CHAPTER-4
MEDIA IN ACTION
With ever increasing pace of technology, media is also becoming more and more advance. The need for developing mass media to the changing demands for the future is to be addressed quickly. Nowadays messages communicated through modern means of media reach to the public easily and also understood by them. With the advent of cyber technology, people are thronging towards it. Today’s world believes on visuals added with sound i.e. Television, which proved to be the most innovative mass media ever invented. Apart from it Radio, and for the literate population Newspapers contribute greatly to the imparting of messages of public interest. In this chapter I try to give an insight into the activities of the different media and the kind role they are playing for trying to spread awareness about HIV/AIDS.

**Television**

National television known as Doordarshan in India is the world’s largest television network with 23 channels and 1314 transmitters dotting the country. Besides Doordarshan there are over 150 multilingual private satellite television channels offering news, general entertainment, movies, music and so on to over 87% of Indian population. Besides Hindi and English telecast covers 15 other Indian languages. TV in India has already been used to offer HIV/AIDS education in the form of serials, quizzes, advertisements and awareness programmes.

In a survey carried out in India more than 70% of respondents said they had received their information about HIV/AIDS from TV.

To be effective, messaging about HIV/AIDS must be both educational and entertaining. These two goals should be mutually exclusive. A number of programmes have served to inform their audiences about the virus, while at the same time achieving market success. Doordarshan, National AIDS Control Organisation (NACO) and BBC World Service Trust (the international development arm of British
Broadcasting Corporation) joined together in 2002 to launch the country’s first ever mass media campaign to increase HIV/AIDS awareness. The campaign has been largely based on education through entertainment with two key strands being the popular interactive detective series Jasoos Vijay and the award winning weekly reality youth show ‘Haath se Haath Mila’.

Both programmes have proved popular with audiences and Jasoos Vijay was voted ‘Best Thriller Series’ in the prestigious Indian Television Awards, 2003. Viewers are therefore given information about the virus and how to protect themselves while watching an enjoyable programme at the same time. For e.g., according to an independent survey, 85% of respondents to the campaign said they had learned something new and almost a third said they had discussed messages with the friends.

In Other Countries

Spreading awareness and educating the masses through TV about HIV/AIDS is also playing an important role in other parts of the world like in Brazil, the extraordinarily popular ‘telenova’ or television soap. The TV Globo Company placed an HIV themed serial at the heart of its programmes schedule, ‘Malhacao’ (working out) dealing with issues facing young people in Brazil. Captured huge audiences when its teenage protagonist learned that she was HIV positive. The move by the Brazilian government to begin distribution of free anti retroviral drugs was also showed in Malhacao’s storyline. One such programme in Nicaragua is ‘Sexto Sentido’ (sixth sense), it is hard hitting ‘social soap opera’ that tackle issues such as sexuality, rape and domestic violence. It is a highly popular show and has a reach to about 80% of the population. It is a good programme to spread awareness among the masses. There are numerous examples of other programmes around the world that have echoed this success. The NHK, the national television network in Japan, aired a serial
called ‘Kamisama Mo Suckoshidake (please god just little more time) that revolved around a schoolgirl who was HIV infected after becoming a sex worker. During the programme’s run, the number of HIV tests and request for counseling became more than doubled in Japan.

In China, its National TV, CCTV and PCI (Population Communication International) and other several partners have brought the soap opera ‘Bai Xing’ (ordinary people) to million of viewers. They have been able to follow the struggles of Luye and her family as they tackle many issues, not least of which are the problems by HIV/AIDS. Bai Xing has proved to be a popular and award winning show. Various media organisations including leading entertainment, music and news channels of the country have spreading HIV/AIDS awareness on their agenda.

**MTV India**

Heroes project is partnering with MTV India to incorporate HIV/AIDS messaging in their programmes as air Heroes Public Service Announcement (PSA’s). The project will also provide informational material and hold special events together to raise awareness among Indian youth. A recent example of this was the Heroes Project stall at MTV India’s biggest flagship award event-MTV IMMIES (Indian Music excellence Awards, 2004), where the team behind the film ‘Phir milenge’, hindi cinema’s first mainstream movie in the subject of HIV/AIDS.

**NDTV**

The NDTV and Heroes Project association focuses on HIV/AIDS related news programming. NDTV’s features and debate shows provide an ideal platform for open discussion on issues surrounding HIV/AIDS. Recently as a part of its association with Heroes Project NDTV ran
HIV/AIDS focused shows on ‘You decide The ‘X’ factor and Dr. NDTV in addition to special stories on the subject\textsuperscript{11}.

