

BOCK 3

**PERSUASION AND INFLUENCE
OF MEDIA**



UNIT 5 POSITIVE INFLUENCE OF MEDIA*

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Learning Objectives

After reading this unit, you will be able to:

- explain media's role in health communication and increasing health awareness,
- discuss the role of media in health education, and
- elucidate media's role in destigmatization.

5.0 INTRODUCTION

By now, you must be able to comprehend the intricacies of media psychology, the role it plays in the field of psychology, in our lives, and the way it has been studied and researched over the years. Apart from the fact that it was recognized as a proper field of study after a lot of effort, it is also clear that more attention was given to the negative effects it had on human psychology and cognition.

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This is not surprising. We all know that psychology at large was obsessed with investigating negative aspects of human functioning for several decades, before the advent of the Positive Psychology movement. In 1998, **Martin Seligman**, then president of the American Psychological Association, chose positive psychology as the theme during his presidency. This was a monumental step towards the rise in focus on human strengths and virtues, and not just their frailties and weaknesses.

So, how exactly does media fit into positive psychology? Ask yourself this, why do you think psychologists or researchers wanted to study media effects in the first place? Because they were concerned with the impact, it had on human behaviour and cognition. Scholars believed that what people heard, read, and/or saw through the means of media had major influence on them. Such hypotheses were tested and researched upon rigorously. Many studies established how media affects people's thoughts, feelings and actions.

However, as we said earlier, the attention was mainly on the negative effects it had. What would happen if the situation was reversed? What could be the positive effects of media? Logic would suggest, if people were acquiring violence from watching aggressive content, they could also learn altruistic behaviour if they engaged in content that promoted altruism. This provided an interesting point of view that researchers had not considered earlier. Thus arose the field of **Positive Media Psychology**, which deals with the positive cognitive, emotional and behavioural impact of media use. The positive impact of media in health communication, health education, and destigmatization forms the focus of this unit.

5.1 MEDIA'S ROLE IN HEALTH COMMUNICATION

Media plays a dominating role in communicating information. The field of health communication deals with the study and use of communication strategies and approaches through which the public can be informed about different health issues. Mass media is used to publicize useful health information, increase public awareness about the importance of health in development and the negative consequences of unhealthy habits and lifestyle. Health communication also helps in maintaining important health issues on the public agenda. The use of the multiple mass media and other technological innovations to broadcast relevant health information to the public, increases public awareness of individual and collective health aspects and underscore the importance of health in development (WHO, 1996).

Health communication is not restricted to communication between the doctor and the patient; it includes the larger aim of keeping the public aware of various health practices. If there is a health emergency, it is important to communicate the same in a way that everyone can understand and thus, follow necessary precautions. Let us look at some of the health

communication that took place during the COVID-19 pandemic. The baritone voice of Bollywood super star Amitabh Bachchan was used as the caller tune to raise awareness about coronavirus. “*Do gaz doori, mask hai zaruri*” (maintaining distance of 2 feet and using mask is essential) became a popular jingle of the time.

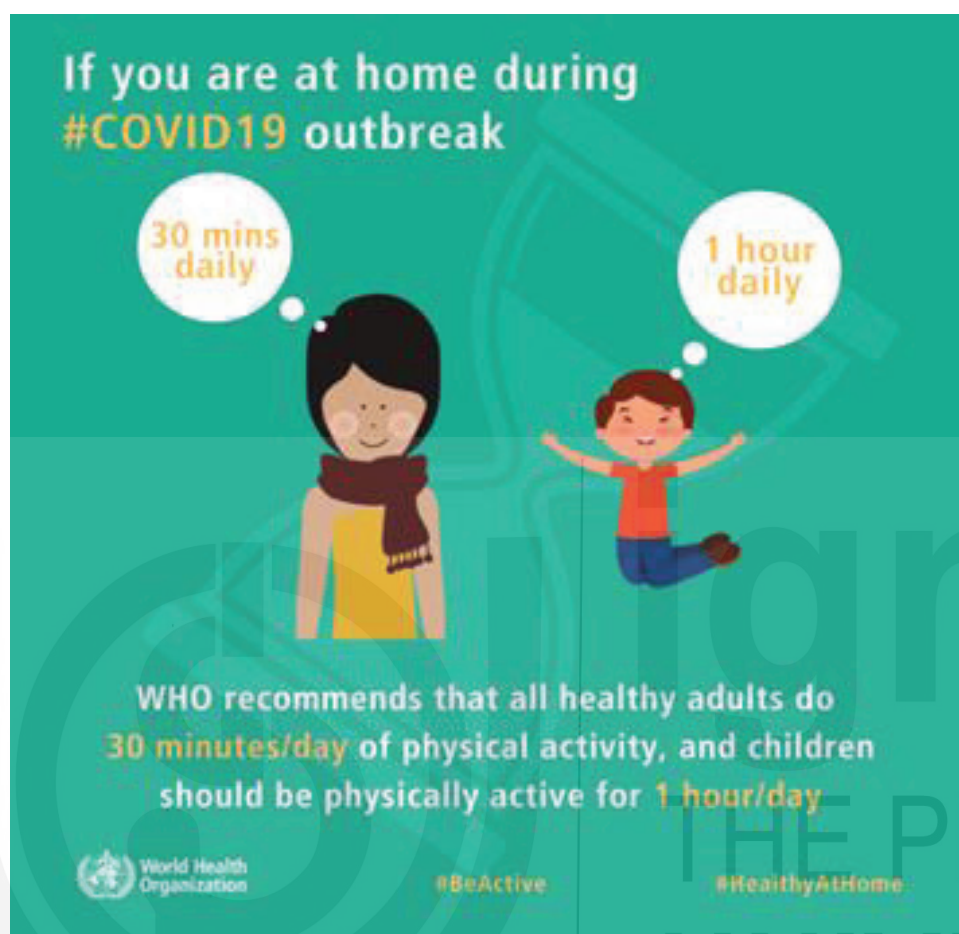


Figure 5.1 Health-care Behaviour during COVID-19

Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:WHO_EN_HealthyAtHome-Physical-activity_if_you_are_at_home_during_COVID-19_outbreak.png

The images (Figure 5.2) have been taken from e-book created for young children by Public Health Foundation of India, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India. The e-book, available in five different languages, has been created to empower children with practical information that would equip them to cope with Corona virus pandemic.

Such kind of health communication exists all around us, and was essential especially during a pandemic like, Corona virus when a lot of misinformation was being spread through the social media. According to *USA's Healthy People 2010*, health communication is a way of using effective communication strategies to influence people's behaviour in taking decisions to improve their health conditions. Health communications influence the individual as well as the collective decisions about enhancing health.



Figure 5.2 Images from an e-book on Coping with COVID-19 pandemic

Source: <https://phfi.org/covid19/covid-resources/>

Health communication happens through campaigns that are run with the help of traditional and contemporary modes of communication, which we will discuss shortly. The communication about health can take place at multiple levels as is shown in Figure 5.3. Greater the level at which health communication works, more is its reach and hence greater is the success.

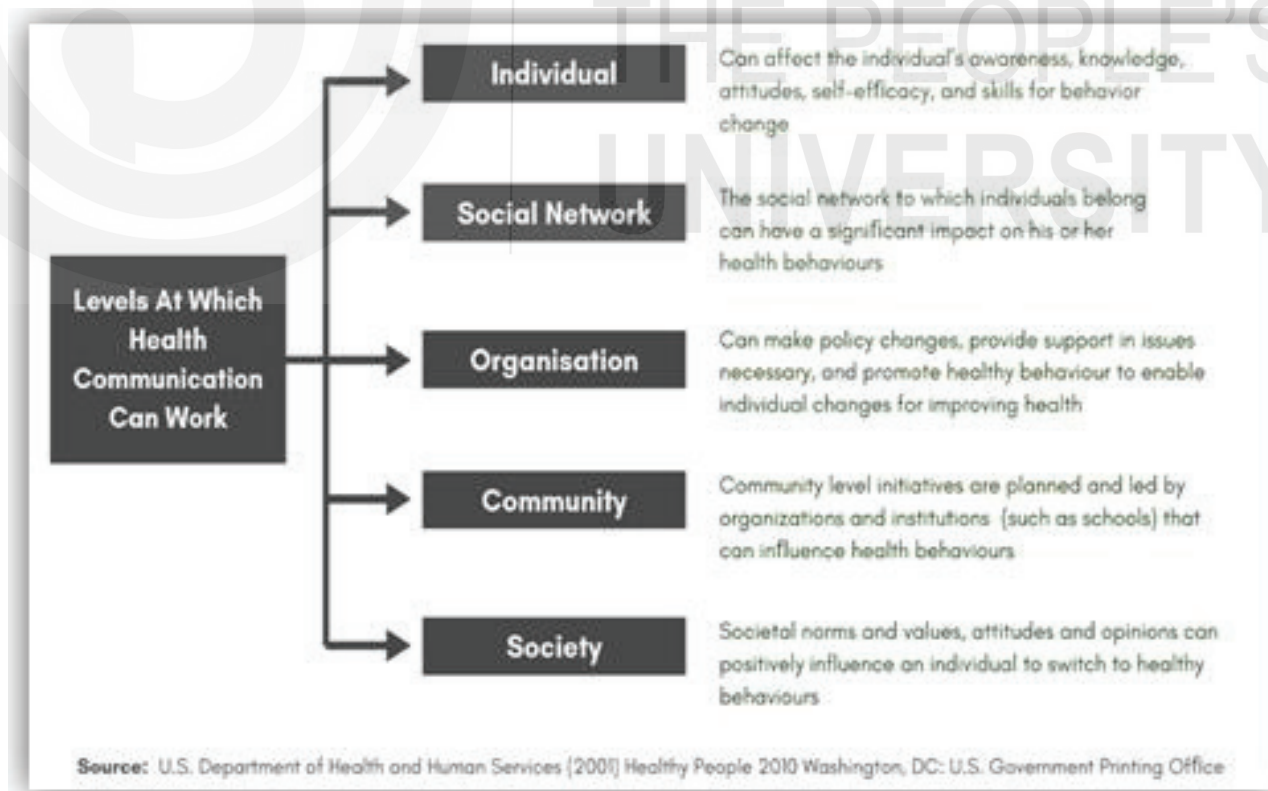


Figure 5.3 Multiple levels of health communication

Health communication makes individuals more aware, and as a result, the community more knowledgeable about various important health-care behaviours. This helps in creating a healthier and more developed society. Effective communication in health communication can:

- **Putting health on public agenda and improve health outcomes:** By influencing, supporting and engaging individuals, communities, healthcare professionals, policymakers, and the public to follow certain behavioural practices, health communication eventually improve health outcomes (for example, India's pulse polio campaign to ensure every child below the age of five takes polio drops, helped in the near eradication of the disease from the country).
- **Reduce the impact of socio-economic, racial, disease specific factors:** Health communications are designed in such a manner that they are accessible to all, irrespective of their socio-economic status, race or other factors (for example, doctors using more simplified language, pamphlets and brochures, using easy to understand language so that people from different backgrounds can understand better).
- **Improve prevention and promotion of healthy behaviours:** Prevention is better than cure, and hence health communication promotes healthy lifestyles and safety behaviours. WHO, for instance, is promoting active lifestyle during the lockdown (Figure 5.1) Other examples include the promotion for the use of various birth control methods, and campaigns run regularly on non-smoking, so people are more cautious of their actions.
- **Helps in demystifying diseases and provide accurate information in the era of infodemic:** Health communication helps simplify knowledge about diseases into clear and 'actionable' messages. We live in an era of infodemic, where there is plenty of information – some right, some wrong mostly being spread through social media (WHO, 2020). This makes making health enhancing decisions difficult for people. Health communication is necessary to mitigate misinformation and myths.

5.1.1 Why is Health Communication important?

According to CRICO Strategies National CBS Report (2015), ineffective communication has been a cause for 1,744 deaths and over \$1.7 billion in malpractices in a period of five years. This alone is enough to stress on the importance of having better health communication practices in place. The purpose of health communication is, not just preventing certain diseases, but also promoting behaviours that are more health conscious. Groups that are marginalized in society like sex workers, or people with low or no literacy, stigmatized groups, like those suffering from HIV/AIDS or mental illnesses etc. are reached through health communication. Increased numbers of health professionals are focussing on health communication as a speciality. They are learning from various other fields such as psychology, communication

theories, and from marketing studies in order to attain better and more effective communication skills.

