Chapter 8

SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 Introduction

8.2 General Suggestions

8.3 Specific Suggestions

8.4 General Recommendations

8.5 Specific Recommendations

8.6 Scope for future research
Chapter 8
Suggestions and Recommendations

8.1 Introduction
This chapter presents the suggestions and recommendations that the researcher has developed on the basis of the findings and its interpretations. The chapter has five major modules namely, general suggestions, specific suggestions, general recommendations, specific suggestions and scope for future research. The entire research was conducted, arranged and presented on the basis of five independent variables that were individually dealt in five separate studies. To maintain this order the specific suggestions and specific recommendations are also presented study wise. The general suggestions and general recommendations however are on the basis of the general findings and observations made during the course of the research.

8.2 General suggestions
8.2.1 The first and the most important finding of the study with reference to social advertising is that the social advertising does not go unnoticed - it is seen, recalled and liked. The overall response of the subjects towards social advertising which was more than fifty per cent in all the four categories viz. aided-celebrity, aided non-celebrity, unaided celebrity and unaided non-celebrity, indicated that social advertising was recalled. The impact of the social advertisements was not limited to the recall since some of the social issues shown in the presentation were also influential in bringing some attitudinal change. Barring a negligible number of subjects who were indifferent, most of them were keen in knowing more about some of the issues or were willing to lend their support towards the social causes. Even in the general questionnaire when subjects were asked to recall social advertising that they have heard or seen earlier, they recalled many social advertisements which are run regularly in India. Not only they remembered
the general ideas behind these social advertisements but also recalled the slogans and the celebrities that were a part of it. This indicates that social advertising is noticed and remembered. So definitely for youth social advertising works and therefore it is strongly suggested, social advertising must be done regularly.

8.2.2 During the research it was found that, youth was looking up to social advertising as a source of information and they consider social advertising as genuine. The subjects believed that the most important element of social advertising was information. In fact for youth the informative value of social advertising scored over use of celebrities and humour. Therefore any social advertising must be informative. In India there are hardly any authentic sources available to youth or children that provide information and guidance on various matters crucial to them. Many developed countries have health centers and NGOs that disseminate information via their centers at different locations, helplines and websites. Such effort is missing in India in general and in fact social advertising can fill in this gap to some extent.

8.3 Specific Suggestions

8.3.1 Study One
The findings clearly support the use of celebrities for social advertising. Celebrities are instrumental in bringing the social issues to forefront. Celebrities ensure the social issues get due publicity. The celebrities are influential in motivating the youth towards the desired aim. Therefore while conducting social advertising it is suggested that celebrities must be prominently used.

Several specific suggestions with reference to use of celebrities in social advertising are as follows:
a) Celebrities selected must be popular and preferably be belonging to films. The findings indicated that celebrities from films are much better remembered than celebrities from television.

b) The credibility of a celebrity is an important factor to look out for while selecting a celebrity. Credibility of the presenter is an important determinant of the acceptance of the advertised message. Also credible sources are more persuasive. If some event happens that affects the reputation of the celebrity, the negative publicity could backfire on the associated social issue as well. Though the behaviour of the celebrity cannot be predicted at least past performance can be an indicator while selecting a celebrity for social advertising.

c) Overly exposed celebrity, specially the one doing multiple social advertisements must be avoided. A single celebrity addressing too many social issues can lead to a fair degree of confusion among the audience and little room for credibility.

d) It is equally important that there is an appropriate fit between the celebrity and the target audience. The celebrities that can be influential for social advertising directed at youth may not be equally persuasive while advertising for elderly. So while selecting celebrity the target audience's preferences must be considered for greater impact.