**SET India**

Being a network of entertainment channels, Sony Entertainment (SET) India believes that AIDS education can be entertaining. Sony TV is committed to embedding relevant HIV/AIDS messages into storylines of its most popular programmes, such as the Youth based programme ‘Indian Idol’, the hospital based ‘Ayushman’ and detective thriller ‘CID’. Working with Heroes Project, these shows have introduce celebrities and elements of drama to influence audiences. Like for e.g. the ‘Indian Idol’ youth icons will alert other teens about the risks of HIV/AIDS. SET India also committed substantial free airtime for PSA’s across its various channels\textsuperscript{12}.

**STAR India**

In July, 2004, Heroes Project launched its first public awareness campaign with Star Television Network. Star India has provided the project with approx. Rs.214 million worth of free airtime across its various channels annually cover a three year period. Through Star TV HIV/AIDS messages can not only be disseminated to a wide base of audiences close to million people, but also the focused reach of niche channels such as Channel V or Star Movies provides an opportunity to reach specific groups such as youth and housewives\textsuperscript{13}.

**SUN Network**

One of the foremost channels of South India both in news and entertainment industry. The network has committed a sustained mass media campaign that will play a critical role in influencing social attitudes and behaviours towards HIV/AIDS in southern part of India. A strong programming mix by the SUN Network includes prime time
programming, developing a new celebrity based show, an interactive health show and Public Service Announcement (PSA) promotion. SUN has offered to engage their most popular programmes such as ‘Metti Oil’ and ‘Anna Malai’ in delivering responsible messages to their audience. They have committed 5-6 episodes of their call-in health show and a women based show, Magalir Mattum’ to get out appropriate advice.\(^1\)

**Zee Network**

One of the biggest TV networks in India with wide viewership all over the country of over 500 million. With its numerous entertainment and news channels, the network plans to weave in HIV/AIDS awareness messages into its top programmes such as ‘Astitva’ and musical shows like ‘Sa Re Ga Ma Pa’ and ‘Antakshari’. Zee Networks through its regional channels under the Alpha brand will help in reaching viewers in smaller towns and cities also.\(^2\)

The number of private TV channels has increased from none in 1990 to more than 215 in 2010. Entertainment constitutes about 60% of the total programme content, even though some channels such as Star Plus follow CNN’s example in delivering ‘news on the hour, every hour’. News and education constitute a mere 15% and 9.6% of the programme content.\(^3\)

However in a bid to give themselves a halo of social responsibility, some channels broadcast programmes with a veneer of public interest, programmes like soaps that incorporate socially relevant themes such as women’s education and empowerment, interactive talk shows on whether smoking should be banned and open forums with government representatives responding to audience queries on human rights abuses or consumer rights.\(^4\)

An emerging trend that also reflects the current programme focus of development agencies is the targeting specific segments of the
audience, in particular young adults (children and youth in the age of 10-29 years constitute about 40% of the population). Urban middle to upper class youth especially constitutes a key target group for private channels. This section of the social order is the most responsible as it is considered to be the future prospect of the country. Music channel such as MTV and Channel V, which rank among the top ten favourite channels, features VJ’s who are popular role models for a young generation. Cashing in on this trend, UNAIDS, India initiated in 1996, a collaboration with channel V for an on air and on-ground camping for HIV/AIDS awareness. The collaboration includes training and sensitisation of VJ’s on issues relating to HIV/AIDS. In another effort, The Ford Foundation, India funded a BBC training programme for Radio and TV, producers on reproductive and sexual health.

Among the electronic media, TV has played a vital role in achieving current levels of knowledge about AIDS, quantified in our analysis using our novel measures of effectiveness and independent effect. Increasing access to could be anticipated to provide further gains in AIDS awareness among women. However a study married urban women showed how messages obtained from TV are diffused into conversation and discussion with social networks; typically after seeing something about AIDS on TV discussion with husbands was mainly in terms of a social phenomenon rather than personal perceptions of risk. Thus necessary dissemination of knowledge does not automatically translate into conversations with the sexual partner about personal risks. Social relations and gender dynamics in rural areas provide additional barriers to any such open discussion. There are even some interpersonal hypothesis of what would have happened without TV which indicates that knowledge levels would have been lower. However, there are some analysis shows that despite watching TV regularly substantial numbers of
rural and urban women had not gained knowledge of AIDS as a result. According to the National Readership Survey, there were 383.6 million TV viewers in 2002, a figure which has increased to some 500 million according to the latest estimates and with every prospect of it becoming the prime medium in rural India. Clearly, TV based information strategies are of considerable importance in this context.

In addition to the TV programmes ‘Jasoos Vijay’ and ‘Haath se Haath Mila’, nine one minute TV spots were produced via TV stations in New Delhi, Jaipur and Lucknow. These spots were broadcast several times in a day for the duration of the campaign. These TV spots used humour, music and entertaining narratives to convey messages about 1) the myths and misconceptions regarding routes of HIV transmission, 2) the mistaken beliefs about living with HIV/AIDS, 3) methods for preventing HIV infection (for e.g. using condoms), 4) the need for open discussion.