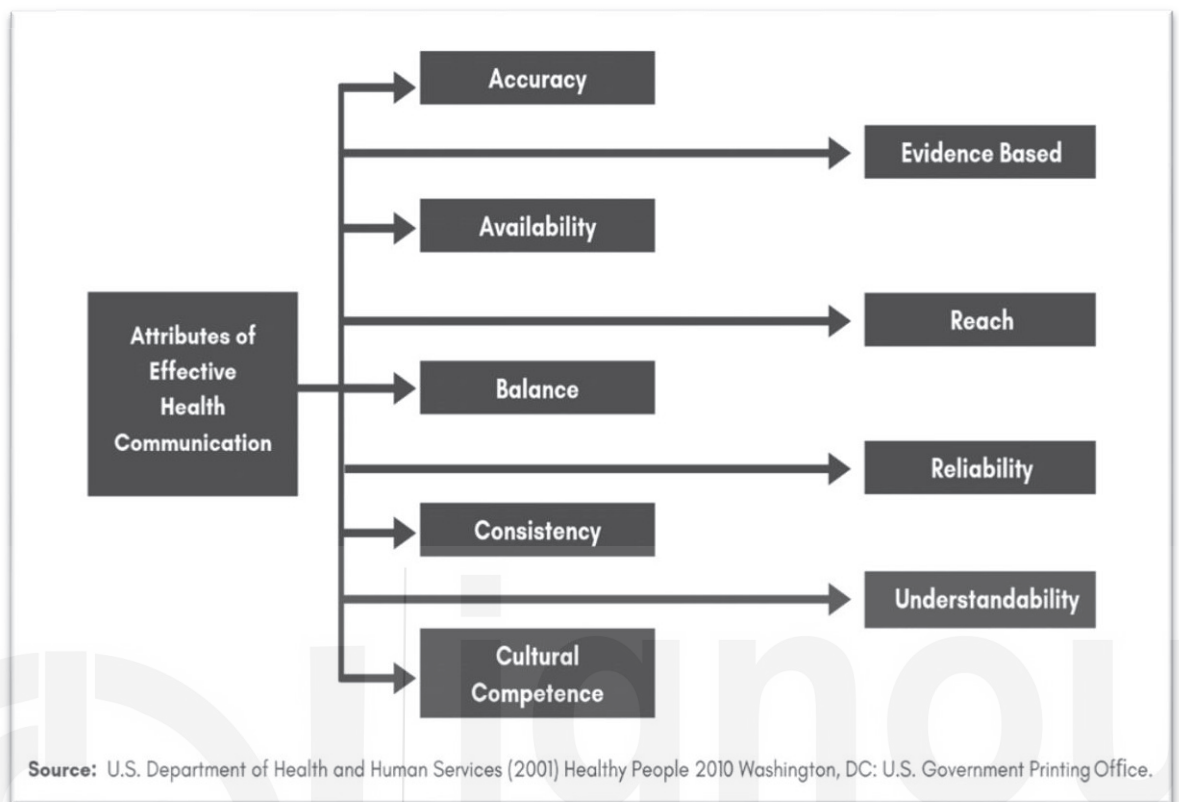


Figure 5.4 Attributes of Effective Health Communication

Effective health communication needs to be:

- accurate (the message should be valid and factually correct)
- accessible to the targeted audience
- balanced (with both benefits and risks of potential actions being presented)
- consistent (content should be consistent with information from other sources)
- culturally appropriate (that is it should take into consideration ethnic, racial and linguistic diversity)
- evidence based (content of communication is scientific and based on research)
- Wide reach (so that the message is available to the largest possible number of targeted population)
- Reliable (the source of the health communication content is credible)
- Understandable and repeated (the content is repeatedly delivered or available, like the COVID-19 ring tone)

5.1.2 Approaches to Health Communication

Communication is a process of sharing information. However, without the means to share that data, it will remain more or less a secret. If a person comes up with a certain idea, s/he shares it with people with the help of proper communication channels. Similarly, when it comes to health communication, we require certain medium to allow health related information to reach as many people as possible. According to Thomas (2006), there are some traditional and some contemporary approaches through which health communication takes place. The shift from an emphasis on communicating with the “masses” to one on communication with specific segments of the market has led to new and different approaches to communication. Traditional approaches to health communication include distribution of print materials (brochures, self-help guides, health education material etc.), health fair, information and referrals (through e-mails, telephone etc.), public service announcements, non-paid types of promotions on radio, television, newspapers, press releases, featured stories on different media etc. Contemporary approaches to health communication are influenced by the technological innovations in the field of communication. These include direct-to-customer marketing, electronic information distribution, e-marketing, and social media marketing.

Use of multiple communication channels, like radio, television, newspaper, flyers, brochures, internet and social media tools (i.e., Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube) can allow health messages to be communicated to people. Health communication strategies aim to change people's knowledge, attitudes, and/or behaviours, that includes increase risk perception, reinforcing positive behaviours, influence social norms, increase availability of support and needed services and empower individuals to change or improve their health conditions. It includes many areas including edutainment or enter-education (education through entertainment), health journalism, interpersonal communication, media advocacy, organizational communication, risk communication (communication based on fear appeals), social communication and social marketing. It can take many forms from mass and multi-media communications to traditional and culture-specific communication such as story-telling, puppet shows and street-plays. Soap operas and movies are also often used to disseminate health information.

Let us discuss the various channels of dissemination of health communication briefly.

- 1) **Entertainment Media:** How often have you seen a movie or a television series and wished to be a part of it? How often did you see a character similar to you on the movie screen, because of which, you felt more confident in your own skin? Or simply, how often do you watch Harry Potter or Narnia and wish you had a wand or a magic closet? Movies, television series, fictional characters, they can invoke emotions in us that normally might not come out as easily. We have read in previous units

how media can influence us, and how it is becoming a very regular part of everyone's lives. Thus, when it comes to communicating about health, entertainment media has been extremely useful.

To give an example let us go back to the year 2007 when '*Taare Zameen Par*', a Bollywood film was released, that highlighted a child's dyslexia. The movie was a critical as well as a box office success, and was one that carried a strong message. The movie revolves around a child who was suffering from a learning disorder known as *dyslexia*, which made studying academics in a normal fashion hard for him to fathom. His parents, unaware and ignorant of their child's disability, send him to a boarding school thinking it would help him. It was not until an unconventional teacher appears that things start to get better for the child. The movie was praised by not just critics but also by the general audience and scholars (Rao and Krishna, 2008).

Education-entertainment programs incorporate health-promoting messages and storylines in entertainment programs. Entertainment media can undoubtedly promote health communication and healthy lifestyle in a very effective way. We will further discuss this effect in detail in the case study at the end of this unit.

Digital Marketing: With the invention of internet, the world became an infinitely smaller place to reside in. People from different parts of the world were able to connect with each other, their cultures, their education, etc. Considering the dependence of people on the internet, it is only wise to use such mediums to connect with people to promote healthy behaviours. Traditional media such as television and radio has become less popular means for obtaining health information. Rather, internet and social media are increasingly being used for the same. Most consumers of online health information access user-generated health information as it provides tailored information for the users, that suits them personally. Health communication using social media has shifted from being unidirectional (as in mass media campaigns which were top-down communication) to multidirectional where consumers generate (bottom-up communication), seek as well as share (horizontal communication) information. Given this change, the field of health communication and thus health education also had to undergo a change.

Diverse digital marketing strategies exist to promote health communication. There exist a number of websites providing people with relevant and helpful information. There are chat-bots, which allow people to have short conversations regarding health, social media accounts that people follow to get updates about how they can keep themselves healthy and social media influencers who help run campaigns that promote health communication, thereby endorsing and encouraging people to adapt to healthy behaviours.

Social Media Marketing: Shares health messages through online social media platforms, which include social networks like Facebook, information-disseminating platforms like YouTube, and microblogging services like Twitter. The advantage of social media health campaign is its enormity, breadth of reach, and immediacy of social media platforms apart from being cost-effective. Social media campaigns are more effective in successfully converting health-related knowledge and information into web-based discussions. Studies on effectiveness of social media campaigns report positive behavioural changes being elicited. Social media platforms were used during the COVID-19 pandemic to spread information about the pandemic and reducing fear and anxiety among the public. Healthcare institutions are increasingly using social media as a channel to communicate with their customers.

An Indian social media campaign on Youtube by Mahindra Rise in association with Cancer Patients Aid Association, titled, “Sehat Ka Batua” creatively used the habit of women putting their purse (*batua*) inside their blouses as a reminder for personally examining their breasts to protect them from breast cancer. You can watch this campaign here https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zu_55piVrJU (A Unique CSR Initiative of Mahindra, for Self-Diagnosis of Breast Cancer in India).

- 2) **Advertising:** Another major strategy in health communication is advertising. Huge investments are made on traditional public health advertisements annually to promote preventive health behaviours. According to Schevitz (2010), educational campaign is essentially a selling campaign, the article we offer for sale being health. The central idea of commercial advertisements as well as health advertisements is to change behaviours of the target audience. Therefore, the underlying principles of product advertising (commercial advertising) and advertising for health promotion are the same. These principles and steps have been elaborated in Unit 7.
- 3) **Interpersonal Communication:** This is the most important form of communication as it involves the interaction between the health care provider and the patient itself. A person is most likely to take his/her doctor’s word of mouth very easily, considering they place a lot of their trust in them. This is another reason why while educating health care professionals, emphasis is now made also, on how they communicate the information. It ought to be in a manner the patients are able to grasp and follow.

The role of media is paramount as it is not just there to disseminate data and information, but also to influence people into following the advices. Thus, it is important to, not just spread the message to as many people as possible, but to have enough value in the message so that people are compelled to abide by them. We would later see how the *Pulse Polio*

campaign by Mr Amitabh Bachchan was extremely successful in drawing people to the polio booth.

Behaviour in humans is not a one-time change. Rather, it is a continuous process, which requires regular maintenance. For instance, if you are trying to convince someone to start exercising, it is very likely that they will not agree in one go. You might have to talk to them about exercising and its benefits, why they should engage in it, etc. on a continual basis. It is only after a certain point, will they agree to start with the recommended habit.

The process is similar in health behaviour change. **Communicators must repeatedly engage with the audience in an effective way so that they end up taking up the mentioned advice.** Health communication falls under the umbrella term of health education. Let us discuss the latter, how it is different from the former, and how media has contributed in its advancement.

Print media ads (i.e. Newspapers, Magazines, leaflets, brochures etc.) play an important role in informing and educating the people about important events related to their daily life. Sharma (2005) further suggests that newspapers are among the most important sources of health related around the world. The print media provide detailed information on almost every topic related to health. By informing the important things about the health-related issues, media help bringing the behavioural changes among the people. These changes may be related to change in the previous unhealthy habits, or wrong beliefs, or may be related to preoccupied attitudes or aimed at reinforcing the existing beliefs of habits.

Check Your Progress 1

Answer true or false:

- 1) The larger aim of health communication is to keep the public aware of various health practices.
- 2) Entertainment media is not a channel for spreading health communication
- 3) In infodemic, there is very less information.
- 4) For effective health communication, it is not necessary that the information is culturally appropriate.
- 5) Social network is one of the levels at which health communication can work.

5.2 MEDIA'S ROLE IN HEALTH EDUCATION

Health education has the primary aim of informing people about health. According to the World Health Organisation, "health education is any combination of learning experiences designed to help individuals and

communities improve their health, by increasing their knowledge or influencing their attitudes” (WHO, 1998). The WHO definition lays emphasis on a) dissemination of health-related information, b) inspiring and motivating the population for, c) taking necessary action, d) to improve health and e) maintain healthy behaviour / lifestyle.

Health education is a social science that is a hybrid field drawing from the biological, environmental, psychological, physical and medical sciences. It is a core public health discipline. Its aim is to promote health and prevent disease, disability and premature death through education-driven voluntary behaviour change activities. These change activities target the knowledge, attitudes, skills and behaviour of the individual, group, institutions or community as a whole. The **purpose** of health education is to positively influence the health behaviour of individuals and communities as well as the living and working conditions that influence their health.

Box 5.1 Reflect!

After knowing both their definitions, can you differentiate between health education and health communication?

Reading in one go, one might think twice to notice the distinctions between health communication and health education, due to the similarities they share. However, the reason why they share certain qualities is that health communication is a part of health education. Nevertheless, health education is not just about imbibing healthy behaviour or quality. It is concerned with motivating, building skills and confidence (self-efficacy) in people so they are motivated to switch to healthier behaviours.

There are different **health education strategies that operate at three different levels**. At these levels, the methods for imparting ideas and information to develop knowledge, attitude and skills are also varied. The individual methods include direct face-to-face communication like home visits. Such communication is interactive and permits a two-way flow of information. Thus, the client (a layperson or a patient) can ask questions and get clarifications from a health educator (a nurse or a health care worker for example). Because of limited resources (of time, availability of health educators, cost etc.), health education cannot always be done individually. Health education can be imparted to small groups. Group methods include demonstrations, role-play, street-play, panel discussion, group discussion, seminar, lecture, workshop, etc. These methods are comparatively less interactive. However, they allow for feedback. The group is usually homogenous in nature, for example all patients of osteoporosis or newly married adults on the use of contraceptives. Mass method is the method of mass media. To reach maximum number of people who are diverse and

geographically dispersed, mass methods are used. It does not allow for two-way communication. These methods comprise exhibitions, lectures and health promotion campaigns on mass media including radio, TV, newspaper, magazines, bill-boards etc.