8.3.2 Study Two
Fear appeals are designed to stir up some negative emotions. Further these aroused emotions are those mental agitations or excited states of feelings which actually motivate interest and prompt the audience to behave in the desired manner. Therefore fear appeals can be effectively used in social advertising to bring about the preferred change. However while using fear appeals in social advertising certain suggestions are worth considering:
a) An advertisement in which the level of fear is too low will not generate the necessary emotional response, thereby failing to create attention and interest in the basic problem. High fear appeals also tend to yield little attitude change because they activate defense mechanisms. Therefore moderate fear appeals, which provide sufficient motivation but do not activate perceptual defenses, can be used for generating attitudinal change.

b) It is often noticed consumers counter argue to protect themselves from fear generating advertising messages. However this can be avoided if the source used in the advertisement is highly credible, one such that he/she can influence audience attitudes. This will ensure that the consumers refrain from counter arguing.

c) The audience for whom the advertising message is designed has to be properly known since the audience’s characteristic determines the degree to which they will be persuaded by fear appeals. For example fear appeals are more effective when the message recipient is self-confident and prefers to cope with dangers rather than avoid them.

d) There is some evidence suggesting that fear of social disapproval may be more effective in influencing actual behaviour than the fear of physical harm. So social advertising exploiting fear appeals must try to focus on social ramifications that the audience may have to suffer in case they do not accept the advertised proposition.

e) Fear appeals are effective when the advertisement provides information about the seriousness of the threat, suggest the probability of its occurrence and advise practical steps to avoid the fearful consequences in the advertisement. Messages not suggesting a solution to the audience are less likely to be persuasive.
8.3.3 Study Three
Since noise affects the receipt, attention and recall of social advertising it is suggested that social advertisements have to be treated differently to avoid the impact of clutter. Various ways to minimise the impact of clutter can be used such as:

a) Designing exclusive breaks on television and radio between programmes that are fully dedicated to social advertising. This would avoid the chances of social advertisements losing in the clutter of general advertising in the commercial breaks. Also it is important the breaks meant for social advertising should not have too many social advertisements because that would again lead to clutter. Similarly in print media, full page can be exclusively used for social advertisements so that it is not disturbed by other commercial advertisements.

b) Research shows that the effects of increased clutter do not affect all advertisements equally. Advertisements placed either at the beginning or at the end of a commercial break are less affected than the advertisements in the middle of such breaks. This suggests that social advertisers ought to negotiate the first or last position in a commercial break.

c) One more way to zap-proof television advertisements is to produce creative advertising messages that will attract and hold viewers' attention. When the commercials are interesting as well as entertaining viewers will prefer to watch them rather than zap or zip them. Research shows that zapping tends to occur most strongly during the first five seconds of an advertisement, so it is crucial to sustain the consumer's interest during these first few seconds.

8.3.4 Study Four
The recall of advertising presented on audio-video medium such as television was higher than non-audio-video medium such as posters. Therefore it is suggested that social advertisers must dedicate more of their advertising budget for audio-
video media option such as television. The impact of sight, sound and motion
definitely commands better recall compared to the other media options where all
of the features of television are not available. Television can be best suited for
almost all type of advertisements; be it providing demonstrations, featuring
testimonials and celebrities or creating drama. The radio, print and outdoor can be
considered for playing the role of supportive media. There are several other audio-
video media options that can be effectively used, such as:

a) Mobile phones are an interesting advertising media option for the
advertisers, at one end they can be seen as an extension of mass medium such as
radio as they are usually loaded with radio connectivity. Secondly mobile phones
are extremely selective advertising medium where the advertiser can decide to
exactly whom to reach out in terms of demographics as well as geographic
location. Thirdly mobile phones especially the high end ones are enabled with
audio-video facility and provide almost all other amenities of a computer.

b) Similarly social advertisers can make use of computers. Creating their
websites on Internet and having all related information available on it is one
effective way of reaching, at least to the educated and urban audience. Internet can
provide all benefits of an audio-video medium such as television and further
provide advantages of interactivity and round the clock exposure. Internet can also
render additional benefits that television does not provide, for e.g. target audience
can get their queries sorted by securing their anonymity. One more advantage of
computers over television is that it is not intrusive like television and target
audience can choose to be exposed to the advertising message on their own at their
convenience.

c) Films present one more effective audio-video option for social advertising.
Cinema has unique characteristics that set it apart from other forms such as
television and radio, where the viewer has the opportunity to avoid advertisements
in myriad of ways. However, the cinema prevents this ease of avoidance due to the
viewing context of the advertisement. There are two film related advertising options. One is targeting the audience going to watch cinema in theatres by presenting social advertising either before the movie begins or in the intervals. Second is more effective where social advertisements are a part of the movie itself. This type of commercial advertising promoted through films is called as product placement. Similar concept can be used to promote social issues, where the characters from the films promote some social cause as if it is a part of the film.