A weekly health programme on Doordarshan has won an award for the best communication strategy on HIV/AIDS. The programme ‘Kalyani’ was selected by the Asian Media Information Communication Centre (AMICC), Singapore as the best communication strategy on HIV/AIDS from India for a project titled ‘HIV/AIDS prevention in Asia: Communicating the message’. ‘Kalyani’ which means benediction from goddess is broadcast in 9 states creating health awareness about malaria, tuberculosis, reproductive health issues, tobacco, alcohol use, sanitation and HIV/AIDS. All the programmes have a common theme but each state produces it independently adding local context and colour. ‘Kalyani’ is produced in partnership with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and the NACO.

This is the first time in Indian TV industry’s history that a programme enjoys the same TRP (Television Rating Point) as news.
programme aired by Doordarshan’s regional stations and rake in rich benefits for the public broadcaster.23

Keeping in mind both the aspects of educating and entertaining, a TV drama ‘Nivedeta’ was aired on Doordarshan. It is a drama about a young woman named Nivedeta24 whose husband is unfaithful to her. It is not the run of the mill soap operas. She meets up with Sushila who displays all the signs of HIV infection. Nivedeta learns that Sushila has contracted it from her husband. She encourages Sushila to go in for testing. At the end of the episode, viewers watch a short segment with celebrities endorsing HIV test, displaying numbers for helplines and offering general precautions. The serial is of 26 episodes and uses the model of ‘education as entertainment’ to tell a story about the HIV/AIDS. The serial is broadcast locally in Andhra Pradesh via Doordarshan. It was picked from the education oriented soap operas made in South America like ‘Simplemente Maria’ and one of the first soaps in the country ‘Hum Log’25. The programme is the culmination of three years of primary and secondary research and pre testing. To test the programme, the production team developed an audiovisual for others to watch. Various discussions with groups working in HIV/AIDS, gender discrimination and trafficking in Andhra Pradesh resulted in some minor adjustments. With Andhra Pradesh is ranked among the country’s HIV prevalence need for educating the masses about AIDS is felt more and that’s why whole concept of Nivedeta was conceived.

There has been a remarkable increase in the TV viewing in the past 10 years reflecting rising income levels and improved power distribution. People are watching films. Sports and serials with a very few programmes were shown on factual and educational background on Doordarshan, which dominates all India TV audience.
In a survey conducted by the BBC World Service Trust, it is found out that Doordarshan with its all India reach (excluding metropolitan cities) is very encouraging. This is shown through simplest measure of awareness—having heard of HIV/AIDS. All across India, Doordarshan viewers have significantly higher level of awareness than those who don’t watch. Staggering 94% of viewers of Doordarshan have heard of AIDS and 77% know that they can protect themselves from this deadly virus by regular use of condom. The figures for those only viewing other channels are 83% and 63% and for those with no TV access, only 49% is a scary figure, having heard of AIDS and just 30% know the value of condom.

The enhancement the awareness about Parent-to-Child transmission, about PPTCT and its activities to trigger behaviour change among targeted segments. Directorate of Audiovisual Publicity (DAVP) designed, developed and executed an advertisement through electronic media. DAVP conducted this campaign on behalf of NACO in three states viz. Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Manipur. Mass media campaign around the theme of PPTCT was implemented in March-April, 2006 and consisted of five video clips repeatedly shown on TV. A total of 15 TV channels were used to transmit the messages related to AIDS. A field based study was carried out during the month of February-April, 2006 to assess the impact of the media campaign on PPTCT and to draw lessons for the future. A team of 24 researchers gathered primary data from 2522 respondents in the field. 3 states, 6 districts, 12 blocks, 6 municipalities and 48 villages were covered during the sample survey.

The field survey was carried out to capture the media consumption habits of the target audience, their awareness levels about HIV/AIDS in general and PPTCT in particular, their attitudes and behaviours related to utilization of PPTCT services was also captured during the survey. A structured questionnaire was designed and developed under the guidance
and approval of NACO. The government media like Doordarshan are unmatched in their reach across all the states. It is been maximum people and therefore, it will be worthwhile to back it as medium. After this SUN TV in Tamil Nadu and Star Vijay in Maharashtra are effective, whereas Gemini TV does not find favour to a great degree. ETV Marathi and Zee Marathi can at best supplement the effect that an advertisement in Doordarshan can create. As far as our target audience in concerned these can not replace Doordarshan for some years because of its wide reach.

The survey further found that TV is the most effective medium to communicate social messages. The study finding indicates that on all the parameters, it is those respondents who have been exposed to TV advertisement whose awareness knowledge are high.

**Radio**

One of the basic elements of Radio is its reach, it has far more recipients than any other media. The communication through this medium of media is considered to play an important role in imparting any message. Radio broadcast, both for information and education is fairly old in India. Expansion of radio transmission has been rapid. The radio has immense reach in India and radio listening still remains an important source of information for a large number of listeners particularly in rural India.