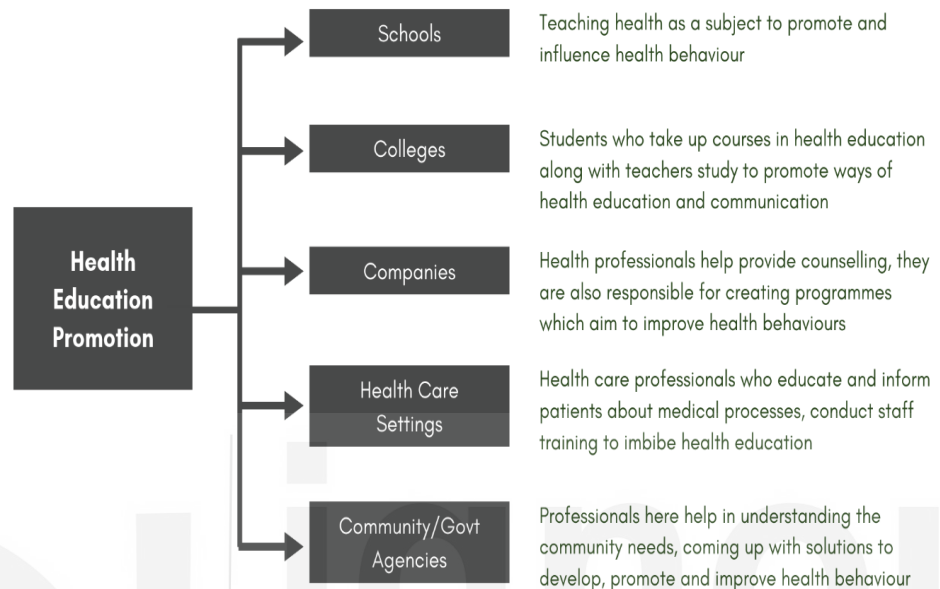


Figure 5.5 Health Education Programme

5.2.1 Health Education and the Mass Media

Health education aims at helping individuals and communities to have improved control over their health, by increasing their knowledge and influencing their attitude towards health. But the aim of health education is not limited to just the cerebral level. It aims at motivating people to take appropriate actions to improve their health. People need to know about the variety of factors that affect health, including social, economic and environmental conditions, apart from the individual risk factors and the facilities and utilities of the health care system.

Gupta & Sharma (2015) suggest that mass media impart necessary health information in our daily life, enabling common people to take appropriate decision about the different aspects of their lives especially about health. Evidences suggest that mass media play a central role in informing and education people about important events / changes happening around the world. Especially because media connect the audience to the world beyond their immediate reach. In other words, media bring the world closer to the audience and increase their reach and access. Mass media is one such institution which has the ability and potential to influence every individual's life in a big way. We see that media has ability to influence, our behaviour, our culture and even it can affect our thinking and attitudes towards different issues in our daily life (Gupta, 2006).

Use of social media can enhance communication strategies for health education and provides new opportunities for public health. Health educators and professionals are now relying on social media tools for being visible and viable. More research needs to be conducted on use social media technologies by health educators and its impact.

Box 5.2 Health Education and Health

Health education: It is a part of the discipline of **Public health**. It involves:

- conducting research and assessments
- planning mass media and health communications campaigns
- implementing mass media and health communications campaigns to help change attitudes and behaviors, and imparting knowledge and teaching skills to achieve health
- evaluation of these programs for continuous program improvement.
- health advocacy (for healthy lifestyles, policies, and environments)
- providing training to individuals, health advisors, other professionals, and policymakers

(Auld, Radius, Galer-Unti, Hinman, Gotsch, & Mail, 2011)

Health communication: It is a part of the **discipline of communication studies**, in which communicating promotional health information (like public health campaigns, health education, doctor and patient interaction) is examined and practiced. The focus is on different communication strategies that can be utilized to inform and influence choice and behaviour of the targeted population. It is majorly dissemination of health information (like ways to enhance health or avoid risk to health) and is a **part of health education**. It improves health literacy of people, which is one of the goals of health education.

Health promotion: Health promotion is defined as the process of enabling people to increase control over, and to improve one's health (Health Promotion Glossary, 1998). As part of the public health movement around the world in the 1980s, World Health Organization initiated a number of programmes towards achieving "Health for All".

Media have wide reach and access to influence millions of audiences, and geographically scattered, the reasons why media are so intensively used in health education programmes. Through the right mix of message and media, desired behavioural change amongst the target audience can be obtained. Thus, media plays an extremely important role of **change agent**. It influences the knowledge, attitude, beliefs, choices and eventually behaviour of people about health and healthy behaviours.

5.2.2 Why is Health Education important?

In absence of healthy individuals, a community, let alone a country, cannot thrive. When the health of the citizens of a country deteriorates, so does the economy. To put things into perspective, let us look at the following example from history.

During 1347 to 1351 CE, the black plague had spread all across Europe, killing 30 to 60% of Europe's population. Around 75 to 200 million individuals met their death due to this plague, and the consequences of the same were, with little surprise, enormous (Dunham, 2008). A sense of fear was generated among everyone alive. More and more people started staying in the safety of their homes rather than deciding to go to work. This eventually turned into an economic crisis at the top of a health crisis. The government, since was not very helpful, was now threatened by the public, which further made it a state of uncertainty and instability. There were religious repercussions to this as well, but that is irrelevant in this context. What *is* relevant, however, is how a health crisis can make things extremely difficult, if not managed properly at the right time.

In today's time, things have obviously changed for the better. Medical technology has advanced beyond imagination since the 1300s. However, diseases and health deterioration are not something humans can get rid of, it comes with being a mortal being. Nevertheless, that does not mean people cannot take precautions to ensure safety about their health. The Corona virus pandemic is an important case in point.

The purpose of health education is to educate people so they choose healthy behaviours. It enhances quality of life of individuals and creates a healthy society.

Box 5.3 Activity

Think about the COVID-19 pandemic and reflect on how health education played a role in curbing the spread of the virus.

5.2.3 Health Education in India

There are about 260 million people living in India who are unable to read and write, according to the 2011 census. Considering the amount of illiteracy, one can imagine the complexity of reaching these people with the idea of health education. Moreover, there are more rural than urban areas in the country. It is a highly diverse country, and traits such as these require proper attention when a plan for health education is generated.

Central Health Education Bureau (Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India) is the apex institution in India for health education

(https://dghs.gov.in/content/1408_3_httpchebncin.aspx). It has the following five divisions to ensure health education. All these division together help provide valuable information to people related to health. They are responsible for devising a plan that takes into consideration the various intricacies to ensure the effectiveness of the various health education promotion campaigns. The seven divisions are:

- Training division
- Media and Editorial
- Health promotion and education services
- School health education division
- Administrative division

While all these divisions work together to improve and provide health education, let us try to understand the role of media in a little detail. **The media division**, in particular, takes up various activities in order to promote health education. It uses scientific ways of disseminating the latest and correct information to the people about health and prevention of diseases. It ensures exhibitions on several health-related topics, and celebrates days such as World Health Day, World Mental Health Day, No Tobacco Day, and Worlds AIDS Day, to name just a few. Not just this, but the editorial division also brings out periodicals namely *Swasth Hind* (English monthly) *Arogya Sandesh* (Hindi monthly), and *Swasthya Shiksha Samachar* (Hindi quarterly) to disseminate health education information (Sharma, 2005).

The Bureau provides media services to all National Health Programmes and Technical Divisions of the Directorate General of Health Services. It prepares scripts for All India Radio and Doordarshan Kendras on health issues of public health interest.

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) Differentiate between health education and health communication.

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- 2) Identify the methods to promote health education programmes.

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5.3 MEDIA'S ROLE IN DESTIGMATIZATION

Box 5.4 Reflect!

Have you ever been treated differently because you behaved in a way, which is not generally accepted norm? (For example, a girl who speaks loudly may be frowned upon by people for not speaking softly. Or a man being called names because of him being effeminate).

“Stigma is a perceived negative attribute that causes someone to devalue or think less of the whole person. It is a preconceived idea or stereotype that causes someone to devalue or think less of the person in question. People tend to distance themselves from individuals in stigmatized groups, to blame individuals in these groups for negative actions and to discriminate against the stigmatized individuals” (Salters-Pedneault, 2020).

In simpler terms, stigma is a certain quality or trait attached to a set of people (perceived to be negative or different) in order to distinguish them from others as compared to more socially accepted forms of behaviours. For example, in India, girls and boys are expected to behave in a specific way, such as men are expected to have masculine characteristics and women, with more feminine characteristics. Thus, when a girl or a boy fails to abide by these ‘normal’ forms of behaviours, they are stigmatized, and may often face discrimination by the society. Further more, the behaviour society considers to be unusual, becomes the whole identity of that individual. For example, if a man is effeminate, the society may deem him as “*the effeminate man*”, thereby ignoring all the other qualities that make him a separate individual.

Other example could be of a person suffering from a mental illness. In India, mental illness is still a taboo and people choose to not talk about it openly, fearing how others might respond. Thus, many a times, families choose not to disclose to the society if they or any of their family member is suffering from any mental illness for the fear of social stigma.

Erving Goffman, one of the most influential sociologists of the 20th century, defines stigma as a phenomenon where an individual is rejected by the society due to a certain quality that is considered strange. The individual's reaction to stigma can be divided into the following three ways:

- **The Stigmatized:** Includes people who have the trait deemed undesirable by the public
- **The Normals:** Includes people who do not bear the stigma
- **The Wise:** Includes people among the normal who accept and are more open to the stigmatized

Gerhard Falk (2001), another sociologist and historian, stated how stigmatization would always remain a part of human civilization with one

group stigmatizing the other. That is because of the concept of ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders’, and people’s need to feel belonged to one group. Falk concluded that, “we and all societies will always stigmatize some condition and some behaviour because doing so provides for group solidarity by delineating ‘outsiders’ from ‘insiders’”.

Box 5.5 Reflect!

Now that you know what stigmatization means, how would you define destigmatization? What are the ways you think can help in reducing stigma?

5.3.1 What is Destigmatization?

The process of attempting to remove stigma, and to thereby, normalise qualities that are considered unusual through different means is known as destigmatization. In other words, to remove negative associations from what is regarded as shameful by society. Stigma can be reduced by the help of education, which can be in the following terms:

- **Making people aware of the facts** (like, men can be effeminate; females can be masculine, etc.)
- **Empowering the stigmatized groups** (by encouraging people to be more open and accepting of their differences)
- **Choosing to speak more cautiously** (not using degrading languages for pointing out certain differences among people)
- **Focussing on the positive** (by asking the people to pay attention to the diversity and freedom acceptance of differences would bring)
- **Creating a more inclusive society** (a society where there is acceptance and celebration of difference)

Box 5.6 Reflect!

Have you ever had stigmas about someone or a particular group or a concept? How did you overcome it?

There are numerous individuals who grow up stigmatizing because they do not know any better. However, many people get out of this bubble by educating themselves about unfamiliar concepts. This can take place due to a personal experience or due to some other reason. A major contributor to reducing stigma can be with the help of media. Considering its reach and the people who are affected by it, media can play a pivotal role in destigmatization. Let us understand how it can help in further detail.

5.3.2 Role of Media in Stigmatization

In 2015, the hashtag “#Oscars So White” was initiated by an activist, and to this day, it continues to hold importance. Eventually, numerous known and

respected actors came forward to join the movement and boycotted the Oscars, an award that is notably the biggest honour an actor can be bestowed upon for their skills. Why was this? Simply due to the lack of black representation and a more diverse set of nominees. How did this hashtag become so popular? It was with the help of social media platforms, where people were quick to respond to the issue with their support.

This scenario lead people to take a second look at, not just the nominees, but movies in general. People began to ask themselves questions such as, are our movies diverse? Are there people from different ethnicity who get representation? The answer is a big and simple **no**. Hollywood movies have usually revolved around white or male lead characters. Moreover, if there are characters of different ethnicity to be portrayed, they are often played by popular actors instead of those who would actually fit the criteria. In India also, we hardly have actors from the north-east India playing characters from the north-east. The bio-pic 'Mary Kom' is a pertinent example, where the lead Mary Kom was played by the mainstream actress Priyanka Chopra and not an actress from north-east India.

Movies play an important role in people's lives; these fictional stories include characters that become role models to many people. Thus, the lack of diversity in movies can play a direct effect on the society. The representation is not just limited to black actors, but it called for better representation of women, LGBTQ+ community, and individuals belonging to different ethnicities, etc.

How movies portray characters can help people make judgements about them, they can know and read about it to educate themselves further. In the absence of any representation, however, this is unlikely to happen. By portraying black characters as gangsters, Asian characters as highly conservative, etc, these will imbibe and promote the already existing stigmas. This is where media can act more maturely while portraying stigmatized or underrepresented characters. A large part of media has already begun ensuring representing people and other concepts (such as mental health, HIV/AIDS, etc.) to reduce the stigmas.

What do you thing foreigners think of when they think of India? Is it an image of poverty? Over population? A land of snake charmers?

Ask yourself this, is India limited to such characteristics? Not in the slightest. Nevertheless, what people outside of India know of the country is through its portrayal in the movies, TV series, and books. Moreover, it is not a mystery that Indian characters are not often seen on the international screen. When they are, however, they are stigmatized and a stereotypical view of them is highlighted.

It is not just an issue in international media, however, when it comes to Indian cinema, there is hardly any diversity. Female characters are portrayed mainly as love interest to the male lead, LGBTQ+ characters are included for

comical purposes, mental illness is hardly mentioned and can also be seen poked fun at on various television series. In short, there is a long way to go. What is portrayed in the movies, play a direct role in influencing the minds of people who are in continuous touch with media's various forms.

In today's time, when majority of the population engages with media, it is clear there is a need for a positive role that media can play in educating people, and in many cases, it has begun doing that. You will understand how media can promote health education and communication better after going through the case study mentioned in the end of this unit. However, let us go through another topic of importance, destigmatization, in which media can also play a pivotal role.