8.3.5 Study Five

Study five indicated social advertisements presented repeatedly contribute positively towards the recall of social advertising. It is important that social advertisements are repeated over the same media for better recall. To ensure that the audience is involved and they connect with the messages presented in social advertising, frequent and adequate repetitions of the messages are very crucial.

Though research is inconclusive about exact number of repetitions for attitudinal change, in general minimum three and maximum ten repetitions have been suggested to avoid the wear out effect by different researchers. However buying slot on television or radio does not guarantee that the target audience is definitely going to be exposed to the advertised messages. Issues such as clutter, zipping and zapping are further multiplied due to availability of variety of television channels or radio stations that narrow down the chances of reaching a specific audience. So it is suggested that advertisers repeat the messages sufficient times.

Mere repetition may not always work so the same messages can be presented by emphasising on the principle of variability theory. This theory suggests that variable encoding occurs when the audience sees the same advertisement in different environments. These varied environments increase an advertisement’s recall and effectiveness by encoding it into the brain through various methods.
8.4 General recommendations

8.4.1 There are several recommendations for the government that’s supposed to be the prime social advertiser in India:

a) It has been noticed that the Government in India is using advertising as a strategy just around the time of the elections to enhance their image. The supposed to be social advertisements are more of political advertisements highlighting the achievements of the government in power and their ministries. So it is recommended the funds allocated for social advertising be distinctly used for social advertising only.

b) It's observed that in India social advertisements focus on limited issues. A developing country like India is confronted with many serious and pressing issues which need immediate attention and action. Issues such as eve-teasing, dowry deaths, female feticide, increasing instances of drug and cigarette addiction, ragging, domestic violence and rash and drunken accidents to name the few are barely advertised. Not that these issues could be tackled only through social campaigns, but social advertising can bring to light many aspects pertaining to these issues and at least lead to social consciousness. Such advertising can bring about public awareness with respect to legal protection available for the victims (in case of domestic violence or ragging), medical aid for the patients (in case of tuberculosis, leprosy), assistance available from NGOs and so on.

c) Governments are also recommended to pump in adequate funds for social advertising. The funds can be used for various purposes such as sponsor social research, book different media options and rope-in popular celebrities in social advertisements. Adequate funds would make possible for social advertisements to be aired during prime time slots or to be published in best of the publications thereby leading to better reach and overall impact of social advertising.

d) The governments are recommended to create an environment conducive for successful social campaigns. With this regard three conditions laid down by
Lazarsfield and Merton\(^{296}\) for the effectiveness of mass media for propaganda purposes are worth considering. The first condition is real or psychological monopolisation by the media; that is a condition marked by the absence of counterpropaganda. The second condition required for effective mass propaganda is canalisation, the presence of an existing attitudinal base for the feelings that the social communicators are striving to shape. The third condition is supplementation by which they mean the effort to follow up mass communication campaigns with programs of face to face contacts. Many a time social campaigns fail because social advertising is practiced rather than social marketing. The inherent difference between the two is that a social advertising approach contrives only the event of mass media communication and leaves the response to natural social processes. Social marketing however arranges for a step-down communication process. The message is passed on and discussed in more familiar surroundings to increase its memorability, penetration and action consequences.

8.4.2 The responsibility of social welfare primarily lies on the government but media can also contribute in multiple ways such as:

a) Media can provide free spaces or slots for promoting social advertisements to various social advertisers. If free slots are not possible during prime time slots, at least a special rate card can be devised for social advertisements.

b) Many media owners have established their own award functions to recognise the work that’s been done on their media. Such award functions can also recognise the efforts of different social advertisers by way of felicitations or rewards for their worthwhile contributions.

c) Media can also acquire the role of social advertisers. In India television channel Aaj Tak promoted the issue of second hand smoke and eve-teasing, DNA

---

an English newspaper addressed the issue of terrorism and radio station Radio Mirchi addressed the issues of piracy and car pooling. The other media can also take a clue and support social issues they identify with.

d) Media can run such movies and serials that address social issues. To motivate the producers such serials can be given some preferential treatments in terms of rates, timing or slots.