The biggest broadcaster in India, All India Radio (AIR) has the biggest listenership and a reach of about 99.14% throughout India.

All India Radio, Jaipur developed and aired a programme on HIV/AIDS which won the prestigious ABU prize on HIV/AIDS awareness. The programme was named ‘Janile janiba’ (know and win) in local Rajasthani language. The programme was based on the interviews of 14 HIV positive persons, the objective of the programme was to dispel the fear and stigma attached to HIV. A similar kind of programme (docu-
drama) is being broadcast in the same title in ALL India Radio, Jaipur for the tribal community of Koraput district of Orissa in their own 'desia' dialect which is sponsored by Orissa State AIDS control Society.31

In a bid to mobilize general audience's attention and for the common good of the masses. In its continuous endeavour to contribute to society, Radio City 91.1 FM, it is India's premier Radio network reach out to the listeners far creating awareness on HIV/AIDS. In a bid to enhance AIDS awareness, the national FM brand is conducting a robust of AIDS awareness campaign which includes community mobilization, fund raising and special programme initiatives.32

The special programming line up across 14 of radio City's FM stations includes the airing of specially packaged informative promos and capsules of small duration busting myths on AIDS along on-air contest testing the listener's health awareness specially about AIDS.

The station's Radio Jockey (RJ) will cover ribbon tagging activities, awareness building camps across their respective cities through live broadcast. The stations will feature a slew of on-show guests starting
right from those living with AIDS, medical experts, state dignitaries and prominent personalities. Starting on the initiative, National Head, Marketing of Radio City Rana Barua, said ‘As a condition looming large on humanity every step towards HIV/AIDS awareness counts. We at the Radio City have always been at the forefront to proactively involve our listeners and jointly contribute to the community we live in. It is very important that people realize that HIV/AIDS awareness can not only help prevent this deadly virus but timely identification can also help expedite the curative process. Radio City through its captivities is trying to create general interest through various community mobilizations and having contributed to the cause of AIDS awareness.

Lucknow’s Radio City 91.1 FM is conducting a week long campaign called ‘AIDS se Jung-Celebrate Life’. This programme is supported by UP AIDS control Society and HIV Global Fund Project of population foundation of joined hand with Radio City.

Vadodra’s Radio City has organised a ‘walk for cause’ rally. The rally is aimed at creating awareness in the public. The rally was whole heartedly supported by the local administration.

Ahmedabad’s radio City is reaching out to enhance AIDS awareness through a ribbon tagging activity. Their RJ’s spend the day interacting with student from different colleges and presented then red ribbons. In its continued efforts to contribute to the society, Radio City is partnering with Gujarat AIDS Control Society to support the Red Ribbon Express, a train with a mission to create awareness about this deadly disease. It has extended its support to this holistic and comprehensive campaign in the nations on going fight against AIDS. Radio City has conceptualised a programme- Radio City cares zindagi zindabad, an awareness campaign offering all encompassing and sustained support to the Red Ribbon Express.
Two Radio spots were conceptualised, designed and developed by NACO/DAVP and were broadcast on All India Radio’s national and various regional stations, Vividh Bharati and 8 stations of private FM channels of the three target states. The FM chosen are Radio City (Mumbai & Bengaluru), Radio Mirchi (Mumbai & Chennai), Suryan FM and Red FM.

Radio Mirchi in association with Heroes Project, the largest non-governmental public service campaign in India and the Satyam Foundation, the corporate social responsibility arm of Satyam Computer services Ltd. Launched a one of a kind month long initiative called ‘HIV pathi therinjikko-AIDS pathi purinjikko’. Spearheaded by Heroes project, the campaign was conceived to dispel myths and misconceptions that prevail in the minds of people 20 years into the epidemic. The purpose of this unique initiative is to address some of the issues directly and provide right answers to questions. This campaign witnesses the coming together of the corporate and NGO’s on the same side on entertaining through radio.

Using a powerful mass media like Radio will be a challenging task. The messages will be disseminated throughout the day addressing issues from care and support to stigma and discrimination. Programmes like quiz initiated in a unique way, a celebrity ask questions about HIV/AIDS dispelling myths and misconception. Later the winners were awarded with T-shirts autographed by the celebrity.

The SUN Networks Suryan FM, one of the most popular Radio channels in South India also taking up activities to for creating awareness about HIV/AIDS. The Radio channel has committed mass media campaign that will play a critical role in influencing social attitudes and behaviours towards HIV/AIDS in South India. A strong programming mix by the Suryan FM includes prime time programming, celebrity based
show on the interactive health show and PSA promotion. Special instructions were handed over to RJ’s for personal intervention in making their programmes more creative, effective and appealing to the masses for dispersing HIV/AIDS awareness.