5.3.3 Media's Role in Destigmatization

Box 5.7 Activity

When you want to know about something, what do you do to know more about it:

- a) Go to the library
- b) Google the information
- c) Watch Documentaries
- d) Watch Movies/TV Series based on the topic, if any
- e) Read Newspaper cuttings of the information
- f) All or a mixture of all the above

Chances are you would take a combination of the actions mentioned above. The point of the above exercise was to make you understand how much media plays a role in each of our lives. There are many concepts and issues that people are not aware of and one movie, media campaign, newspaper article has the power to generate enough stir among the public that they would be compelled to know more about the topic.

For instance, we discussed, how the release of '*Taare Zameen Par*' pushed people, schools to raise awareness on the topic of learning disabilities. Similarly, media can play a pivotal role in influencing and spreading public awareness. It can help in normalising behaviours that are stigmatized by educating people in an effective manner.

For instance, mostly the qualities associated with women in movies are that they are emotional, caring, and those who will keep the house and the family together. While there is no issue in empowering women who run households, it is also important to represent the other section of women in a positive light. In recent years, viewers of Indian film and television have witnessed a shift from portrayals of females as innocent and subordinate in nature, into independent sexual beings. This has already begun with more movies coming that highlight a woman's character as being more than just a love interest.

With movies such as *Kahaani*, *Queen*, *Dear Zindagi*, *Padmaavat* etc. things are surely taking a positive turn.

Thus, media can play a significant role in offering newer narratives in the public domain. They help in reducing the prevalent stereotypes, prejudices and discriminatory practices. They bring discourses of 'deviance' into discourse on 'normalcy' or 'alternative ways of being'. Silent candle-light protests by the public, at India Gate was a virtually unknown concept until the 2005 blockbuster *Rang De Basanti* brought it alive.

Mental illness is a taboo in India, but the circumstances are slowly changing. This is possible because of the increase in the number of people who are willing to talk about the issue in public. India recently also decriminalised suicide as a criminal activity, a step that acknowledged mental health issues as more than a criminal behaviour. Movies like *Hichki*, *Pa*, *Taare Zameen Par* brought new discussions on different psychological disorders.

Popular channels and social media also have a lot to do with imparting awareness on various mental health related issues. It gives people the space to communicate the issues they are going through. What this does is that it makes people conscious of many others suffering from similar situations. It creates a community where people can be of help to one another. Bollywood actor, Deepika Padukone, openly came out about her depression. She talked about her battle with depression while her professional career was booming. She emphasised on the importance of making this issue as public as possible and released a video "Not Ashamed" on the popular channel, YouTube, where she shared her personal struggle while going through that phase.



Deepika is [#NotAshamed](#)

Deepika Padukone, a popular Bollywood actress, openly talking about her battle with depression in a You Tube Video

If we take an example of representation of LGBTQ+ community, it is evident that there is little representation. Furthermore, when it is, it is often portrayed in a comical role. However, media has been playing a positive role in making people aware by including characters that belong to this community. Thereby, leading to an effort to reduce stigmatization of LGBTQ+ community. More TV series, movies now include characters belonging to the

LGBTQ+ community. These characters are given quality role and importance in the series' plot. One recent example could be of the movie *Kapoor and Sons*, where one of the lead characters in the movie was gay. The character was not poked fun at for his sexuality and it was depicted in a very realistic manner, thereby, putting the existence of the community in front of the public.



Kapoor And Sons' Film Poster

It Showed one of the lead characters as being gay, excluding the stereotypes that come with it

We have continuously read and gone through researches that proved media's influence on public. It, however, is understood that people's behaviours and cognitions are not changed due to exposure to one strong media message. It takes constant effort to imbibe positive messages into the public. Media's reach can fasten this process, and its effectiveness is the reason why it is used to disseminate information.

In the next section, let us look at case studies to understand how media helped in promoting health communication, education and destigmatization for HIV/AIDS campaigns.

Check Your Progress 3

- 1) Define destigmatization.

.....

.....

.....

- 2) Cite some examples where media has played a role to destigmatize people's behaviours.

.....

.....

.....

5.4 CASE STUDIES: HOW MEDIA CAMPAIGN HELP DISSEMINATE INFORMATION?

Case study 1: Mass Media Campaign on HIV/AIDS (Sood, Shefner-Rogers, & Sengupta, 2007)

HIV/AIDS is a virus that damages one's immune system and makes one more prone to getting sick. It is contagious and can spread from one person to another through sexual intercourse. It cannot be cured but can be prevented. Those who suffer from it can lead a normal life, however they must take precautions so it does not spread further.

It is not easy due to the lack of enough education and awareness about the disease. A lot of misinformation, stigmas, and false opinions are prevalent about AIDS. This can make life harder for those who are suffering from the disease. The fear of stigma can even convince some not to seek help from health care professionals. This is extremely dangerous for the person suffering as well as for others who might get in contact with them.

India saw its first case of AIDS in 1986, and since then it has spread to a large part of the country. It is imperative that people are more aware of this, and actions are taken to ensure it does not spread further. As per the HIV estimates report (2019), Government of India, there are around 23.49 lakh people living with HIV/AIDS (PLHIV) in 2019, and the estimated new HIV infections declining by 37% between 2010 to 2019.

HIV/AIDS is transmitted mainly because of engaging in sex. Sex, itself, is a taboo in India and is not talked about, which explains why the disease spread to such a large number. Even though times may be changing, at least in some metropolitan areas, stigma and discrimination are still a major hindrance to prevention, care, and treatment (UNICEF, 2004).

Entertainment-Education Strategy to combat AIDS in India: Strategy to involve entertainment media was taken in the attempt to influence knowledge and behaviour change towards AIDS in India. The entertainment-education strategy is based on the Social Cognitive Theory by Albert Bandura, which concluded that people's behaviours are influenced by what they observe, and they tend to behave in a manner similar to how their role models act.

The BBC World Service Trust Partnership Campaign: To increase awareness of HIV/AIDS in India, a campaign was launched by the BBC World Service Trust (BBC WST), India's National Aids Control Organisation (NACO), Doordarshan (national television service), and All India Radio. The purpose behind the campaigns was:

- to increase accurate knowledge about the modes of HIV transmission,
- to increase knowledge about the means of preventing HIV infection,
- to promote interpersonal communication about HIV/AIDS, and;

- to promote interpersonal communication about condoms and condom use.

'Jasoos Vijay', a TV series, was the basis of the campaign where the protagonist, Vijay, was HIV positive. It was through his experiences the audience learns about the discrimination people suffering from HIV face, the care and treatment for the virus, the importance of condom use and other means through which it can be prevented.



Jasoos Vijay, a TV series with the aim to spread awareness about HIV/AIDS

Image Source: IMDB

'Haath se Haath Mila' was another reality show that went out in the streets to spread awareness about HIV/AIDS. Each episode consisted of real-life youth dilemmas, comedy skits, popular music segments, and contests that generated public discussion about sexual health issues. In addition to these, nine one-minute television spots, which were repeatedly shown and carried information regarding:

- the myths and misconceptions regarding routes of HIV transmission,
- the mistaken beliefs about people living with HIV/AIDS,
- methods for preventing HIV infection (for example, using condoms), and
- the need for open discussion about sexual norms and practices.

Six one-minute radio spots were also created and were tailored as per the local audience, with special emphasis on male audience members. These spots carried knowledge regarding how HIV infection is transmitted, and how condom usage can help prevent it.

Results of the Media Campaigns: These campaigns did a lot for changing the perspective about HIV. Furthermore, results clearly showed that individuals who were exposed to the campaigns were more likely:

- to be aware of STIs, HIV/AIDS, and condoms,

- to know about the routes of HIV transmission,
- to have fewer misconceptions about HIV transmission, and
- to talk to others about STIs, HIV/AIDS, and condoms than those who were not exposed to the campaign messages.

The case study establishes how much media can contribute in providing people with helpful information. Furthermore, in this situation, it fulfilled the objectives.

Case Study 2: The Bachchan Effect: *Do Boond Zindagi Ke* (Case study on India's Pulse Polio Mission)

In 2002, India witnessed a massive outbreak of Polio. Northern India had a major share of infections from UP and Bihar which comprised more than 95% of total cases. But there was huge resistance in the rural public towards immunization. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and UNICEF had to employ advertising company (then) Ogilvy and Mather to lead the mass communication for the Pulse Polio program in India. Their major challenge was to persuade the rural mothers to visit the vaccination camps and get their child the polio drops.

To overcome the resistance and motivate women to get their child immunized, Mr Amitabh Bachchan was made the brand ambassador for the Polio Eradication Campaign in 2002. Mr Bachchan is very popular in north India and has great respect and credibility. His image of an angry young man (a role that he played in many popular Hindi movies) was capitalized by the advertising agency. In the television ad, he roared "*Dhikkar hai hum par, Polio ke booth par itne kam log?*" His powerful voice echoed on every TV set and radio station in the early 2000s and resulted in mothers getting their children to the polio booths and receive '*Do Boond Zindagi Ke*'.

When these mothers were asked about the reason for coming to the camp that held little or no importance for them initially, their response was that "Amitabh Bachchan has become angry!" Research also established the effectiveness of Amitabh Bachchan media spots. TV ads were slightly more influential than radio ads in drawing people to the polio booths. The use of emotional appeal in the campaign did the magic. Even UNICEF recognized Mr Bachchan's effort as a UNICEF Good will Ambassador (<https://www.unicef.org/india/our-partners/celebrities/amitabh-bachchan>).

Eradication efforts coupled with effective use of mass media for the 'Pulse Polio' campaign was met with measurable success. India recorded just 66 cases in 2005, down from 135 cases reported in 2004, 225 in 2003, and 1,600 in 2002.



Every Bachchan ad about Polio awareness would end with the actor raising two fingers with the message- 'Pulse Polio Immunization- Two drops of Life'.

Source:

<https://www.socialsamosa.com/2020/03/brand-saga-pulse-polio-campaign/>

The door-to-door communication strategy was coupled with posters, campaigns, exhibitions, interpersonal communication, village seminars, wall paintings, health camps (swasthya mela), folk drama and community meetings which lead to polio eradication from India.

5.5 SUMMARY

Let us review what we have learnt in this unit.

- When media channels started to gain popularity, the positive aspects were well ignored. Its negative effects were soon rigorously studied and declared, not much attention was given to what good it can do to the human society.
- However, with the emergence of positive psychology, media's importance to help people in various ways was paid attention to and given importance. How media helped in prosocial and other positive behaviours started to gain wider acceptance. It is still in the process of becoming a large phenomenon. However, the foundation has been set.
- Media play a significant role in health in health communication, health education, stigmatization and destigmatization social taboos.
- Through the case study, we learnt how different media channels helped raise awareness about HIV/AIDS. Not just that but it was effective in reducing stigmas attached to it, and helped those suffering from it seek help and take further precautions. Another case study demonstrated the

result of effective mass media campaign for polio immunization. Clearly, when a proper strategy is in place, media can provide extreme value to the society and can thus, contribute massively in developing the society further.

5.6 KEYWORDS

Destigmatization The process of attempting to remove stigma and to normalise qualities that are considered unusual through different means

Health Communication Communicating health information, like public health campaigns, health education, doctor and patient interaction, which is examined and practiced

Health Education Aims is to promote health and prevent disease, disability and premature death through education-driven voluntary behaviour change activities

Health Promotion Process of enabling people to increase control over, and to improve one's health

Infodemic When there is plenty of information – some right, some wrong – mostly being spread through social media

Positive Media Psychology Sub-field of Psychology that deals with the positive cognitive, emotional and behavioural impact of media use

Stigma A perceived attribute or trait that causes someone to devalue or think less of the whole person

5.7 REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1) Discuss the role of mass media in health education.
- 2) Explain the significance of health education for a developing society.
- 3) How does mass media campaign help in disseminating information to reduce stigma and bring about behavioural changes? Support your answer with relevant case studies.
- 4) Elucidate the main attributes for effective health communication.
- 5) Describe the various channels of disseminating health communication.

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Popular social media health-promotion campaigns:
<https://www.bangthetable.com/blog/public-health-social-media-campaigns/>

Health education in India:<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ794068.pdf>

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5.9 ADDITIONAL ONLINE RESOURCES

- Effective use of social media platforms for promotion of mental health awareness (nih.gov)
- 3 Effective Marketing Campaigns Promoting Mental Health Wellness 3 Effective Marketing Campaigns Pro (digitalmediasolutions.com)
- Social Media as an Educational Tool to Promote Health (uniteforsight.org)
- EMRPUB_2012_EN_1362.pdf (who.int)
- http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/attachements.cfm/att_94034_EN_Effectiveness%20of%20Mass%20Media%20campaigns%20HDA.pdf
- Prof. Melanie A. Wakefield, PhD, Prof. Barbara Loken, PhD, and Prof. Robert C. Hornik, PhD (2010). Use of mass media campaigns to change health behaviour (nih.gov).