8.4.3 Similarly advertising agencies over the years have taken a sort of liking for social advertising. Social advertising gives them opportunity to work freehand, something which is difficult while working for commercial products. Secondly social advertising has been their ticket to fame. At the various international award functions Indian advertising agencies have made their presence felt mainly by riding on social advertising. But serious effort to fight for the issues has been missing. So it is recommended advertising agencies contribute by way of creative services at subsidised fees or no fees. Secondly the advertising agencies should ensure the issues they are advertising for, gets its due publicity not just by way of entry to award functions but by reaching to the intended audience. The advertising agencies should ensure social advertising is given professional treatment just as commercial advertising in terms of research, understanding of target audience, setting advertising objectives and decisions in relation to message tones. Appropriate media planning and scheduling based on understanding of media trends and target audience are as much needed in social advertising as in the case of commercial advertising. Conducting proper pre-testing to ensure the message has potentials to meet the predetermined goals and post testing to ascertain the fate of the advertising campaign is extremely vital. In brief social advertising must be treated on par with commercial advertising or perhaps be given more importance due to its noble cause.
8.4.4 In India social advertising is sponsored by various product manufacturers and service providers. Such social advertising serves dual purpose for the sponsoring organisations, they can contribute towards welfare of the society on one hand and ensure positive image for themselves on the other. As far as the positive image is concerned the motive is justified, but different advertisers latching on to the social idea to sell their wares has gathered momentum in recent times. Some advertisers have merged social idea with their products; some have taken the cause marketing route while some have used social advertising to break the clutter. Companies sponsoring social advertising with a genuine welfare motive are scarcely noticed. Rather than just using a social idea for advertising, the companies can get into more sustained efforts for public good by associating with NGOs / social organisations or even by starting their own social endeavour. Number of companies such as Wipro, Tata, Infosys, Reliance and National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) are setting good examples in India. ONGC and IOCL have seriously engaged with NGOs on various causes and TCS runs a program, Adult Literacy Programme in association with central and state governments. Wipro’s Azim Foundation and Infosys’ Infosys Foundation are dedicated philanthropic wings of these companies which fulfils their social responsibility. Perhaps such efforts are expected from more and more companies where social advertising can be a part of their social commitment.

8.4.5 It is also recommended that celebrities contribute their services for social advertising. The celebrities are however expected to standby single or few social issues for which they genuinely care for. Their half-hearted support to every second social issue for enhancing their own image is not likely to yield any positive response. The celebrities are also recommended to play a responsible role in their personal and professional life since they are considered role models and their behaviour has influence on their followers. For e.g. a celebrity himself a smoker in public cannot preach others to quit smoking.
8.4.6 Film makers and producers have been addressing social issues through films and documentaries. Many films have been agents of social change in the past. The trend is seen even in recent times. Many Indian films and documentaries based on social issues have been recognised for their efforts at national and international film festivals. But the problem with such social movies is that they don’t get the desired response as they don’t reach their target audience. If companies and media support such endeavours in terms of sponsored screenings for schools and colleges or advertising to create awareness about them perhaps they will serve their purpose. So it is recommended, considering the significance of films as an advertising canvas, more film makers conduct research on social issues, make films on them and ensure that they reach the intended audience.

8.5 Specific recommendations

8.5.1 The social advertisers are recommended to be cautious while using celebrities in social advertisements. It has to be noted celebrities can be effective in social advertising but their involvement has to be limited up to garnering initial attention or while propagating a new issue. While bringing up any considerable change among its public, social advertisements must use experts from relevant field. Though celebrities give the necessary hype to the social issues, the youth/subjects do not consider them as experts in such fields. The motive behind the celebrities supporting social causes was seen with a scanner and there was certain amount of suspicion or doubt about their motive. So to deal with this issue a celebrity as well as some experts from the relevant field can be used for best results. For e.g. celebrities can be used for appealing to youth to quit smoking. However while promoting this cause one of the issues may be how to handle the physical side effects of quitting and this can be addressed through advertisements featuring medical expert rather than celebrity.