The number of radio stations has increased from about 100 in 1990 to 231 radio stations of All India Radio and 555 FM stations in 2011. The area covered rises from 84% to 98%. However tremendous reach and the fact that it presents the best option for low cost programming, radio has been treated as a poor relative for over two decades. Listenership has either dropped or reached the zenith. In some cases listenership has risen, although very negligibly, in some urban areas.

Some efforts have been made to use radio for social change as in the case of the state sponsored radio rural forums for agricultural communication in the 1960’s or to promote adult literacy in the 1980’s. In recent times NGO’s have helped broadcast programmes on women and legal rights, emergency contraception and teleserials advocating girl’s education. The increasing devolution of political power initiated through the 73rd and 74th amendment to the constitution in 1988-89 has also set a climate conducive for the empowerment of community Radio and the provision of training to NGO’s and communities to use them as a medium for articulating their concerns.

A key need in India is for local broadcasting that reflects issues of concern to the community. In this regard, some communication experts believe that an increased and accelerated commercialisation of radio will eventually drive down the cost of FM sets, thus facilitating local radio which as a result helps in dissemination of messages at the local level. Creating awareness through local radio stations will benefit in terms of understanding as the messages will be in local dialect/language. The messages will also be according to the local customs and social milieu.
Newspapers

Newspapers are considered to be an important media as it reaches out to educated and learned readers. It is the best media to present a message through a picture or a story. Newspapers evolve from news giving to message carrier in recent times. Different approaches were adopted by the newspapers to tackle the issue of HIV/AIDS.

Two print advertisements were conceptualized, designed and developed by NACO/DAVP and were published in 160 newspapers all over India. The details of newspapers advertisement are as follows:
1. Good news(showing couple)
2. Good news(with two girls)

In line with the current set of priorities of NACO, this communication campaign is aimed at awareness generation as well as behaviour change the (pregnant) women and their family members.

Given that national literacy rates were as low as 56% the limited reach of newspapers and magazines and the distinctively urban educated readership profile. The role of print media has been defined more in terms of information, dissemination and advocacy. The situation in very disturbing, the circulation figures are rapidly increasing as the advertising revenues but this is especially true of English publications, which accounts for 71% of the total ad revenue of members of Indian Newspaper Society.

A key feature of these publications unfortunately is the increasing prevalence of glossy, as friendly and TV based reporting. That the sole trendsetter in this increasing corporatisation of the fourth estate, the Times of India also ranks among 10th top selling newspapers of the world. Given the increasing cost of newsprint and production, the pressure of the market imperatives, newspaper houses have followed the trend of carrying ad friendly pages at the cost of development and health
Leading dailies have over the last few years dropped their sections devoted to development and health. The low literacy rates and high production cost have also obstructed the possibilities of smaller publications that could potentially reflect the concerns of the development sector.

Contributions at Large

Dainik Jagran

To equip its readers with accurate information on HIV/AIDS, Dainik Jagran has committed periodic editorials and advertising space inventory of 4000 sq. cm. The daily wants to increase the in-depth coverage of HIV/AIDS that goes beyond stating bare facts but provoking questions about ‘why’ associated with the disease. Besides reaching out through 25 editions in 8 states, the group plans on the ground events under its forum called ‘Jagran Pahal’ collaborating with Heroes Project. this forum will feature AIDS awareness camps, voluntary checkups etc. at rural centers, in regions where AIDS is on the rise. Apart from this they publish ads and stories which can create an understanding how can we protect our self from this disease.

The Hindustan Times

The newspaper plans to disseminate in-depth information on HIV/AIDS through a sustained media campaign. Besides regular news reports, the media campaign include an interactive weekly column to encourage people to write their queries and concerns about HIV/AIDS. Issues such as safe sex practices, voluntary testing and discrimination against the people living with HIV/AIDS will be discussed in the weekly column. Hindustan Times has announced that it will make AIDS awareness a part of their massive school programme by encouraging the 1200 participating schools which they selected to make safe sex and AIDS awareness a part of their social awareness programmes. It plans to
send out messages encouraging women empowerment across Bihar, a state in which Hindustan, its Hindi publication which is a number one Hindi daily with 80% of the market. The high rate of readership is due to the dominance of Hindi speaking population across the state. In collaboration with the Heroes Project, Hindustan Times has offered to produce an education booklet for women in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, a segment which has the lowest levels of education and access to information of AIDS.

The Hindu

A pioneer in AIDS journalism, The Hindu group is committed to filling gaps in reporting and analysing the problems of HIV/AIDS in India. They propose to incorporate content on HIV/AIDS in their Newspaper In Education (NIE) programme for schools and cross promote this programme in The Hindu’s special feature section ‘young world’. With a focus on women empowerment messages, the group seeks to leverage its various editions and content development power to develop high quality educational resources such as booklets on HIV/AIDS. In addition, The Hindu plans to lend its AIDS journalism expertise for developing regional journalistic capability and in agenda building.

