

## SOCIAL MARKETING: A CRITICAL EVALUATION

ARNAB KUMAR SAMANTA\*

### ABSTRACT

The applications of marketing principles and techniques to influence behaviors that benefit individuals as well as society, is called as social marketing. It was first brought into notice by Philip Kotler in early 1970s. This is the application of 4P's of commercial marketing with a social viewpoint. But in India it is not so effectively used as it was needed. Many of the corporate houses use social marketing campaign with social messages for their brand building purposes. But they neglected on the fact that how the social messages would be implemented fruitfully in the normal course of life.

**KEY WORDS :** Marketing, Society, Campaign, Brand, Building.

\* **LECTURER, NETAJI MAHAVIDYALAYA, ARAMBAGH, WEST BENGAL**

## **INTRODUCTION**

For the achievement of behavioral goals of a social good, the marketing along with other concepts and techniques applied systematically, is called as social marketing. In 1970s it was born as a discipline. According to Philip Kotlar, “differing from other areas of marketing only with respect to the objectives of the marketer and his or her organization, social marketing seeks to influence social behaviors not to benefit the marketer, but to benefit the target audience and the general society.” Social marketing is an approach which is used to enhance the activities targeted at changing or maintaining people’s behavior for the benefit of individual and society as a whole. Beyond traditional marketing and advertising, social marketing sells ideas to motivate healthier behavior. It is about applying the 4P’ ( product, price, place, promotion) of commercial marketing with social view point. It is also about convincing people to adopt a behavior or product which will improve their quality of life as well as the wider community.

## **BENEFITS**

Social marketing helps to ensure policy which is based on an understanding of people’s lives, making policy goals realistic and achievable. It enables us to target our resources cost effectively and select interventions that have the best impact over time. It enables us to develop product, services and communications that match peoples need and motivations. It has the ability to spread information and bring opportunities to promote our product. It helps in increasing ROI( Return On Investment) to be match higher than other marketing method. We don’t required any special technical skills or SEO skills. Only basic communication skill is required. The trust factor for the brand is also developed by social marketing. Social marketers deals with goals such as reducing cigarette smoking, encouraging condom use to make potentially difficult and long term behavioral change in target population

## **STEPS**

As a systematic and planned process, it follows six steps-

- 1) Getting commenced
- 2) Scope
- 3) Development
- 4) Implement
- 5) Evaluate

## 6) Follow-up

**INDIAN SCENARIO**

Corporate India has decided to sell product, ideas and create mass awareness through social marketing. One of the remarkable case in this point is Idea cellular. Idea had started attracting consumer by using a Bollywood superstar with a new “idea” every few month. The advertisement was started by idea highlighting how can save trees by reducing the usage of paper through value added services. Then Idea had started “Education for all” campaign which was showing how technology would become an enabler for education in the most remote areas of India. Later language campaign by Idea also hit the mark. All the campaigns created a separate identity for Idea Cellular brand. Though it did build the brand trust but the sales growth was not transformative . Today Idea is still occupied the fifth position in the largest telecom sector in India. Then the question normally arises did the social marketing using social messages fail to deliver in India? The answer may be yes or no. Firstly, social marketing worked only on the betterment of the trust front of the brand which increased only the brand recall. Secondly, it should never be used as a mutually exclusive marketing campaign at the cost of original commercial campaign. Another great example is of hard hitting “Jaago Re” campaign which was started by Tata Tea in the year 2007 against the corruption and is still going on. The campaign by Tata Tea helped to mobilize youth and register many first time voters in India.” Save our tigers” campaigned by Aircel is another notable example of social marketing. Through these campaigns all the companies addressed big issues of the society and with the help of these they get the attention of viewers and created awareness by which the brands got a better recognition. A credibility around the brand has created by the help of such campaigns. The brand recall gets stronger in the minds of people due to the social factor. People in India are strongly connected to their roots and have a great concern about what happened in the society. The social marketing or campaign do help brands in entering a differentiated league compared to competitors. South Korea and Japan are the countries having effective responses to such social marketing.

**DISADVANTAGES**

Social marketing is not free from limitations. It seeks to bring back the two way communication. It will reduce the neatly ordered workflow that other parts of the organization seek to introduce.

It introduces risky communication with the customer and suppliers. It threatens how existing business system is operated. It has no immediate benefit, only promises of great return yet needs monitoring and is wasting large amounts of management times. Another drawbacks of social marketing are that message and media selection are not easy task.

## CONCLUSIONS

Social marketing become an effective marketing tool for brand building in India. But most social marketing campaigns fail in terms of actual adoption in day to day life. They end up just being ideas. Some of the ideas might look good on the screen. But implementing the same in the normal life could be challenging. Apart from this, the actual implementation of the campaign depends on the corporation that is taking it up. Some of the companies use the campaign just to strengthen the brand and do not take the matter seriously. But there are some successful examples like “Jaago Re” campaign launched by Tata Tea which was fruitful and helped to mobilize and register many first time voter in India. But in health and education purpose, social marketing is effectively used in India by the government only like Pulse Polio campaign, Blood Donation campaign TB eradication etc. But in USA social marketing is effectively used in drug abuse, heart disease and organ donation. But it is not happened in India on a large scale. So, using a social message to marketing the products is a great path to build a trustable brand. But the companies don't really become the social firm.

## REFERENCES

- 1) [www.socialmarketing.com/whatis.html](http://www.socialmarketing.com/whatis.html)
- 2) [www.en.wikipedia.org](http://www.en.wikipedia.org)
- 3) [www.nsmcentre.org.uk](http://www.nsmcentre.org.uk)