8.5.2 Findings of the Study Two strongly recommend use of fear appeals. Fear is an emotional response to some actual or perceived threat or danger and fear
appeals in advertising are included to increase the viewer’s interest in an advertisement and enhance the persuasiveness of the advertisement. However, fear appeals are successful in certain situations only and they can motivate the audience to take action in order to remove fear only when used judiciously. Therefore, it is recommended that while using fear appeals, proper research is conducted for determining appropriate degree of fear appeal, as too moderate or too intense fear appeal both can be ineffective.

8.5.3 The findings of Study Three that dealt with conduct of social advertising revealed that though television is an effective medium, it suffers from the problem of clutter. To tackle the problem of clutter, one of the options available with private television channels and radio stations is that they can embed their serials or programmes with social messages, something what Doordarshan has been doing regularly. They can introduce such programmes where the panel of experts is available to give authentic issue-related information along with help-lines where people can write or call up and get their queries sorted out. Similarly, popular shows can also include social information in their programmes, especially if the audience’s favourite characters can deliver social messages; it can certainly make an impact. It could be called ‘message placement,’ the philanthropic corollary to product placements deals in which marketers pay to feature products in shows and movies. This practice is not new in foreign countries and officials who have used these methods say they had been effective in influencing public views and behaviour. There is a lot of research supporting the view that when a character from a popular show flaunts a social message, it is much more effective than other advertising options such as pamphlets or posters. Many television channels in India are noticed doing this in recent times where the entire serial is woven around social issue/s. For e.g. channel Colors has a serial ‘Baalika Vadhu’ based on women issues in general and deals with child marriage in particular. Other channels like Star and Zee also address issues like dowry deaths, discrimination of girl child and female feticide through their serials. Many
regional channels too address issues pertinent in their states through such shows. All these efforts can render several benefits. First the social issues can get the much needed publicity; it can initiate a public debate. Secondly such dedicated serials would not suffer from the problem of clutter and there would be unaffected flow of information. Lastly such shows can influence viewers even without the viewer's knowledge. However this form of social advertising to deliver best results requires a proper partnership between media and the social organisations working on the issue. Such partnership would ensure that necessary and accurate information passes through the shows. The writers of the show and the experts from the social organisations have to insert messages into the shows to influence the public attitude in such a manner that neither the entertainment value nor the accuracy of the information is compromised.

8.5.4 The findings of Study Four indicated that audio-video medium such as television is more effective than non-audio-video medium. Popularity of television among the subjects calls for more and more use of audio-video medium. But only using television might not be enough so additional visibility can be lend by posters and banners or other means of outdoor advertising. Similarly radio and cinema can provide additional reminder value. In short detail information can be projected on television and brief references can be made through other media options.

8.5.5 Study Five revealed that repetition plays an important role in the reach and success of social advertising. So it is very essential that social advertising messages are adequately repeated and that too on variety of media options.

Thus all parties connected with initiating, creating and propagating social advertising are expected to promote it with more sustained and dedicated efforts. It is recommended that sponsors like government and corporate allocate funds generously. Media can allot more and exclusive spaces and slots for social advertising. From advertising agencies not only creativity in making social advertisement but also professionalism in determining advertising objective,
setting advertising budget, using message tones, media planning and use of appropriate pre and post advertising research techniques is highly recommended. Celebrities are expected to support social causes with commitment and film makers are recommended to bring social issues to fore and generate public awareness. Thus to ensure it produces positive results social advertising needs to be able to ignite a social debate and provide solution for general welfare. This will happen when the environment is conducive, which needs an active contribution from all quarters of the society such as policy makers, media, companies, social organisations and every one else who has the power to contribute in some way to the society.

8.6 Scope for future research

The present study was an attempt to evaluate the effectiveness of factors that affect or contribute to the success of social advertising. Various variables were evaluated in this research like celebrities, appeals, clutter, media used for social advertising and repetition. These variables contribute in a major way to the success or failure of social advertising. The present research was divided in five studies to investigate the role of these five variables individually and the research has satisfactorily proved that study of these factors is important for developing meaningful social advertisements.