An Effort

Apart from media houses, which publish newspapers there are some are efforts which are working behind the curtain job to create a breed of journalist specialising in providing a greater understanding on HIV/AIDS awareness. The ‘Voice of U.P’ training initiative is part of a series of activities in a comprehensive training package on health and HIV reporting for journalists from Uttar Pradesh. Supported by the Kaiser Family Foundation, the training has been implemented by interviews network with the support of Washington DC based staff. The overall aim of the series is to equip the local media to raise the profile of HIV/AIDS.
and health in U.P in a way that create awareness, help set the social and political agenda and ultimately spur an effective response to public health challenges such as HIV. The Voice of U.P initiative reached 34 reporters with HIV related information and focused on a core group of the six most interested in continuing to report on the topic. More than 50 stories appeared on the issues covered in the training; HIV surveillance, HIV counseling, ethical and legal issues regarding HIV/AIDS, the TB/HIV co-epidemic, access to treatment, preventing mother to child transmission and the works of networks of people living with HIV (PLHIV) in prevention and care.

The journalist from the print media also Muslims Graduated their knowledge and reporting skills on human behaviour, human trafficking, migration and HIV, the links between the gender, reproductive health and HIV in India and upcoming National AIDS programme Phase-3.

Building the commitment of media, owners had to give more quality coverage to HIV/AIDS issues at the Media Summit hosted by Dr. Manmohan Singh. Voice of U.P equipped urban and rural reporters from the state with practical tools to produce sensitive, balanced and accurate reportage on the epidemic.

According to the National Readership Survey (NRS), 2006 “Over the last three years, the number of dailies and magazines had risen and its readership grown to 222 million. Vernacular dailies readership has gone up to 203.6 million while English dailies have at around 210 million. The reach of magazines was 68 million in 2006. Mishra and Agarwal (2007) reported that newspapers are publishing HIV/AIDS issues and articles in regular intervals but they are required to contribute more considering the impact of the killer disease”.

Showing the importance of the print media in AIDS awareness a study was conducted in Gujarat, there were 15 major newspapers in seven
each in English and Gujarati and one in Hindi for analysis for a period from January 2001 to September 2007^7. In this period of time 528 articles were gathered and 210 were analysed. 80 of the 210 articles covered issues of people living with HIV. While professional journalist were authors in 93% of such articles. It was observed that after the studies of some articles are playing a negative role and they are creating confusions in the minds of the readers^8. Newspapers and magazines sometimes publish articles and stories which can produce negative impact on their understanding towards the disease. Print media sometimes gives inappropriate, poor quality and not very often inaccurate coverage to AIDS. It needs to be sensitized to take up the advocacy of AIDS issues.

Internet

The most advanced development in the field of communications is the origination of internet, a web based platform where all the knowledge and information came at one place. The computer is the ultimate junction meeting point of communications. The use of internet for communicating health messages is to create awareness for better of the general populace. Widespread use of internet has made a remarkable change in health information and educating patients and non-patients for chronic illness.

Along with nearly every facet of contemporary life, access to health information has been and continues to be revolutionized by advances in communication technology i.e. information disseminated through internet.

The internet is a powerful medium through which we can communicate, disseminate and gain valuable information regarding any given topic. The internet can play a role in improving health because it provides individuals with opportunities to select information that is most relevant to their needs.
There is a rapid increase of interactive and user friendly internet sites (websites) dedicated to HIV/AIDS. Increased access to health information can educate patients about the prevailing situation of the disease, motivate public to participate in care and creating awareness, evaluate treatment options, foster social support and building effective ways to how cope with the disease.

Health related activities performed online includes searching for illness, fitness information, learning about medications and their interactions and seeking from online medical support groups. The trend towards patients access to and use of the internet as a source of health information is growing with the increase in computer users in urban areas.

The condition in India for internet users is increasingly day by day with more people acquiring computer knowledge. The computer literate population in India is making good use of health related information on the internet. The internet content is becoming more understandable according to the need of the user.

One of the predominant factors that is helping internet users to access more and more information and being educated and consciousness about the disease conditions. The hectic and fast life of the urban metropolitan population doesn’t give much time to read newspapers or watch TV. But internet with its vast used in the offices can be an effective medium and way of imparting informative messages. Some website even sends mail to randomized selected user to give health related information. The condition of HIV/AIDS is becoming grievous in the near future. Therefore the use of internet on the greater scale is much needed.

The Indians are becoming internet savvy. A survey by Internet and Mobile Association of India published in The Times of India(2005) reports that ‘internet penetration has been facilitate by low rates for
broadband connection and introduction of affordable PC’s which enables the common man to overcome the first obstacle of accessing the Net’. The researches world over show that internet has immense potential and is one of the best medium to spread HIV/AIDS information.

