yogurt and cheese spread. Just 74 advertisements were advertisements regarding oral hygiene aids which comprises of just around 3.5%. These comprised of ads of mainly various types of fluoridated and non-fluoridated tooth paste. The articles on general health or public related schemes that were published were also analysed. These comprised of various government schemes and various columns, editorials and queries that were raised within the newspapers to medical practitioners. Around 30 articles of this genre were published but just 6 per cent of these were regarding oral health awareness.

Table 1: Percentage Analysis Of The Contents Of The Newspapers.

NEWSPAPER RANKED ACCORDING TO READERSHIP COVERAGE.	TOTAL NO OF PRODUCTS ADVERTISED	TOTAL NO OF FOOD RELATED ADVERTISEMENTS	FOOD WITH CARIOGENIC POTENTIAL	ADVERTISEMENTS REGARDING ORAL HYGIENE AIDS
DAINIK JAGRAN (HINDI)	-	-	-	-
DAINIK BASKAR (HINDI)	366	215	107	24
AMARUJULA (HINDI)	423	177	112	16
HINDUSTHAN (HINDI)	476	186	87	12
MALAYALA MANORAMA (MALAYALAM)	331	81	37	14
TIMES OF INDIA(ENGLISH)	502	163	120	8
	2098	822	463	74
PERCENTAGE		39.2	56.32	3.5

DISCUSSION

As per Ahmed et al advertisement is any paid form of exposure or promotion by some sponsor that reaches through various traditional media such as television, newspaper, radio, outdoor advertising, magazines or modern media such as blogs, websites and text messages.³ Even though the digital marketing is booming, many companies still continue to

advertise in newspaper due to its wide reach among the Indian population.

This content analysis revealed that a very large majority of the advertisements that were published were food based and a very disturbing trend of more than half of it being of cariogenic potential. The main aim of an advertisement is to impact a buying behaviour. As per the readership survey during the lockdown, majority of the people read the same newspaper more than once a day and also the same advertisement was often seen to be repeated for over a week in the same newspaper creates memories about the brand by associations that are related to brand name in the readers mind who are consumers in this scenario. Zajonc et al⁴ suggest that familiarity may lead to creation of positive impression of an object.. Familiarity with the brand thus creates a sense of trustworthiness in consumer's minds and makes the consumer buy that more. This study demonstrates that, under the current Indian regulatory systems, exposure to cariogenic food advertising remains disproportionately high compared with the promotion of more healthful foods. The advertising of non-core foods, including high-fat/high-sugar foods and its constituent foods, confectionery and fast-food restaurants, has also increased considerably over the decade.

This study demonstrates that, under the current Indian regulatory systems, our exposure to food advertising remains disproportionately high compared with the promotion of more healthful foods. Considering past research about the relationship between advertising exposure and patterns of food consumption, it is likely that the levels of advertising of high-fat/high-sugar foods, and obesity among Australian children as per a study by Zywicki et al.⁵ As per Tiggermann et al⁶ socio cultural ideas are most strongly spread through mass media .Most often a unhealthy food is advertised by a healthy looking person which often reinforces a very wrong ideal image in the consumers mind As per Pollay and Mittal⁷ ,advertising promote social messages and life style by illustrating the position of ideal consumer and increases consumer's willingness to purchase.

The advertisements regarding oral hygiene aids were just around 3.5 per cent as compared to the 56.5 per cent of the remaining ads that were on non-food based objects. All of the ads on oral hygiene were focused on promotion of various tooth pastes. Even though today we have a wide range of tooth brushes, mouthwashes and interdental aids, none of these were covered in these newspapers making it difficult for the common Indian crowd to acquire knowledge about oral health them. The advertisements of non-fluoridated tooth paste were equally common as that of fluoridated ones. Aaker and Jacobson⁸ found a positive relationship between advertising and perceived quality. Advertising spending is positively related to perceived quality, which leads to greater amount of purchase from that brand as consumers generally prefer to purchase from a well know brand in order to avoid disappointments over quality.

It was also seen that just 6 per cent of the total health awareness articles were on oral health. Chronic diseases are on a rise in developing countries, which means the quality of life related to oral health, as well as general quality of life, may decrease further. Because oral and other chronic diseases have common determinants, a common risk factor approach should be implemented. It is necessary that more awareness on oral health issues should be covered and published focusing on general population and those at high risks. More columns should be dedicated for this purpose and various government colleges and dentists can collaborate with general health practitioners and contribute articles to various local newspapers and thus help reduce this social inequity.

Since advertisements and newspaper in general play a very influential role in the purchasing patterns of consumers and

affects the general health in large the government can spend an amount of its allotted health budget to promote health awareness through various newspapers, with special emphasis on oral health. Need for a balanced diet and incorporating fibre rich food and the need to use a fluoridated tooth paste should also be stressed. Government can ask for the need to place a statutory warning on the food with high caries index just like the one on tobacco products. A through breakdown label of the food item in terms of recommended daily allowance(RDA)guidelines can also be asked to be printed.

CONCLUSION

The local newspaper can be especially influential in smaller communities, strategies are needed to help reporters and editors in these settings provide more and better coverage of oral health awareness for it provides a medium to influence larger community. India is home to 22 major different languages ,with over 13 different scripts, hence further studies should be done to analyze this trend of unhealthy food advertising in various other regional newspapers. This study thus shows both the constraints and public education regarding oral as well as general health opportunities provided by this genre.

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