

# Bollywood Celebrities' role in promoting goods of Social Change in India

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## Abstract

In India social issues based upon hygiene, personal health, maternal & child health, smoking and tobacco etc have always been a main agenda of the central and state governments of all the times. Therefore, a huge & incremental chunk of annual government budget is devoted to them every year. The present government is also spending more on advertisements and campaigns against some of the social issues; even in some of these campaigns, the costs involved are higher than some of the ministries' budgets outlays. This paper will be in the form of research essay where the main focus of the research questions will be on the Bollywood Celebrity's role in eradicating these social issues in the country. Moreover, it will also look into the various issues related with the Bollywood celebrity based social advertisements and campaigns.

**Keywords:** bollywood, celebrity, social Issues, advertisement, promotion

## Introduction

In India the Bollywood celebrities are considered to be the highly influential people whose actions and decisions are watched and often emulated by wide audiences, even it is found that the public worships them just like the other religious Idols. As an old adage goes "With success comes not only money, but also a responsibility towards the society", while a lot of our Bollywood celebrities are doing well financially, only a few realize their responsibility and working towards the betterment of better society. Even the B-town Celebrities have a lot of influence on the general public of the country because of the fact that they have a huge onscreen presence, it makes it easier for them to use it and put it to good use and same can be used a plus point by the Indian Government to use them for social advertisement campaign. In India, Bollywood celebrities are involved in the various issues and campaigns of social change endorsed by the government. For example, the famous Bollywood celebrities like **Amitabh Bachchan** is associated with

Polio eradication campaign and the campaign against open defecation and was also the face of 'Save Our Tigers' campaign in the country, Similarly, celebrities **Shilpa Shetty** is associated with the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, **Vidya Balan** is associated with safe drinking water and sanitation campaigns, and also campaigned for World Wildlife Fund's Earth Hour campaign, **Aamir Khan** was a brand ambassador of Incredible India tourism campaign where the advertisements focused on the safety of foreign tourists in the country, **Akshay Kumar** is featured in the social advertisement against cigarette smoking and women hygiene during menstruation. These are the few examples, from the recent advertisements.

### Review of literature

Ranjbarian, Shekarchizade & Momeni (2010) in their study agreed that the advertisement is the action that persuades individuals of any particular market to buy services and product. Through different ways the advertisement message can be spread like TV ads, radio publicity, print promotion, online advertising, billboard marketing, in-store advertise, WOM advertising, and endorsement. Now the question arises that which category of promotion is best? The best nature of advertisement depends on the type of industry or firm and its necessities and desires. McCracken (1989) found that celebrities endorse characterized an effective way of transferring the meaning to the underlying brands. The common conviction of the marketers is that there is a significant and huge impact of those advertisements, which are endorsed by the famous celebrities comparably with the non-endorsed celebrities. Today the mass media are flooded through descriptions of along with information concerning superstars, and because of a consequence, celebrities have high repute, distinctive traits, and fascinating descriptions according to the community's opinion (Giles 2000; Cracken 1989). Choudhury A.H. & Mukherjee K. (2014) found that Celebrity endorsement creates a favorable and positive impact on recall and thereby on the consumers' purchase decision. They indicated that both the male and female are highly positive towards celebrity perception and sensitive to the celebrity advertisements. Manjusha & Segar V (2013) focused on impact of celebrity endorsements on consumers purchase intentions and overall brand. They disclosed impressive insights into the topic which examines differences between endorsements with celebrities.

## Research Methodology

This study used the research questions that were developed to answer gaps as well as make connections using the existing literature on the topic of Bollywood celebrities and social advertisement Campaigns. Each question was created after researching information on the said topic in order to acquire information and data from public and literature available.

The research will be based on qualitative enquiry of the underlying research problem and thus will be presented in the forms of paragraphs based on the analysis of empirical information available. The research questions which will lead the paragraphs are as follow:

1. *What are the factors which affect the Bollywood celebrity based social advertisement in the country?*
2. *How the Bollywood celebrities in the campaigns of promoting social reforms/ eradicating social evils are associated with different theories and mechanisms?*
3. *What are the best practices for using Bollywood celebrities for social change that government can concentrate upon?*

## Discussion and Findings of Research

**First question- What are the factors which affect the Bollywood celebrity based social advertisement in the country?**

The success of social advertisement in India completely depend upon the factors discussed below, these factors individually or in combination plays a prominent role in the success of social advertisement.

- a) **Communication channel-** Audiovisual (television/film), print, radio, and social media will have different effects, for example the celebrities who have well established image and a recognizable voice will can be effective on the Radio medium where the face of celebrity is not visible. For example, Amitabh Bachhan is having a well established voice tone thus can be used in Radio advertisement as well.

- b) **Time period-** The Celebrities faces the phases of popularity from one time to another thus their impression may not be same all their life. For example, Amitabh Bachchan was not very popular in his earlier phase of Film Industry but today he is the most influential Bollywood celebrity. Even not only the use of celebrity but also suitability of the advertisement also plays a vital role. For instance, the social advertisement stating the benefits of rain water harvesting will be beneficial just before the season's outbreak.
- c) **Condition/Risk type-** given people often have strong prior perceptions, the impact of celebrities may not only be due to their influence alone, but also the public's existing views about particular conditions and risks related with the social cause thus the study may have overlapping results. For example, people already know about the harmful effects of tobacco, and even some of them wanted to get rid of this habit, thus if the social advertisement will be based on delivering the ways and information regarding the help centers, it would act as a savior and support to already existing perceptual base.
- d) **Demographics-** Certain populations may be more susceptible to celebrity influence than others, on the basis of age, culture, education, gender, or socioeconomic status. To epitomize, the advertisement where the youngsters are the target audiences must have a young celebrity of that time.
- e) **Familiarity:** The Effect may vary from one who is related with the given social message and those who are not directly. For example, those whose family member has suffered due to smoking can relate and feel more connection with advertisements against smoking.
- f) **Use of fear and warning;** The social advertisements are generally incorporated the warning or fear to change the undesirable social behavior of the masses. For example the advertisement of coconut breaking with a hammer and relating the same to the head without helmet may have more long lasting effect.