There are examples which are helping the cause of spreading awareness through online media. Together with ‘Saadhan (the helpline of Mumbai based NGO, population services), Fropper.com has initiated an online campaign to spread awareness about HIV/AIDS, safe sex and sexually transmitted infections amongst the youth of the country. The focus is on getting the youth came forward and express views on HIV/AIDS as well as clearing common myths and misconceptions about the disease. There were provisions of using the helpline and chat shows, wherein experts from ‘Saadhan’ will chat with members of Fropper.com and provide free counseling on HIV/AIDS⁴⁹.

The internet can be used in various ways to spread HIV/AIDS awareness like photo sharing, video content and experiences. One such initiative was YouTube. Founded in 2005, YouTube has emerged as the world’s most popular online video community allowing millions of people to watch and share original videos. YouTube allows people to easily upload and share video clips on www.youtube.com and across the internet through other websites, mobile devices, blogs and emails. In an effort to embrace non-profit organizations to maximize their outreach through websites, the YouTube Non-profit organization helps organizations connect with their supporters, volunteers and donors without the expensive outreach campaigns.

Many organizations are actively using YouTube for outreach⁵⁰.

The UNICEF has among the most active and vibrant channels working on HIV/AIDS. It has posted numerous video stories, coverage of conferences and awareness videos on the issue. A search of UNICEF
reveals the presence of channels which contain localized content from different countries for their focus areas. The UNICEF India Channel showcases the HIV/AIDS anti-stigma Public Service Announcement created in collaboration with UNAIDS and the International Cricket Council (ICC). UNAIDS is also present on the YouTube with their channel with a few short films for awareness generation which include a music video dedicated to a woman’s fight against the stigma and discrimination and ignorance toward people living with HIV/AIDS.

‘No HIV, No AIDS-Stop the disease’ is a channel dedicated to increase people’s awareness about HIV/AIDS, particularly information about the early symptoms of HIV infection, signs and transmission, HIV/AIDS virus testing, cure, medication, treatment, services and clinics.

Apart from these popular services on AIDS awareness there are other websites which give you an updated information in the form of news on the internet. There are several websites such as www.aidsawareness.com, www.avert.org,

**OTHER MEDIA**

**Folk Forms**

Folk forms which have been traditionally used in India as a means of spreading information are diverse in nature and comprises different forms of drama, dance, song, mime, puppetry, and storytelling. These are some of the mediums which are being used not for their artistic content but for their effectiveness as a potential tool to disseminate communication messages. These forms of median are basically an art which is present in remote areas. This is not only done by folk people but by those who tend to impart messages for communication to spread awareness on the given subject.

These folk forms of media are basically considered as traditional forms of media. The traditional media constitute the basic level of
disseminating messages as it uses the language of the common masses who inhabit that area. For finding the effectiveness of traditional form of media, Firstly we should know what is traditional and folk media.

As for categorization, traditional folk forms of communication in India can be divided into:

- Folk Theatre
- Street Play or Nukkad Natak
- Puppet Shows
- Fairs and Exhibitions

**Folk Theatre:** In comparison to the west, Indian folk theatre did not fragment into opera, ballet and drama based on dialogue but focus on composite forms consisting dancing, verse and prose dialogue. Imparting and disseminating messages through folk theatre is very useful in areas where local cultural values are higher than modern methods of communication.
Folk theatre has a strong base in parts where local dialects were the only way of communication. Although there was little information about HIV/AIDS in areas where even medical facilities are not available, these forms of communication are the only alternative way of spreading awareness. How can a piece of information reach in far flung areas of North East where no form of official media is present like the T.V or Radio. The tribal or local community are being engaged and trained to impart awareness education through their own set of folk media.

**Street Play or Nukkad Natak:** This is the easiest way of communication as it doesn’t require much of the efforts like costumes or stage. It can be done at any place like on the streets, open grounds, Railway stations, Bus stands etc. The characters are visibly seen in uniform clothes and most of the times do not require even the props. Different NGO’s have formed their own groups which performed street plays to create awareness. Naz Foundation groups started their Nukkad Natak campaign in Lucknow to educate people about HIV/AIDS and their impact on the health. They performed Nukkad Natak at roadside, Railway stations and other public places. Some State AIDS Control Societies have roped in different theatre groups who performed street plays on AIDS awareness.