Answers to Check Your Progress 1: True or False

(1) True (2) False (3) False (4) False (5) True

UNIT 6 NEGATIVE INFLUENCE OF MEDIA^{*}

Structure

6.0 Introduction

6.1 Role of Media Violence

6.1.1 Theoretical Explanations of Media Violence and their Impact on Human Psychology

6.2 Media's Role in Body Image Issues and Eating Behaviour

6.2.1 What Are Body Image Issues and Eating Disorders?

6.2.2 Portrayal of Ideal Body Types in Media

6.2.3 How Media Influences the Human Psychology?

6.3 Internet Addiction

6.3.1 What is Internet Addiction Disorder?

6.3.2 Gaming Disorder

6.3.3 How does Internet Addiction Impact People?

6.4 Case Study: Gaming Addiction in South Korea

6.5 Summary

6.6 Keywords

6.7 Review Questions

6.8 References and Suggested Reading

6.9 Additional Online Resources

Learning Objectives

After reading this unit, you will be able to,

- explain how media violence impacts human psychology,
- analyse the role of media in shaping body image issues in individuals, and
- discuss internet addiction, whom it affects, and what are its impacts.

6.0 INTRODUCTION

Experiences shape us and media plays a huge role in this shaping. In the previous units, we discussed how we imitate things that we observe regularly, a concept as explained in the Social Cognitive Theory by Albert Bandura. Case study in the previous unit established how media campaigns were able

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to influence and spread awareness about HIV/AIDS to the vast majority. Enough research has already been conducted to emphasise how media can play an impactful role in human psychology. Unless a person is cautious and conscious of the information, they engage themselves with, they can very easily be convinced into believing certain ideas the media chooses to highlight. More importantly, with media technology growing at such a fast pace, and people's dependence on it increasing by the day, not everyone is paying attention to the impacts it might have on them.

For instance, moviemakers and storytellers are more interested in creating art, and probably even money, than on creating an impact, be it positive or negative. The aim of various news channels is to attain higher viewership rather than to present the information as is. In other words, many personal agendas take place behind the scenes, which people do not necessarily know about. However, it is no surprise that media does end up creating a large impact.

Nevertheless, is influence through media that simple? Different academicians have different beliefs. However, they all agree on one thing; media does have the power to make people believe in anything, and this is precisely why the audience should be mindful of what they watch and absorb.

There are reasons why movies are rated by critics (*ratings such as 'U/A' – meaning a film should be guided by parent for children under 12 years of age, or as 'A' – meaning a film is restricted to adults, etc.*). Ratings are a way of expressing what the movie includes in advance. It is to ensure appropriate audience watches appropriate types of movies.

In the previous unit, we learned about the positive impact media can have. Let us now understand the negative ways in which it can influence people. The major topics we will discuss herein are the ways media influences violence, body image issues, and internet addiction. We will study the media effects through various researches done under each topic for better understanding. We will also go through an India specific case study about the negative impact of media.

6.1 ROLE OF MEDIA VIOLENCE

Box 6.1 Exercise

Name top 5 actors according to you and try to remember films they have done where there is little or no violence?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

5. _____

(There aren't many such movies, are there? This should give you an initial idea about how much violence we normally watch)

By now, we have established the correlation that exists between media and human psychology. Although there exists complexities, scholars and researchers have repeatedly proven the negative effect media can have on people. To emphasize this effect, let us read a few eccentric and real-life acts of violence and damaging behaviours that were performed by those who were inspired by different movies:

- **Chelembra Bank Robbery:** In Kerala, 2007, the convicts of a bank robbery stated how their actions were inspired by the movie '*Dhoom*'. In the movie, the antagonist digs a hole that leads to his goal. The real-life convicts handed out their robbery in a similar fashion. They dug a hole that led to the insides of the bank, from where they successfully looted cash and gold worth 80 million (Banerjee, 2012).
- **Stabbing of The Teacher:** A 15-year-old student stabbed his teacher to death after she made a remark on his inability to do well in studies. When the investigation was taking place, the boy revealed that his actions were inspired by the movie he had seen recently, he was referring to '*Agneepath*', a movie in which the protagonist takes revenge on those who falsely implicate his father (Sujatha, 2012)
- **A Clockwork Orange Inspired Crime:** '*A Clockwork Orange*' was a 1971 critically acclaimed film adapted from a book by the same name. The movie had allegedly inspired a few crimes around that time, due to the vivid portrayal of violent crimes in which the protagonist engages. The film tried to distance itself from such criticism by stating that the violence in the movie had nothing to do with real life crimes. However, after a girl was raped by a group of teenagers while they sang 'singing in the rain' in London (exactly how the protagonist of the movie does to his victim), the movie was withdrawn from general release (PBS[undated] Stanley Kubrick's *A Clockwork Orange*, 1971)

The above three cases are not the only ones in existence. One can argue that out of all the people who see such movies, not everyone starts acting aggressively. This is a fair argument, but it still cannot declare that violence portrayed in media cannot have any negative implications on the society. It is true that not all people turn into murderers after watching or reading a murder fiction. However, considerable evidence exists to establish that if people continuously engage themselves with mediums that include and promote violence, they might become more aggressive and violent overtime.

Bushman and Anderson (2009), in experimental research, concluded how those who played with violent video games were more likely to be numb about the pain and sufferings of other people. In their research, they divided

the subjects into two groups. One engaged with violent games, while the other did not. It was noticed that the group, which did not play the violent video game, were quick to help the person who needed it than the other group.

There are a number of researches, articles, books, etc. that discuss the effects of media violence on human psychology and we have discussed this in detail in previous units. Let us now dig deeper and study the specific effects media violence has on people. What are the effects of engaging with violent media? What are the factors that decide who gets more affected? Let us move to answer such questions in more detail.

6.1.1 Theoretical Explanations of Media Violence and their Impact on Human Psychology

- **Social Learning Theory:** According to this theory, people acquire new behaviours through the process of imitating and observing others. Social learning theory acts as a bridge between cognitive and behavioural school of thoughts. According to the theory, individuals use their cognitive abilities to learn from social context. This form of learning can take place through the process of observation. What is important to note is that observational learning can occur even in the absence of direct reinforcements to the observers, thereby accelerating acquisition of new behaviours. One of the experiments that proved how individuals learn by observation is through the results in 'Bobo Doll' experiment (Bandura et al, 1961, 1963). Albert Bandura in the early 1960s performed this study in an artificial setting. It was noticed that children who were exposed to a violent media clip in which an adult model hit a bobo doll, were more likely to follow the same action.

The experiments with Albert Bandura, however, had its weaknesses. One of which was low external validity, i.e. the results of the theory might not apply to real life situations. Furthermore, the video shown to the children, where the adult would hit the bobo doll, was similar to the setting in which these children were placed. Thus, one could argue if media had to play a role at all. It could also be a possibility that the resemblance in the setting motivated children to act in a violent manner, towards the doll. So, can people learn through observation? According to many scholars and researches, yes, they can.

With ethical concerns eventually catching up, the experiments shifted towards observing individuals in a natural setting, or by taking self-report measures and surveys. Nevertheless, meta-analytic studies, like that by Paik and Comstock (1994), posit existence of a positive and significant correlation between television violence and aggressive behaviour. Evidence from another meta-analysis work on violent video games by Anderson et. al. (2010) strongly suggested that exposure to violent video games is a causal risk factor for increased aggressive

behaviour, aggressive cognition, and aggressive affect and for decreased empathy and prosocial behaviour.

However, the reason behind ‘why’ people might imitate violent behaviour is also concerning. Many of the violent media glamorises such behaviours, and those who engage in it usually do not lose anything. Furthermore, in video and computer games, where the person is actively taking part in what is happening, the player is often rewarded for selecting a more violent action and violence is presented as fun (Funk, 2005; Funk et.al., 2003). Games that reward violent action promote aggression through aggressive thinking (Carnagey & Anderson, 2005).

- **Media Violence and Desensitization:** Studies also show that continuous exposure to violent media makes people less empathetic in real life. This is because of normalisation of violence due to repeatedly engaging with violent media. This process is also known as *desensitization* and can explain why some might not consider what they are doing is actually violent. Desensitization is the process of decrease in cognitive, emotional, physiological, and eventually behavioural responses to a violent stimulus. Behavioural outcomes of desensitization could be failure to intervene to stop violent actions of others or committing a violent act oneself (Funk 2006). A common example of desensitization is when we all make videos of someone’s suffering rather than intervening to help.

When some natural or human made calamity affects a particular place in the world (like, Mumbai Terror Attacks of November 26, 2008), everyone feels deeply about it. Everyone tries in his/her own ability to help and deal with the grief. However, unless they were personally affected, they all eventually move on. This is a natural process of desensitization that takes a natural course. However, desensitization as a result of exposure to media violence is not natural. Such desensitization results in the inhibition of moral reasoning – reasoning based on one’s moral and values – which would prevent the person from engaging in aggressive actions.

It increases the belief that violence is normative. Repeated exposure to violence makes it a normal factor in their lives. Thus, as a result, what normally would fall under the category of violence for most people; might be a normalcy for those who engage with violent media constantly. Thus, media violence can desensitise children, adolescents and youth of the true consequences of violence. It reduces their empathy and negative attitude towards violence. Furthermore, this also can lead to increase in aggressive and violent behaviour in them (Guerra, Huesmann, & Spindler, 2003).

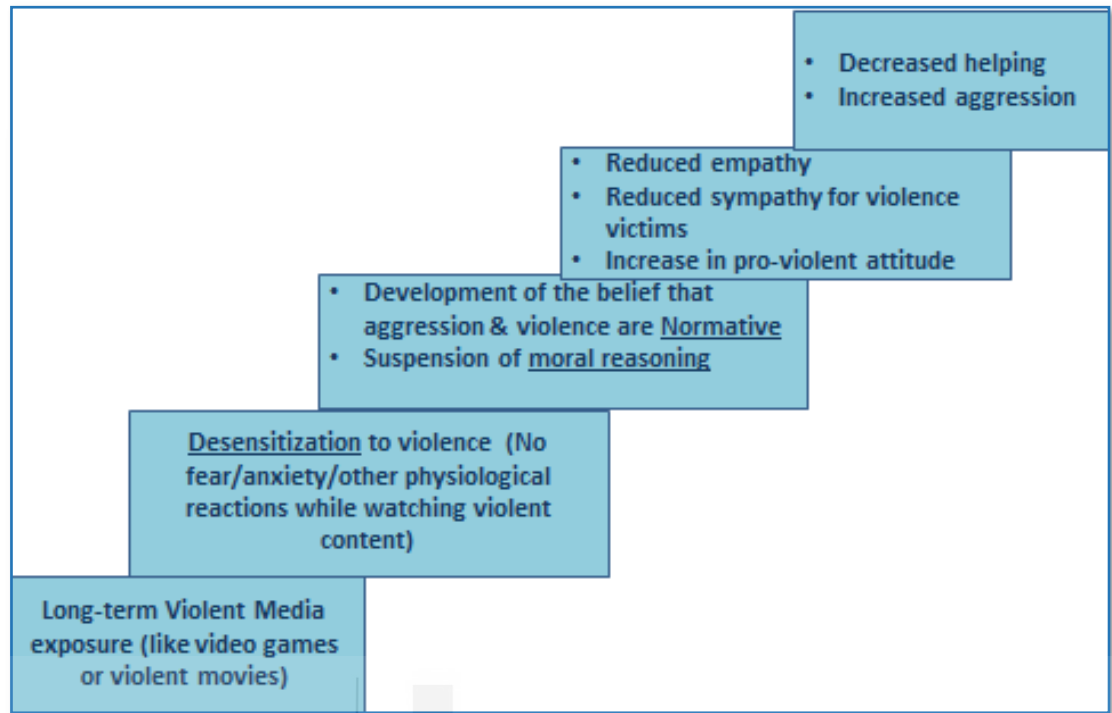


Figure 6.1 Desensitization Effects

Much of the media coverage surrounding violence is romanticised. It is mostly unrealistic and those who participate in violent acts are shown as enjoying the same. This could further the process of desensitization towards violence. For example, many times protagonist of a movie is shown to be performing various violent acts in the name of valour or even masculinity. It is regarded as ‘cool’, ‘heroic’, ‘popular’ and also celebrated in many ways. Thus, violent act on the part of the ‘hero’ is reinforced and that is exactly what the viewers perceive.

- General Aggression Model:** The General Aggression Model (GAM) is a meta-theory that integrates the role of different factors in aggression. These factors can be situational (like frustration or provocation or exposure to aggressive models/media, or even culture) or personal (like personality, beliefs, biological factors), and are the primary input variables for aggression to take place. These input factors further influence individual’s thoughts, feelings and physiological arousal, defining the individual’s internal state. Individual’s internal state along with their appraisal of the situation and decision-making process determine whether aggression would occur or not. An angry person with aggressive thoughts and who perceives the situation as threatening or aversive is more likely to act aggressively. According to GAM, exposure to violent media is an important situational factor influencing aggressive behaviour (Anderson and Bushman, 2018). According to GAM, continuous exposure to media violence impacts all the three internal state paths (thoughts, feelings and arousal) and also increases hostile appraisals. Thus, aggressive beliefs and attitudes, aggressive behavioural scripts, and desensitization to violence lead to increased aggression. However, the level of *how much* media violence may influence is also

dependent on who is on the other side of the screen. That is, personality factors *might* also have a role to play. Let us understand if media violence affects different personalities differently or not.