**Second question- How the Bollywood celebrities in the campaigns of promoting social reforms/eradicating social evils are associated with different theories and mechanisms?**

Below mentioned are the fourteen mechanisms explaining celebrity influences recreated and developed as per the underlying research topic originally developed by Hoffman SJ, Tan C. Biological, psychological and social processes that explain celebrities' influence.

Discipline	Mechanism	Meaning	Description
<b>Economics</b>	1) Signals	Related with competitors	The counter propaganda is absent in case of many social advertisements, Thus the social advertisements need not to worry about any competitors
	2) Herd behavior	Following what others are doing	The social advertisements can hardly generate the herd effect as the social evils are relatively takes time in changing
<b>Marketing</b>	3) Meaning transfer	Doing what celebrities are doing	The celebrities in Social generally give message on right doing , e.g prohibition to use the cigarette, therefore, people can celebrities are saying rather than doing
	4) Source credibility	Personal experiences are referred	The celebrities may use warnings or fear to warn the public, e.g. people who are suffering from oral cancer as a result of tobacco use can be used as a bad personal experience
	5) Halo effect	Success of celebrity is associated with product	The celebrity's social image can help in improving his/ her PR at the same time of promoting the social change
<b>Neuroscience</b>	6) Neural mechanisms of meaning transfer	Associating the celebrity while purchasing product	The Celebrity acts as an influential advisor, therefore , people may consider his advice before using the harmful product, or conducting socially unacceptable behavior
	7) Neuropsychology of credibility	Recognition of the product and memory formation	Shaming or fear can generate the recall effect e.g. the advertisement raiding the people who are defecating in open may leave a lasting impact on the public who used to defecate in open
<b>Psychology</b>	8) Classical conditioning	Positive responses of celebrities that people have	The celebrities generally build their image through their work, e.g Amir Khan has build a positive image while working in the movies against social evils or producing such programs
	9) Self-conception	Advise by the celebrities based upon perception of people	Celebrities own an image where there suggestions in some of the cases are perceived to be positive, e.g old aged female celebrity's message on maternal health can last a long and credible impression on females

	10) Cognitive dissonance	Effect of celebrity on unconscious minds of people	Because the celebrity images are already known to the public thus their social message may help in reaching out to the audiences easily
	11) Attachment	Celebrities help the people with low self esteem	Celebrity based social advertisement helps in improving the social habits of people
<b>Sociology</b>	12) Social networks	Celebrities based advertisements spread quickly	The people share social messages more frequently on the social media platforms
	13) Commodification and social capital	Celebrities are followed for the development of better social image	Most of the Social advertisements use celebrities in it just in order to ensure the usefulness of the campaign to full extend
	14) Social constructivism	Celebrity advise may alter the previously formed perception of the people	Bollywood celebrities because of being on the epitome of popularity keeps the potential of altering the older perceptions of the public

**Third Question- What are the best practices for using Bollywood celebrities for social change that government can concentrate upon?**

- 1. Clear Campaign objective:** The Objectives of campaign must be clear , Like the social advertisement campaign target the health of mothers, it should enlist and showcase all the necessary elements of the maternal health.
- 2. Not to overlook the most important Social Goals:** There are always some obvious goals of social policies according to the needs of country such as in case of India the sanitation and traffic are the major issues because of large rural and illiterate people and large population respectively, where the social message cannot be missed out.
- 3. Careful Selection of Platforms:** The careful selection of platform means the reach of the social campaign, like in case the message is to target the rural public the mediums can preferably be DD National and Pansaar Bharti.

4. **Continual refresh is necessary:** There are no of instances where the social advertisements are not changed with the passage of time, for example the consumers awareness campaigns must be changed according to the challenges faced by the consumers.
5. **Providing the solutions:** The social advertisements should not be the alarms only, rather should direct the public towards the solutions, for example the advertisement against open defecation must include the government grant for making toilets in it, so that the public must get direction regarding the issue.
6. **Should accompany a valid legislature:** It is generally found that some of the social advertisements merely become advice, the lawful endorsement of the offenders of prohibited behaviors must be accompanied with such ads.
7. **Balanced approach for social welfare is necessary:** The issues of under-reaction and over-reactions are always associated with the Social advertisements campaigns, for instance every rebuke to mend the child's behavior must not be looked as child abuse. So the social advertisement must be designed in a balanced way.
8. **The use of Social Media platforms is important to reach masses these days:** The social advertisements are considered to be the one which always target at reaching out the masses, so that the message can deliver the maximum value. Some of the popular social media platforms that can be used are as follow:



- a) Facebook
- b) Instagram
- c) Twitter
- d) LinkedIn
- e) Snapchat
- f) Pinterest

## Conclusion

Indian movie celebrities are considered a part of a glamorous world that is far removed from harsh realities of daily life. Often, we get an illusion that these celebrities are way beyond the problems faced by common man and pay no heed in social issues. However, there are a few celebrities who have tried to break this stereotype and are playing a vital role in shaping our society to make it a better place to live in. These celebrities are showing that there are better reasons to follow them, apart from their on-screen work. Due to their work, it has become trendy for other Indian movie celebrities to lend their time for various pressing social issues. The government in India is spending huge public funds on such advertisements thus a careful selection and best execution of celebrity endorsement is a compulsory affair.

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