Theatre always plays a meaningful role on social awakening and reformation. It is the best medium to reach greater part of the population and sensitize them towards a problem like HIV/AIDS especially in areas where level of literacy is very low. If we look back into history we realise that whenever society faced a crisis it was theatre that become the agent of awakening and action. Social theatre is a medium to address like HIV/AIDS that people are worried about cannot express their view publicly. Street plays and Nukkad Natak addresses the issue directly and also motivates the process of problem solving among the masses.
A Sanskriti Sewa Sansthan, a theatre group performs plays on various social themes and problems in different cities in Uttar Pradesh. They sensitize people about HIV/AIDS through gripping narratives in the form of street play. They performed theatre on AIDS and also on Polio awareness, drug addiction, government schemes and youth based programmers but their main emphasis is on AIDS. Eminent theatre persons and Bhartendu Natya Akademi in U.P have started working on scripting a play on this theme. Nukkad Natak is an important step in the right direction because theatre goes beyond words and builds new dimensions that connect with people directly. The plays are designed in such a way that focus on the lives of HIV positive and the strength they have shown in overcoming the problems and stigma they are facing.

Andaman and Nicobar AIDS Control Society (ANACS) are conducting outdoor campaign on HIV/AIDS awareness for the masses. They started their Nukkad Natak campaign in South Andaman districts on the occasion of National Youth Day on January 12. The campaign has been planned at promotional places in the district to create awareness on HIV/AIDS, clear the myths and misconceptions surrounding HIV/AIDS and stop prejudice. The basic aim of these plays is to encourage the general population to learn from positive people on how to bring more meaning into their own lives despite all the challenges.

Puppetry

It is also very effective medium of disseminating messages, imparting education, sensitizing common masses on social themes. Puppetry has a long has a long history in India as well as in the other parts of the world. Puppetry is considered to be very popular particularly in rural areas where literacy levels are low. It can be understood very quickly as it does not involve complex messages. The cost of producing the show is very low and puppets can be used time and again.
These days puppetry is playing a vital role in educating the masses about HIV/AIDS awareness. Lack of quality awareness, lack of education, difficulty in medication and widespread information about this virus. With keeping in mind all these aspect puppetry is helping in great way by creating awareness about HIV/AIDS.

Salam Balak Trust I association with Ishara puppet theatre, one of the famous puppet groups in the country created the first of its kind AIDS awareness campaign through puppetry in NCR, Delhi.

‘Chaunauti-The Challenge’, the first production has been developed on HIV/AIDS prevention. The theme is based on the modes of HIV transmission where all 4 major modes have been depicted with strong messages including condom use, use of disposable syringes, safe blood transfusion and doctor’s care. The play ends with the message; AIDS is not only Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome but stand as Awareness Is Definitely Safe. Another play ‘Nazrien Kholo’ is based on stigma and discrimination faced by the people due to their HIV status. Rahale’s Little Theatre, a theatre group in West Bengal made 60 minute puppet show named ‘sabchey baro atmatyag’(Biggest Self Sacrifice). It depicted the message through the story of a couple, Laila and Gopal. Juxtaposing puppets and imageries from nature along with real informers. Puppetry as a traditional form of media not only provides knowledge regarding HIV/AIDS to the masses but act as a catalyst for public health campaign.

Fair and Exhibition

Another form of media is fairs and exhibitions. These are the most effective way of showcasing messages at one place. The government of India and state governments organised different fairs and exhibitions in order to educate the masses. Different stalls and pavilions were made on
specific programme to sensitize the general masses. Translites, hoardings, posters were put up, public announcement were made and printed material like pamphlet, brochures, leaflets were given free of cost to the visitors.

National AIDS Control Organisation participates in the fairs and melas and display publicity material for creating awareness about HIV/AIDS. The government has started public health campaign in which fairs and exhibition were organised in different parts of India from time to time. The agenda of creating HIV/AIDS awareness was also included in National Rural Health Mission apart from the government of India has also started Public Information Campaign (PIC) that illustrate different issues pertaining to health and awareness.

A regular feature at India International Trade Fair, an annual event organised by India Trade Promotion Organisation (ITPO). A health pavilion was put up by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in which different sections are being made regarding health and prevention. Separate stalls by National AIDS Control Organisation (NACO), Hindustan Latex Limited, whose main aim is to create HIV/AIDS awareness. Literature was distributed and condom vending machines were put up to make people aware and build up confidence among the masses so that they can come forward and face this deadly virus.

Social Media

One of the recent advances in the field of media is the social media. It is the type of media that users can easily participate in share and create content for including blogs, social networks, wikis, forums and virtual worlds. Social Networking, which is a kind of social media, is an online service that enables its users to create virtual networks with
likeminded people akin to social networks in real life. It often offers the facilities such as chat, instant messaging, photo sharing, updates, etc. Currently, social networking sites are the most prominent version of social media. Facebook with 600 million users is one of the most well known social networking sites. These may be very useful in spreading awareness about HIV/AIDS. This may not be very helpful in the present times due to its limited number of users although there are millions of users who use social networking sites on daily basis. They may not contribute to the social cause as most of the users use it for entertaining purpose. But there some organizations and institutions who are working for HIV/AIDS awareness by using these types of media very effectively.
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