- **Personality and other personal factors:** Different people are attracted to different genres of movies. Some prefer drama, some horror, some violent while some romantic. The question is who are more prone to watching violent media? Who are more vulnerable to its effects, if at all they are?

A major reason why media was seen with a negative lens was due to the inability to understand the effect it was having on individuals, be it negative or positive. In other words, researchers who studied this were not sure if people would question the information they received from media or would they blindly accept it.

In a seminal work, Cantril and Allport (1935) presented a careful analysis of the impact of radio advertising in their book 'Psychology of Radio'. They reported that people who had higher levels of education were less likely to take everything they heard on the radio at face value and were more inclined towards checking the accuracy of information being broadcasted. However, this did not guarantee that all with formal education would behave similarly. As he also discussed that some even with the formal education, were not able to assess the true nature of the broadcast. Thus, education may increase the chances of developing a more conscious population; it still does not entirely explain why some educated people are impacted more by media than the others are. This may point towards the role of personality factors in being influenced by media.

Even though most would argue that media violence influences a certain personality type. Recently Timmermans and Sparks (2017) call for media researchers to focus on personality psychology and individual differences as it may help them to decipher the impact and use of certain types of media content. Some studies linking personality and social media use already exist. However, Krcmar and Greene (1999) found little to support any direct relationship between personality characters (like risk-taking and sensation-seeking behaviour) and violent media use. On the other hand, Zillmann and Weaver (1997) studied the relationship between violent media and the score of psychoticism scale of the Eysenck Personality Inventory. A strong correlation between these measures for males scoring in the upper half of the scale was found. However, the overall results showed no particular association between psychoticism and preference for violent media. In another study, sensation seeking was linked with violent program viewing on TV (Böcking and Fahr, 2009). Individuals with high levels of hostility and aggression are more susceptible to the influence of television on violence (Fenigstein, 1979; Fabio et.al 2017). These studies indicate that people with certain personality traits have a tendency to consume violent media to some extent. But the field requires more investigation.

Initially we discussed a few cases where individuals confessed to have been motivated to act violently because of the films they watched. Media undoubtedly plays an important role in promoting acts of violence. But apart from media, many factors come into place to influence individuals to carry out violent action. It would be unfair to think that media is the sole cause of promoting violence among people. One can even argue that real life incidents often inspire certain crimes in movies, which makes the relationship cyclical.

However, because of the undeniable influencing power of media, those who consume different media content should be aware of the effect they might unconsciously have. It becomes a responsibility of those with the ability to take decisions, to ensure nothing extreme results out of anything. In the next section, let us now see how our perception about our own body is influenced by media.

Check Your Progress 1

Match the following:

1. Social learning	A) Effect of media on behaviour
2. Desensitization	B) Internal state paths
3. Sensation seeking	C) Observational learning
4. Bobo doll experiment	D) Reduced empathy
5. General aggression model	E) Increased violent media consumption

6.2 MEDIA'S ROLE IN BODY IMAGE ISSUES AND EATING BEHAVIOUR

If you are asked to name top Bollywood/Hollywood actresses that you know of, do you find some similarity in them? Often in media, we can see people represented in a similar fashion. Women are more often than not, fair skinned, straight haired, have a thin figure, etc., while men are tall, well built, and muscular. This is mostly the case, but is it similar to how the real world looks like? Isn't there more diversity in the world in which we actually reside?

Hollywood's Meryl Streep, regarded as the best actor of her generation with 21 Academy Award nominations, admitted in an interview that in her initial years she had been once rejected for being deemed as "ugly" to play the part. Rekha, the veteran actress of Bollywood, had to go through a lot for being dark skinned. There exists a plethora of similar cases of discrimination that takes place due to the stereotypical standards of 'beauty'. Media, directly,

plays a role in giving definition to this adjective. Furthermore, it consciously promotes this category of beauty as the only type that can be deemed desirable.

“Witnessing the men and women and boys and girls who appear on television and in other media forms, including what they say, what they do, what they look like, and how they interact, can help form audience members’ views of gender roles and their corresponding conceptions of themselves and others. The media can thus shape perceptions of masculinity and femininity, attitudes regarding gender roles (including what is deemed acceptable for girls and women or for boys and men) and behaviours that derive from these conceptions.” (Scharrer,2013).

If one looks at the advertisements in print and in visual media, the ‘ideal’ sense of beauty is publicised and promoted everywhere. When studying the effects of media on body image issues and eating disorders in an academic manner, such hypothesis needs to be supported with research, to further prove or disprove the allegations of media having a severe impact in this regard. Let us begin by understanding what body image issues are, and how they affect an individual.

6.2.1 What are Body Image Issues and Eating Disorders?

Box 6.2 Exercise

Look yourself in the mirror and note down the first 5 things you notice:

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What is the first thing you notice when you look in the mirror? Do you notice your ‘flaws’? Or do you look yourself in the mirror with admiration and confidence?



Source: “Male Body Image Issues Are Important.” 58 Illustrations By BoPoLena (aworkstation.com)

Body image is the perception you have of your body and how that makes you feel. It is the sum total of your thoughts, attitude towards, belief and perception of your own body. And that perception might not always be accurate. Body image also means how satisfied you are with your weight, shape, features, complexion etc. If a person is not satisfied with the way they look, it could lead to unhealthy behaviours. Body image is influenced by both the person related internal factors like personality, and social- environmental externals factors like peer-pressure and media.

Humans are social - they strive for companionships and they want to belong to a group, which makes them feel secure. Therefore, when a particular model is put in front of the masses as a desired self, people try to imitate it. They do so in order to make others accept them for they are similar to the desired criteria.

Similar is the case with body images. Individuals are exposed to a plethora of images, blogs, news articles, all talking about ways of achieving the ‘perfect’ body. However, the reality is different. The images that people witness are mostly edited by professionals so they look a certain way. The pictures that many people, especially females, look at are in reality unreal themselves. Did you know that the effects of unrealistic ideals for body image can be so extreme that in 2017, in France a new law got into effect that requires any commercial image in which the model’s body has been digitally edited must have a “retouched photograph” label (Eggert, 2017). There are many models/actresses speaking out about how they themselves suffer from body image issues. In conclusion, most of us feel discomfort with their own natural body, even though the real majority has little in common with what is portrayed in media.

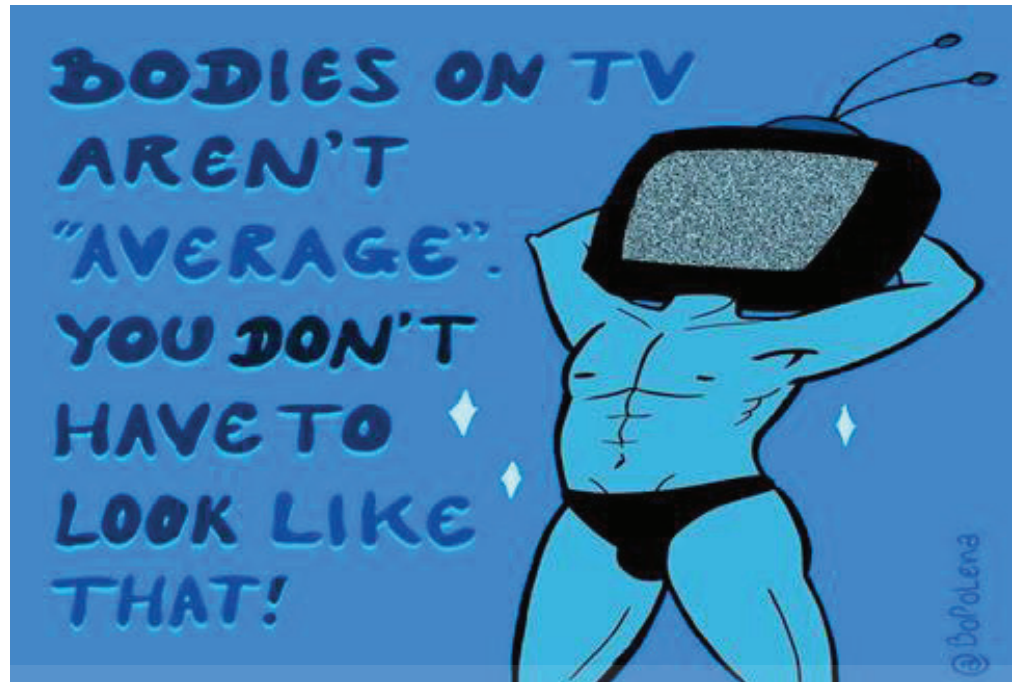
6.2.2 Portrayal of Ideal Body Types in Media

“Beauty lies in the eyes of beholder”, said Pluto. The quote implies that beauty is defined subjectively, and that no one definition of beauty can be considered better than the other one. However, unfortunately, this is not what most people believe. There are stereotypical notions of beauty. A thin body in case of females and a muscular one in case of males sometimes is the sole criterion to determine someone’s beauty.



Source: <https://pixabay.com/illustrations/mirror-ice-picture-depression-1547919/>

If you try to recall even five overweight actors who played a lead character in a movie or TV series, chances are that you will not be able to recall. Media has a very specific and narrow idea of how a person, if they want to feel desired, loved, and beautiful should look like. Media portrays people with similar physical qualities in TV serials, movies, news anchors and advertisements. For instance, thin women and those with a fairer complexion are far more present in media than those with average or above average weight. Similarly, as time progressed, men who are muscular and taller bagged the roles of lead actors more than others. Thus, the underlying message of what counts as beautiful and attractive is disseminated to larger audience. There is very little diversity in the way media portrays beauty, attractiveness or likeability. And what is portrayed in media cannot be considered as a true picture of what happens in reality. However, it does exert its influence.



Source: "Male Body Image Issues Are Important:" 58 Illustrations By BoPoLena (aworkstation.com)

Thin characters are portrayed in a positive light in comparison with less thin characters. Characters who are over weight or those with above-average weight are either underrepresented in the programs as compared to the general population (Fouts & Vaughan, 2002) or are put on screen for comical purposes. Overweight and obese females are often represented as less attractive. Both male and female overweight and obese characters were less likely to interact with romantic partners and were not shown as going out on dates (Greenberg, Eastin, Hofschire, Lachlan, & Brownell, 2003). Fouts and Burggraf (2000) found that female characters with below-average weight were overrepresented in situational comedies as compared to population statistics.

When it comes to men, the most ideal is considered as the one who is muscular and lean. Morrison and Halton (2009), after studying randomly selected highest grossing films from 1980 to 2006 noticed that fat among the male lead decreased while muscular bodies started gaining popularity. Muscularity and leanness were associated with romantic involvement, sexual activity and other positive outcomes (Morrison and Halton 2009). Similar to how thin women are shown as desired; men who are muscular interact more with others and are portrayed as desirable.

In a study of 131 female beauty pageant contestants (pageant finalists and winners constituted almost 90% of the sample) in the US by Thomson and Hammond (2003) revealed some alarming facts. Nearly half (48.5%) of the participants reported wanting to be thinner, 57% were trying to lose weight and about 25% were told that they had eating disorders. In our media-driven culture, beauty pageants repeatedly give the message to the young girls that it is extremely important to be skinny for being considered successful and

attractive. Ask yourself this, have you ever felt like you were not beautiful enough? Or did you ever think that if a certain part of your body was different, everything would be okay? If no, then congratulations, you have what a lot of people struggle to achieve. If your answer is yes, then have you ever wondered where this feeling is stemming from? Let us see why we sometimes feel uncomfortable about our bodies or physical features.

6.2.3 How Media Influences the Human Psychology?

To explain the effects of media on human psychology, let us look at one of the theories known as *social comparison theory* (Festinger, 1954). Social comparison theory explains the process when people compare themselves with others, whom they may see as better or worse, and then define their own social and personal worth. Thus, in case of media, people look at the models/actors as benchmarks and judge themselves based on what they see.

Studies show that women experience dissatisfaction with the way they look when they compare themselves with pictures of celebrities (Heinberg and Thompson, 1992). Body image research has consistently suggested that women are negatively affected by the images of thin, attractive women presented in the media (Fernandez & Pritchard, 2012; Mask & Blanchard, 2011). Their self-esteem and confidence are poorly impacted.

Eating disorders associated with body image disturbance

The exposure to sexually objectifying media eventually leads to body shame which is also the cause of disordered eating in women (Dakanalis et. al., 2012; Spettigue & Henderson, 2004). Thin ideal internalization is reinforced by the media and is associated with eating disorders (Thompson and Stice, 2001) such as bulimia, anorexia, drive for thinness and general body dissatisfaction (Harrison, 2000). It is important to note that it is not just women, but men too, are susceptible to eating disorders due to the unrealistic media portrayals of ideal body types (Sweeting et.al., 2015).

While we can see a hint of diversity finally coming to the mainstream media, there is a lot with which media needs to catch up. The discontent with our bodies is becoming normative and that's not healthy. Individuals do not just blame media for their dissatisfaction. They blame their biological features and their genetic make-up, and much worse they blame themselves!

It is also important to understand that while media plays a role in influencing people's views about their own body image, media is just one factor. Other important factors include family and peer influences, apart from quality (that is critical or uncritical) media consumption and quantity of media consumption (time spent on media). Peers discuss fashion, appearance, dieting, and ultra-thin celebrities in magazine/movies/TV series/social media content, with each other.

