

Study of the Effectiveness of YouTube in Spreading Awareness about Family Planning Campaigns in India

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Abstract—Social media has emerged as a new way through which social issues are dealt with. In fact, today social media is being used for almost all activities; so it is important to recognize the role of Social Media for a Social Cause. In this research paper study of YouTube has been done to find out its role in spreading awareness about family planning through public health communication campaigns in India as YouTube is the most popular video sharing website in India having 400 million user base.

This study includes its main research question that what role has been played by YouTube for the spreading awareness about the Family Planning in India through Public Health Communication Campaigns.

Its purpose establishes new roles for social media where social media especially YouTube is for social cause and should fight with social problems including Women Reproductive Health.

Methodology and tools for collecting data are Internet Research (YouTube) and Content Analysis.

This is the study of the Family Planning Campaigns available on YouTube with a complete analysis based on its title, whether title is relevant to the inner content or not, Views, Likes, Dislikes, Date of Publishing, Use of Music, Presence of Celebrities, Description of YouTube Channels etc.

Introduction:-

This study gives a critical understanding of the role of social media (YouTube) in spreading awareness about family planning campaigns in India.

Government of India has taken initiatives like 'Digital India' which is a campaign to ensure the government services availability to citizens of India with the help of increasing internet connectivity. Such initiatives incorporate vision to connect rural India by developing secure and stable digital infrastructure, delivering government services digitally and by universalizing digital literacy across the country¹. Keeping this initiative of government of India in mind it becomes necessary to review the role of YouTube, the most popular video sharing website of India in disseminating information related to family

planning campaigns which is largely sponsored by the Indian Government. This becomes more important as India adds up to 1,000,000 people to its population every 20 days².

YouTube users have been increasing in India rapidly and according to the current statistics YouTube is reaching 265 million population of India (HT, April 10, 2019). This study investigates the importance of this video sharing website for the better women reproductive health and success of family planning campaigns in India.

There is a big gap between the expectations and results of family planning campaigns in India. Till 2016, India's infant mortality rate was 34.6 per 1000 live births and as of 2015 maternal mortality rate is 174 per 100,000 live births³.

Leading causes of maternal mortality include haemorrhage, sepsis and complications of abortion, hypertensive disorders, infection, premature birth and birth asphyxia⁴. Keeping in view the increasing population and vulnerability of infants and maternal health this study becomes inevitable.

Both individuals and big production companies have used YouTube to achieve their goals by reaching the target audience at a very little cost or effort⁵. Effective literacy rates in India were 80.9% for men and 64.60% for women in 2011⁶. The low female literacy rate impacts the family planning campaigns negatively in India. Studies have indicated that female literacy decides the use of contraception among married Indian couples⁷.

²Arjun Adlakha (April 1997), Population Trends: India

³data.worldbank.org. Retrieved 2018-05-04

⁴"Reproductive health and child health and nutrition in India: meeting the challenge". The Lancet. 377(9762):332-349.2011-01-22. doi: 10.1016/S0140-6736(10)61492-4. ISSN 0140-6736. PMC 3341742

⁵Bruno, Antony(February 25,2007). "YouTube stars don't always welcome record deals". Reuters. Archived from the original on January 16 2014.

⁶Robert Engelman; et al. (2009). "The State of World Population 2009"

⁷ A. Dharmalingam; S. Philip Morgan(1996), "Women's work, autonomy and birth control: evidence from two south India

¹Prakash Amit. "Digital India needs to go local". The Hindu. Retrieved 2017-02-26.

As far as family planning campaigns in India are concerned the success of the same can be ensured if the whole family is aware of the benefits; in this sense YouTube can be a big help as audio visual medium doesn't need literacy and anyone whether literate or illiterate can watch the videos, appreciate and get benefited.

Objective of the study

The main objective of this study is to explore the role of social media (YouTube) for the spreading awareness about Family Planning in India through Public Health Communication Campaigns to ensure its better use in future seeing its popularity and availability across India.

Sampling

300 videos have been selected randomly on YouTube and reviewed for which all the YouTube videos related to Family Planning was the universe. The key sentence "Family Planning Campaigns in India" was searched on YouTube to select this sample size of 300 videos. The total number of videos on the topic was more than 40 thousand.