The findings of the first study based on content related factor such as use of celebrities in social advertising revealed that celebrities in social advertising leads to enhanced recall. Celebrities are an important element of advertising and research in past has also indicated that they are influential on their target audience. But the present study concentrated on whether celebrities made a contribution or not when celebrity based social advertisements were compared to social advertisements without celebrities. However there is tremendous scope for research in this area where several aspects of celebrity in social advertising such as attributes on which to select celebrity, celebrity-audience match and issues that can be effectively addressed through celebrities can be further investigated.
Chapter 8: Suggestions and Recommendations

The second study was based on use of fear appeals in social advertising. The findings indicated that social advertisements with fear appeals were more effective than social advertisements without fear appeals as far as the recall is concerned. For fear appeals to be effective in social advertising understanding of several other factors such as level of fear appeal, how fear operates and how different target audiences may respond to varying fear appeals is extremely crucial. But considering the scope of the study incorporating all these aspects of fear appeals was difficult and there is tremendous scope for future research in these areas. Apart from fear appeals, appeals based on humour, shock and sex can also be used in social advertising depending upon the cause in question. Effectiveness of such appeals other than fear offer scope for further research.

The third study dealt with the negative impact of clutter on the recall. The findings indicated that clutter affects the reception of the message. However the impact of clutter was studied only with reference to television. Research can be further conducted to investigate whether clutter affects other media such as radio, newspaper, magazine, films and Internet and if it does then to what extent. Similarly there is scope for research on ways and means that can reduce the impact of clutter.

The findings of the fourth study based on effectiveness of audio-video medium in comparison to non-audio-video medium indicated that television advertising was more influential in terms of recall. This study compared only two media namely television and posters, other media such as radio, cinema and newspaper that are popular with youth can be extensively studied for their effectiveness for advertising social messages. There is ample scope for research with respect to effectiveness of modern media options such as Internet and mobile phones in terms of impact and reach while targeting youth.
Fifth study determined the positive impact of repetition on the recall with particular reference to television advertising. Repetition proved to be an aid to memory. Research with reference to repetition can further investigate in to adequate number of repetitions required depending upon the nature of media for social advertising.

Lastly, the present study relied on a convenience sample of undergraduate students who are not necessarily representative of the broader population. Future research should clearly aim to ensure that a broader and more representative sample is included.

To conclude advertising is a fascinating and provocative phenomenon. At the outset it is used by many advertisers for many purposes with many different possible effects. The present study however concentrated on the social side of advertising, where in the intents of such advertising ranged from altering behaviour to affecting the way people think about a particular social or economic position. The study concentrated on identifying the factors that could aid in making social advertisements effective and capable enough to change or alter the audience's behaviour. Accordingly five such factors viz. celebrity, fear appeals, clutter, medium and repetition were extensively studied for their impact. The findings of these factors would certainly aid in creating and promoting social advertisements that would ultimately impact its target in the desired way. Second very important aspect of the present research is ‘youth’ since it constitutes an important segment of our society. India everyday resolves and fabricates multitudinous problems and a vital fraction constitutes the problems of the youth. The youth today faces innumerable challenges on personal, social and economic fronts at local and global level and these issues need to be rightly identified and addressed without delay. There is a dire need to create an environment conducive for their physical and mental well being and development. Media is an important source of information for youth. Mass media with sustained use of effective social advertising can create an environment in which good health as well as education is pursued and reinforced amongst the youth. Social advertising can be an entertaining and educative tool for addressing their issues.
Unfortunately, in spite of resurgence in recent years, social advertising has received significantly less theoretical and applied research in comparison to profit-oriented advertising. It is also noticed potentials of social advertising to entertain and educate is seriously undermined. Social advertising can be persuasive and can lead to favourable attitudinal and behavioural change provided created and promoted efficiently. Academicians and researchers can contribute immensely by way of conducting meaningful and comprehensive research. Such dedicated and persistent efforts will certainly aid in constructing influential and result-oriented social advertising that can accomplish the larger goal of social welfare.

And finally to end with a futuristic quotation from author Isaac Asimov\textsuperscript{297}:

"We must sell the world through the persuasion techniques developed by advertology, on the necessity of reducing population, of conserving and recycling the earth’s resources, of exploiting space for energy."

\textsuperscript{297} Sandage C. H., Fryburger Vernon and Rotzoll Kim, Advertising Theory and Practice, All India Traveller Book Seller, Delhi, 1987, p. 5.
Many children get into their father’s shoes very early. Help them get into school shoes instead. Donate generously.