With this new age of media dependence, especially after the emergence of internet, companies running different media platforms must realise the power

they hold and should be made accountable for the negative influence they have on people. Speaking of the internet, in the next section, let us now understand how since its invention, things have drastically changed and how internet addiction is becoming a reality for many.

Check Your Progress 2

1) Define body image.

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2) Explain media's relation with body image using social comparison theory.

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3) What are the consequences of having a negative body image?

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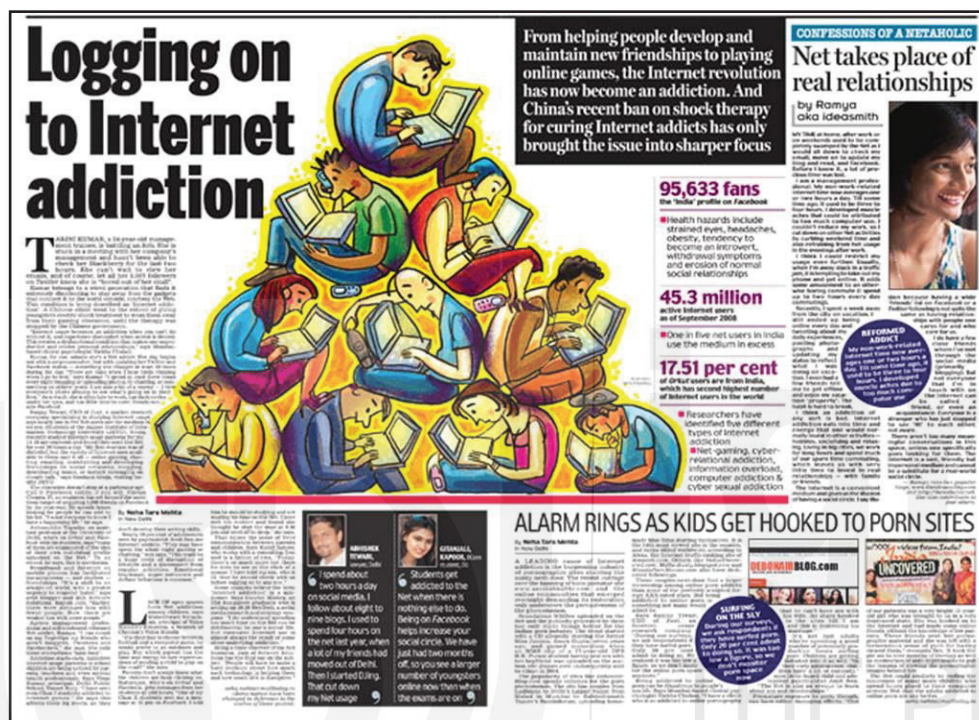
6.3 INTERNET ADDICTION

Internet is one of human beings' finest creations. It made the globe, in which we all reside, a smaller place. It made possible for a person sitting in one end to befriend someone sitting at the other. A means through which people could educate themselves about concepts that were not as readily available before. In other words, its invention did not just provide help to the academicians or scientists, rather, it became a source of help for the smallest of things and eventually became a part of everyone's lives. Video games, and social media of course are notorious and infamous for the effects they have on people, and may be regarded as why people spend more and more time on their mobile devices or computers than with interacting with the real world.

Let us go through an example: if a child is given a new toy, what happens? S/he will probably forget that anything other than that new toy exists, and will invest all her/his energies on the new toy. S/he will do so until the new one also becomes old. At which point s/he will expect and wait for a new and better toy.

Now let's take this analogy and apply it to human beings' relationship with the internet. Without any doubt, the internet was somewhat like magic when

it started gaining popularity. This was clearly because of nothing like the internet was present before. It became a way of amusement, not just for the kids, but for everyone. The interesting thing was that people could not get bored of this toy. Why? Because whatever new comes, comes from itself. Be it social media, music, e-commerce, food outlets, news, entertainment, etc., it all can be traced back to the internet in today's time. We all are dependent on it, without a doubt, but when does this dependence turn into addiction? How does one figure *that* out? Let us understand that further.



Source: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/gauravonomics/3739338937/in/photostream/>

6.3.1 What is Internet Addiction Disorder?

As Huang and Alessi (1996) had speculated the rapidly growing communication resource Internet *will have a major impact on psychiatry*. Huang and Alessi urged academicians to conceptualize and think about the effects internet may have on people. However, even today, there is not a common framework to define what internet addiction means. Internet Addiction Disorder – also referred as Compulsive Internet Use (CIU), Problematic Internet Use (PIU), or iDisorder – is not yet recognized as a disorder by American Psychiatric Association's *DSM-5* (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition, published in 2013), which is used by mental health professionals to diagnose mental disorders. Though addiction to gaming is described in *DSM-5*, however due to insufficient evidence for establishing it as a separate mental disorder with clear criteria of classification, it was not included.

Due to this, the criteria for Internet addiction have often been compared with that of pathological gambling, the only behavioural addiction (or a non-substance-related disorder) recognised by the *DSM 5*. Refer to Box 6.3 for

the symptoms of Gambling Disorder, which are also used as a basis for determining internet addictions.

Box 6.3 Diagnostic criteria for gambling disorder (used as a basis for internet addiction)

DSM-5 (American Psychiatric Association, 2013, p. 585-586)

The individual exhibiting four (or more) of the following in a 12-month period:

- 1) Needs to gamble with increasing amounts of money in order to achieve the desired excitement
- 2) Is restless or irritable when attempting to cut down or stop gambling
- 3) Has made repeated unsuccessful efforts to control, cut back, or stop gambling
- 4) Is often preoccupied with gambling (e.g., having persistent thoughts of reliving past gambling experiences, handicapping or planning the next venture, thinking of ways to get money with which to gamble)
- 5) Often gambles when feeling distressed (e.g., helpless, guilty, anxious, depressed)
- 6) After losing money gambling, often returns another day to get even ("chasing" one's losses)
- 7) Lies to conceal the extent of involvement with gambling
- 8) Has jeopardized or lost a significant relationship, job, or educational or career opportunity because of gambling
- 9) Relies on others to provide money to relieve desperate financial situations caused by gambling

Many researches adapt the above criteria to define computer, video game or internet addiction. Some of these criteria/symptoms include:

✓ Preoccupation with Internet activities ✓ Recurrent failure to resist the impulse to use the Internet ✓ A marked increase in the duration of Internet use needed to achieve satisfaction ✓ Symptoms of dysphoric mood, anxiety, irritability, and boredom after several days without	✓ Excessive effort spent on activities necessary to obtain access to the Internet ✓ Continued heavy Internet use despite knowledge of having a persistent or recurrent physical or psychological problem likely to have been caused or exacerbated by Internet use Functional impairments: ✓ Recurrent Internet use resulting
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Internet activity	in a failure to fulfill major role obligations at school and home
✓ Use of Internet to relieve or avoid withdrawal symptoms	✓ Impairment of social relationships
✓ Use of Internet for a period of time longer than intended	✓ Behavior violating school rules or laws due to Internet use
✓ Persistent desire and/or unsuccessful attempts to cut down or reduce Internet use	(Source: Wen-Yu Hsu, Sunny S.J. Lin, Shan-Mei Chang, Yin-Hsing Tseng, Nan-Ying Chiu, 2015)
✓ Excessive time spent on Internet activities and leaving the Internet	

If you are wondering whether you suffer from internet addiction just because you are on social media a lot, or if you watch innumerable dog videos on YouTube, then you must not worry yourself. Doing so does not point towards an addiction. The problem is when an individual's daily life gets affected, when they stop taking up their normal day's routine tasks, due to their need to stick to their internet screen. Excessive gaming, social networking, chatting, blogging, online shopping, and inappropriate internet pornography use might eventually lead to internet addiction. One should be alert to the time one is spending on these activities at the cost of other important daily activities.

6.3.2 Gaming Disorder

In 2018, the 11th Revision of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11) by WHO introduced gaming disorder and defined it as a “*pattern of gaming behaviour (“digital-gaming” or “video-gaming”) characterized by impaired control over gaming, increasing priority given to gaming over other activities to the extent that gaming takes precedence over other interests and daily activities, and continuation or escalation of gaming despite the occurrence of negative consequences.*” (WHO, 2018) The diagnosis of gaming disorder is given only when the behaviour pattern is severe enough for at least 12 months to cause significant impairment in personal, family, social, educational, occupational or other important areas of functioning.

6.3.3 How Does Internet Addiction Impact People?

Internet addiction (IA) and internet gaming disorder (IGD) is a rising concern in India. In most studies over 15% of the studied sample is found to have a problematic usage of internet (Barathkar & Sharma, 2012; Shyam, Sharma, Palanichamy, 2016). In a recent study on 954 young adults, 15.51% were internet addicts and 49.19% were over users of internet (Jain et.al. 2020). In an Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) funded survey (Sharma, Benegal, Rao & Thennarasu, 2013) of 2,755 people from Bengaluru, India it was found that 1.3 per cent people were addicted to the Internet, 4.1 per cent

to mobile phones, 3.5 per cent to social networking sites, 4 per cent to online shopping, 0.2 per cent to online pornography and 1.2 per cent to gambling.

Some evidence suggests that the brain structure and response of people who may get addicted to internet is similar to those who suffer from drugs or alcohol dependency. In addition to this, internet addiction behaviour leads to the release of dopamine, a neurotransmitter responsible for pleasures and satisfaction, which creates dependency. Thus, with time, in order to be satiated by internet use, one will then want to use it more to reach an amount of satisfaction. The rewards associated with internet use gets them addicted.

How many times do you check your Instagram/Facebook/snapchat/etc. to see whether you received any notification or not? Have you ever wondered why you feel the need to check constantly? That is because it feels good when you do receive an unexpected notification or a message. If it happened once, you might continuously check repeatedly, hoping for something unexpectedly good to repeat itself. However, what happens to those who get addicted to it?

Studies indicate that IA and IGD lead to issues of low self-esteem, impulsivity, poor sleep quality, mood disorder and suicide. They also have comorbidities with depression, anxiety and stress (Tripathi, 2017), hostility, aggression and Attention Deficit/ Hyperactivity Disorder (Dickson et.al., 2019). Studies have also found that pathological use can affect an individual in social and behavioural contexts, including loneliness and issues in social functioning and competence.

Higher levels of screen time in children and young is associated with a variety of health harms with strong evidence for obesity, unhealthy diet, depressive symptoms and poor quality of life (Stiglic & Viner, 2019). Sufficient to say, that there is enough to take this matter seriously and create awareness about it. Using the internet is not a bad behaviour, and in no way should people be shunned of this tool; however, it is imperative that a healthier way of using internet is expressed and encouraged. This would be clearer from the case study of gaming addiction in South Korea.

Check Your Progress 3

Answer true or false:

- 1) DSM-5 has classified internet addiction as a disorder.
- 2) ICD-11 has classified internet addiction as a disorder.
- 3) It is well established that internet addiction causes schizophrenia.
- 4) Dopamine is related to internet addiction.
- 5) Psychiatrists use criteria for gambling as a basis for diagnosing internet addiction.

6.4 CASE STUDY: GAMING ADDICTION IN SOUTH KOREA

It is said that in South Korea, things changed when the game ‘StarCraft’ came in 1998. The game led to another change – setting up of gaming cafés where patrons can play multiplayer computer games for an hourly fee (with a variety of food and drinks), called PC Bangs. Most PC bangs with superfast broadband and powerful high-end computers and with easy internet access were set up near universities and colleges. Now, one could not even walk a few blocks in any locality without running into a PC bang. The vibrant internet environment in South Korea increasingly became easily accessible for gaming and other internet-based activities. And in no time, it had its adolescents and youth addicted to gaming. According to a report based on a South Korean Government survey of 2018, almost 20% of its population is at serious risk of Internet Addiction (Sullivan, 2019). About one in 10 children is addicted to internet and online gaming is the primary reason. Kim et. al. (2020) identified four internet gaming reasons in South Korean adolescents: entertainment, getting along with friends, stress relief, and habitual gaming. Gaming is a big industry in South Korea as it is a central part of youth’s culture and lifestyle.

E-sports are the “in” thing in South Korea and it hosts 10 pro-gaming leagues. Matches are regularly telecasted on national television and some networks air e-sports 24X7. E-sports athletes have celebrity status and earn beyond our imagination.

In November 2011, the country passed a law which banned children below 16 years of age from playing games online between midnight to 6:00 a.m. It is famously called the Shutdown law or the Cinderella law. The law was passed since a significant number of teenagers were losing their sleep due to their gaming addiction. With the WHO classifying gaming addiction as a disorder, the South Korean government is too thinking along the same lines. However, the multi-million-dollar gaming industry is resisting such an attempt.

Video game addiction has been declared a **public health crisis** in South Korea. It was declared a national problem after several gamers passed away from exhaustion after playing incessantly for days without any break. There are many gaming deaddiction programs and boot-camps run by the government to help children, adolescents and young adults control their urges to use the internet and better manage themselves. The National Center for Youth Internet Addiction Treatment in Muju, South Korea is one of them. These facilities make use of group therapy, family counselling, physical activities, music and art sessions and forms of cognitive behavioural therapy to help people.

6.5 SUMMARY

Let us review what we have learnt in this unit.