Methodology

Internet Research (YouTube) and Content Analysis

The methodology includes complete study of the available campaigns on YouTube with its analysis based on its Title, whether title is relevant to the inner content or not, Views, Likes, Dislikes, Date of Publishing, Use of Music, Presence of Celebrities, Description of YouTube Channel etc.

Review of Family Planning Campaigns having Celebrities

While reviewing family planning campaigns on YouTube in which some celebrities of India are present it has been observed that mostly Bollywood actors have been taken for this purpose. Famous Bollywood stars like Amitabh Bachchan, Juhi Chawla, Raveena Tondon and some character artists of Indian Cinema have been beautifully utilized for this purpose but despite making big stars act in these campaigns they have surprisingly low viewership which is highly disappointing.

For example an appeal for keeping distance between children has been made by the super star Amitabh Bachchan in a family planning campaign by National Rural Health Mission Published on Feb 17, 2011 is having 5,004 views and 11 likes⁸ till 9 June 2019. This data is quite disappointing. Searching Amitabh Bachchan on the same date on YouTube gives first video of him which is a spiritual song by him having 45,178,669 (45 Million) views⁹. This shows that even a star like Amitabh Bachchan is unable to attract attention of public

towards this serious issue of India. It also shows that people of India are least aware and interested in these campaigns. It also questions the vision, tools and techniques which have been used to make these campaigns popular on YouTube.

Let's talk about another female star Juhi Chawla whose conversation on Maternal/Child Health by National Rural Health Mission gathered 3,196 views till 9 June 2019 whereas its publication date was 17th February 2011¹⁰. After watching 300 Family Planning Campaigns it has become clear that even presence of big stars from Bollywood in some of them, is not able to enhance viewership of these campaigns.

Review of Family Planning Campaigns incorporating Music, Songs and Drama

Almost all the campaigns are having background music but here those campaigns have been analysed where music has not only been used as a background element but also as a main element and in most of the cases with songs. For example a musical campaign was launched related to the preparations required for birth - 'When there's good news, tie the knots' by BBC Media Action in November 2014¹¹. Though some good character artists acted in the campaign still its reach was very much limited. On 9th June 2019 the campaign had only 1,008 views with 3 likes. Music, songs and laughter are considered strong elements for seeking public attention but in the above case they have not played such role.

Let's discuss another example with music, songs and even drama too, which is on PPIUCD and got published by Collective Art in August 2014 having 8,039 views and 35 likes on 9th June 2019. Its duration was of 13 minutes and 50 seconds¹². In a different example Suvarna Tiwari is singing a popular folk song for Family Planning which is again having very less views (1,063) with 20 likes on 9th June 2019. This video was published by Suvarna Tiwari in October 2017¹³.

Review of Family Planning Campaigns incorporating Animation

Here the campaigns with animation as their major element have been considered; let's understand with the help of an example- Family Planning song 'Pati Patni Karein Vichar, Swasth Nari Swasth Parivar' got published in February 2011 by Johns Hopkins CCP which is having 21,570 views on 9 June 2019 with 47 likes¹⁴. Another Family Planning animation video published by Doctor Hverin in May 2012 got 293,155 views and 717 likes till 9 June 2019. This video was produced by Walt Disney Production for the Populations Council¹⁵. The above data shows that views in the case of animated videos have increased manifold though the duration of second video

villages", Population Studies, 50: 187-201, doi: 10.1080/0032472031000149296, JSTOR 2174910

⁸<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mWn63nuxYZQ>

⁹<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H9tWRGxuKTW>

¹⁰<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TSbIXNpbu0>

¹¹<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Odyv1M4XN4>

¹²<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SOEVKdCnzfo>

¹³<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=USk7TQh8Pv8>

¹⁴https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u6s0ANy_zrY

¹⁵<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t2DkiceqzmzU>

was 10 minutes 21 seconds which is approximately 10 times of the other videos.

Analysis

Views Vs Subscribers/ Celebrities/ Music and Drama/ Animation

Family Planning Campaigns in India are mostly sponsored by Government of India¹⁶. Videos on YouTube are published mostly by IHBP India (397 Subscribers), Johns Hopkins CCP (4,718 Subscribers), BBC Media Action (7,343 Subscriber), Doctor Hver (95Subscriber) or by some channels of individuals like Monica Bakshi (63Subscribers), Suvarna Tiwari (7,753 Subscribers). While doing analysis of above data it has been established that there is not any relationship between the number of the subscribers of a particular channel and the views got by the video. YouTube Channel BBC Media Action is having 7,343 subscribers but the video published by this channel described above is having only 1,008 views in 4.5 years whereas another channel Doctor Hver having only 95 subscribers on 9th June, 2019 has 293,155 views in 7 years.

Views Vs Celebrities/Music and Drama have already been discussed above and it has been found that views are not getting affected by these variables.

Views Vs Animation showed dramatically positive results. Channels having even very less number of subscribers also got a big number of views if video contains animation. These facts have already been examined in above paragraphs.

Views Vs Video Dramas of comparatively long duration

While reviewing it was found that videos of longer durations are having comparatively better views. For example a video titled, "Health Phone™: Spacing methods: Family planning - effective way of ensuring a healthy and happy family" had 2,038,035 views with 3 thousand like and 83 thousand subscribers on 9th June 2019. This video was published by Health Phone in August 2013¹⁷. The duration of this video is more than 11 minutes.

Another video drama titled "India: Urban Health Initiative (UHI) video on Postpartum Family Planning" which was published by Johns Hopkins CCP had 404,269 views with 520 likes and 4.7 thousand subscribers on 9th June 2019. This video got published in March 2014. The duration of above video is about eight minutes¹⁸.

Conclusion

After reviewing these videos some shocking facts have come into existence which present the real picture of the success of

promotional videos related to this ambitious campaign of government of India named family planning.

Poor quality of production- Mostly the videos have poor production quality. When we talk about production it includes pre-production, production and post production. There are many drawbacks observed at all the three stages. Pre-production starts with conceiving the core idea and writing the script for the same. After reviewing the videos it is quite clear that sometimes the ideas or sometimes the scripts are not interesting at all. The scripts are devoid of the basic elements like punch line and appropriate dialogues. The technological aspect of the production is substandard. No visual effect has been seen while reviewing these videos. In some videos nice lyrics and music have been used with melodious songs but no experiment has been done with sound even in this era of Dolby Digital.

Casual approach towards titles- While watching YouTube, viewers search videos by typing some key words. This fact has been completely ignored while giving title to the videos related to Family Planning Campaigns. These videos have comparatively long and unattractive titles, that too without appropriate keywords. Hence if good viewership is required this area must be taken care.

Poor selection of thumbnails – Thumbnails of videos are just like the cover pages of magazines. It must be capable to seek attention of viewers. Videos related to Family Planning Campaigns have been seen with monotonous thumbnails unable to attract a good viewership. Some thumbnails are not even sinking with the inner content.

Longer duration better viewership - It has been reviewed that the dramatic presentation of the issues related to Family Planning having longer duration is capable to attract a good number of views. It conveys that the audience watching videos related to family planning are interested in watching long videos if the content is informative and entertaining. A video on menstrual hygiene titled "Health Phone™: Menstrual Hygiene: Hygiene is very important during menstruation" by UNICEF has 5,541,066 views and 3 thousand likes on 9th June 2019. Its duration is more than 12 minutes¹⁹. This fact shows that the viewers watching Family Planning videos are different in nature as they want complete information regarding the topic. Promotional videos and advertisements of short durations are quite popular and are used in most of the cases but in the case of Family Planning after reviewing 300 videos this surprising fact has come into existence that videos of longer duration are able to attract more views if they have good production quality.

Lack of Strategy, Focus and Will- Family planning has been an ambitious project of the government of India. Number of TV and radio spots have been developed and aired across the nation for years. Many new spots have been made by CCP addressing reproductive health, following research and using multiple creative approaches which include celebrities,

¹⁶Rabindra Nath Pati 2003. Socio-Cultural dimensions of reproductive child health. APH Publishing P 51 ISBN 978-81-7648-510-4.

¹⁷<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GmPP2qjtEZ4&t=584s>

¹⁸<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yKv5Oby2FAG>

¹⁹https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q3_XHews0Js

cultural and traditional facts but still it is not competing with the rapidly changing social structures, beliefs and life style. The new spots are devoid of the required change and innovations.

YouTube is altogether a different medium; the spots made for TV cannot work here. There is an immediate need related to specific production for YouTube exclusively, keeping in view the audience using YouTube. Our country's telecommunication network is the second largest in the world as far as the number of subscribers for both land line and mobile phones are concerned. As on 31st March 2018 the number of subscribers is 1.206 billion²⁰. Now the question arises that how many spots or videos are being produced keeping in mind this fact that more than 80% videos on YouTube are being watched on mobile.

Negligible Role of YouTube in spreading awareness about Family Planning-

In this era of Social Media where videos are the most popular way to connect with the mass we may expect a good reach to the target audience through YouTube but in the case of Family Planning Campaigns the result is very much disappointing. YouTube is the most popular way to make any video viral means to spread that to a larger audience within no time but in the case of videos related to Family Planning the views are too less to relish even in 5 to 6 years of time. Hence the role of YouTube in spreading awareness about reproductive health is minimal and has not been making any significant difference in its overall awareness. This conclusion of the current research paper is really disheartening. It is a matter of big debate that in a country like India where the video of Priya Prakash Varrier gets viral overnight gathering millions of views, the videos on reproductive health of women are not getting even few thousand views in many years. Now the biggest question is that why the Family Planning Campaigns are not able to exploit this medium of extraordinary potential in the benefit of common woman. To exploit this medium of high potential for the well-being of Indian Women of reproductive age group following recommendations are being given.

Recommendations:-

1. To increase viewership, videos must be shared and to make them sharable they must be relatable to the common problems of Family Planning. It means an exceptionally professional team should work for developing the basic idea.
2. To increase reach of Family Planning videos they must be highly involving and interactive. The videos must contain answers of the questions related to the common as well as crucial problems of Family Planning.
3. To make the Family Planning videos popular the channels publishing them must maintain consistency in several

senses like continuous publication of videos, time and date or day of publication may be fixed. The channels publishing videos related to Family Planning must stick to its genre.

4. Family Planning videos and the channels publishing them must understand their target audience. The content, language, ambiance and outfits used in videos must be chosen keeping in mind the choice of the target audience.
5. YouTube is a search engine which helps searching the desired content with the help of key words or trends related to the topic so this fact should be kept in mind while giving title to the videos and it must be ensured that the title should incorporate keywords essentially.
6. Quality of production should be improved with better scripts, artists, music and by using latest technologies related to video production.
7. Attractive thumbnails should be selected or created to make the cover page of the videos attractive and irresistible. Innovative approach should be adopted while creating video content for Family Planning because audience is changing rapidly. Newer generation is coming in the realm of Family Planning. Their need may be same but their choices and approaches are totally different. Hence the video content must be prepared keeping posterity in mind.
8. To increase viewership collaboration can be done with such channels which are producing same type of stuff and having a good number of subscribers.
9. It has been seen while reviewing Family Planning videos that animated content has bigger fan following so animation technology can be utilized more judiciously while producing videos.
10. Viewers seeking videos on Family Planning actually searching for some very specific and fruitful information hence videos must incorporate some specific information based on research. The content must be medically approved and it must look authentic.
11. At last there is an earnest need to understand the following three major points:-
 - (i) YouTube has an immense potential as a medium of communication as its audience is bigger than China and in India it is increasing by leaps and bounds.
 - (ii) Family Planning and Reproductive Health are profoundly interrelated and there is a big need of the effective dissemination of the messages related to both in our country as even in 21st century a huge population of Indian women is devoid of the basic knowledge of reproductive health.
 - (iii) There is an unprecedented rise in the use of mobile and internet services by Indian Women.
 Keeping all the above stated points in mind there is a need to balance these factors while creating videos of Family Planning for YouTube.

²⁰“Trai Telecom Subscription Data as on 31st March 2018”(PDF). TRAI. Retrieved 24 May 2018