- Media influence is inevitable. There are negative influences of media depending on the use and consumption.
- Media, and especially the Internet, are the source through which people can have access to unfettered violence – through video games, movies, etc. It also happens to be the place, where social media and various websites, can affect people's perception about their own body.
- Media as a tool itself is not the cause of problem, the fact of the matter is unawareness about it can lead to many problems for many individuals.
- The South Korean case study showed how internet addiction can become a national problem. Unless people are made conscious of the possible negative effects media can have on them, they may eventually become victim to its many impacts.

6.6 KEYWORDS

Desensitization Process of decrease in cognitive, emotional, physiological, and eventually behavioural responses to a stimulus

Gaming Disorder Impaired control over gaming, and the increasing priority given to gaming over other activities to the extent that gaming takes precedence over other interests and daily activities, despite the occurrence of negative consequences

The General Aggression Model A meta-theory that integrates the role of different factors in aggression

Social Comparison Theory Explains the process when people compare themselves with others, whom they may see as better or worse, and then define their own social and personal worth

6.7 REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1) How does media contribute to body image issues in women?
- 2) Explain media violence with the help of social learning theory.
- 3) Define internet addiction and outline some of its consequences.
- 4) Write a short note on gaming disorder.

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<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/media>

Media Effects: https://ocw.ui.ac.id/pluginfile.php/8077/mod_resource/content/0/Bryant%20%20Oliver%20-%202009%20-%20Media%20Effects_Advances%20of%20Theory%20and%20Research.pdf#page=507

6.9 ADDITIONAL ONLINE RESOURCES

- Frontline - Digital Nation | Epic Documentaries

(444) Frontline - Digital Nation | Epic Documentaries - YouTube
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VP_IHKmelpU

Answers to Check Your Progress 1

Match the Following

- 1 – C
- 2 – D
- 3 – E
- 4 – A
- 5 – B

Answers to Check Your Progress 3

True or False

- 1) False
- 2) False, ICD-11 has classified internet gaming as a disorder.
- 3) False
- 4) True
- 5) True

UNIT 7 MEDIA AND ADVERTISING*

Structure

- 7.0 Introduction
- 7.1 Media and Advertising
 - 7.1.1 Advertising and its goals
 - 7.1.2 Stakeholders in creating an advertisement
 - 7.1.3 Changing landscape of advertisements due to change in Mass Media
- 7.2 Developing an effective advertising program/ media promotion campaign
 - 7.2.1 What is an effective advertisement?
 - 7.2.2 Steps in designing an effective advertising program
- 7.3 Case Study on Media and Advertising
- 7.4 Summary
- 7.5 Keywords
- 7.6 Review Questions
- 7.7 References and Suggested Reading
- 7.8 Additional Online Resources

Learning Objectives

After reading this unit, you will be able to,

- explain advertising as an integral part of media and how it has changed over the years;
- summarize the stages of developing an advertisement, and
- identify strategies of developing an effective marketing campaign.

7.0 INTRODUCTION

Advertisements (Ads) are everywhere – be it watching a program on Television (TV) or listening to radio programs. From market to highways, you would find billboards and hoardings advertising something or the other. In fact, hearing the jingle of an old advertisement brings back a lot of memories. Nonetheless, not many of us actually welcome advertising. Ad breaks on TV have come to imply breaks for any tiny work that needs to be attended to. But the advertisers are getting smarter and they are sneaking in ads in places where we least expect it. Like, having an actor in a movie use a certain product or advertisement in the form of editorial (called advertorial)

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appearing in a magazine or newspaper. Content marketing is another thing that is used by advertising agencies in today's time.

Why do you think companies invest so much in advertising? Does it actually make a difference? Are the sales of a product or service actually influenced by advertising? Do advertisements alter consumer behaviour? If so, then why are some advertising campaigns more effective than others? These are fundamental questions that connect advertising to psychology, particularly social psychology. Let us try answering some of these questions in this unit.

7.1 MEDIA AND ADVERTISING

Media is all about communication, sharing knowledge and information, and connecting people. One of the major roles of media is advertising, that is, spreading awareness about certain products and services highlighting their benefits and uniqueness. Advertising is a huge multi-billion-dollar industry that has grown significantly over the years. It connects manufacturers and service providers with their customers via different media. Different media used for advertising include print media (newspaper and magazine ads), audio-visual media (radio and television ads), social media (ads that pop up on your Facebook or Instagram feeds) and internet (contextual ads placed on search engines result pages or on e-mail). Let us now see what advertising is and how it has changed over the years.

7.1.1 Advertising and its goals

Advertising can be defined as a form of communication with the goal of persuading the intended audience to take certain actions (like buying a product or availing a service). The content of most advertisements is information about the organization/business firm, description of the product/service, benefits of the product (often through comparisons) and specifying the target audience. According to **Philip Kotler**, the father of marketing, advertisement is “any paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods and services through mass media such as newspapers, magazines, television or radio by an identified sponsor” (Kotler, 1984, p.58). In this definition it is important to note that advertising is not ‘personal selling’, which is an interpersonal communication, while advertisements use mass communication media. The vehicle through which advertisements communicate the content is “media”. It is the way the content is packaged and served/transmitted to the audience.

Goals of advertising:

- 1) *Boosting the sale* of the product/service by persuading people to buy them, thus increasing the customer base.
- 2) *Introduction of a new product*: When a new product is launched, advertisements inform the public about them, thereby creating product publicity.

- 3) *Building brand and creation of good public image*: Advertisements also help building reputation of the sponsoring organization, as they communicate how the organization has addressed customer satisfaction.
- 4) *Education and awareness*: Advertisements educate people, not only about new products but also creates awareness towards health in them. Many ads emphasise adopting new healthy lifestyle and giving-up unhealthy habits.

The underlying objectives in advertising are (Kotler, Armstrong, Saunders & Wong, 1999):

- To inform the target audience about a product, its uses, advantages, drop in price etc. or providing information to create awareness in public or to reduce public fears with respect to a product
- To persuade people to change their perception about a product, have a favourable attitude and influence them to buy certain product/services.
- To remind people about products, offers, or issues, their future needs (like insurance policies) etc.

7.1.2 Stakeholders in creating an advertisement

Creating an advertisement involves different groups of participants. Figure 7.1 elaborates the different stakeholders who are involved directly or indirectly in any form of advertising

- i) **Product Advertiser**: This includes primarily the manufacturers and marketers of a product/service; for instance, Proctor and Gamble or Amul. Some retailers could also be the advertisers. Government and social organizations also fall in this category. We have seen so many advertisements on getting COVID-19 vaccination or using the Arogya Setu application sponsored by the government. The advertiser provides the finances for the advertisement.
- ii) **Advertising Agencies**: The advertiser could either design-and-develop the entire advertisement in house through their own marketing/sales/advertising department or they could outsource it to another advertising agency or professional. In most cases since advertising is a specialized field, advertisers go for an outside advertising agency, which is a group of highly creative trained professionals. For the advertising agency the advertisers become a client. There are content creators, photographers, artists/actors, layout-designers, editors, ad directors etc. in the team.
- iii) **Target Audience (potential buyers, users, consumers)**: It refers to the recipient of the advertising message that could be a reader, listener or viewer depending on the kind of media used for the ad. Both present users and future buyers are the target audience.

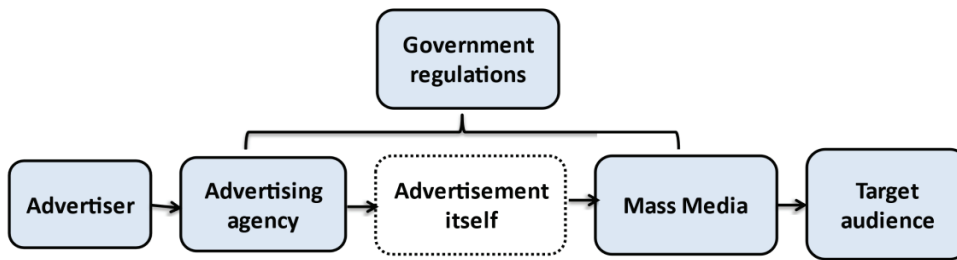


Figure 7.1 Stakeholders in creating an advertisement

- iv) **Mass Media:** Different media platforms are used for communicating the advertising messages. Ads are placed in newspapers, magazines, journals, handbills, etc. (print media), radio, television programs, internet etc. (electronic media), posters, hoarding, air balloons etc. (outdoor media), brochures, leaflets, pamphlets, etc. (sent through e-mail or by post). Selection of the most appropriate advertising media is one of the most important decisions in marketing.
- v) **Government Authorities:** No big business can be practiced outside government regulations. Likewise, advertising is also government regulated. Some laws that have been made in India for regulating the content of advertising include Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1955, Press Council of India Act, 1978, Cable Television Networks (Amendment) Rules, 2006 etc. The Advertising standards council of India) and ABC (Audit Bureau of Circulation) are also some of the authorities in India regulating advertising.

7.1.3 Changing landscape of advertisements due to change in Mass Media

Advertising has become global and very dynamic. The spaces they occupy have become wide. With the expansion of advertising, the nature of advertisements has also changed. Earlier ads focused more on factual information and used mostly verbal claims in print media, radio or TV. Modern day ads are more experiential, engaging and have a lot of visual appeal. The two images next are almost a century apart, and you can easily spot the difference between the old ad and the new.

Modern day advertising is a creative art form that combines storytelling to visual art to music to digital art. Due to the convergence of media and technology, the various media platforms or channels on which ads are placed have undergone a significant change. Multiple options over the internet like YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, blogs, vlogs, search engines etc. are dominating different forms of advertising. The arrival of digital marketing has given rise to some new forms of advertisement, like long format films shown on YouTube or entering into engaging conversations with the consumer.



Source: <https://poojaslibrary.wordpress.com/2015/11/14/lux-and-bollywood-a-90-year-bond/>

Some examples of new formats of advertisements include:

Social media advertising: targets the users of the various social media. It is a kind of online advertising where ads are placed on various social media networks. All of us see a lot of advertisements on our Facebook or Instagram walls. These are examples of social media advertising. It is more engaging, interactive and targeted for specific groups of individuals.

Content marketing on social media: A part of social media advertising is content creation for the followers. Content marketing is the creation, publication and distribution of content on a social media for a targeted audience. This includes sharing pertinent articles, videos, podcasts, and other media to promote one's brand awareness and attract new audience or retain existing ones. It is a strategy to keep one's audience/customers engaged.

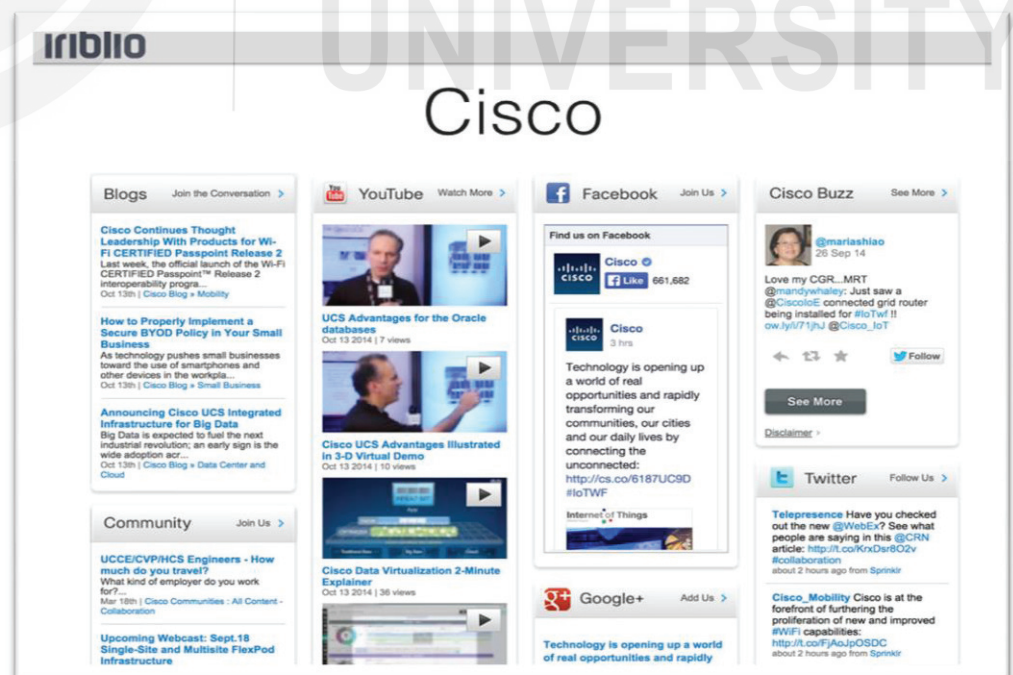


Figure 7.2 Example of Content Marketing

Source: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/jeffzelaya/15246667783>

Interactive advertising: It is called interactive for it involves mutual action between consumers and producers of the ad. The user has control over whether or not s/he will see the ad. The user can dismiss the ad by clicking the cross button. Such ads need to be very creative to catch the attention of the targeted audience.

Search engine optimization: It relies on understanding the manner in which search engines (such as Google, Bing, Internet explorer, Mozilla Firefox) work, the keywords that are frequently typed into search engines (search analytics) or which search engines are preferred by the targeted audience. All this helps the advertiser to receive more visitors on their websites from a particular search engine as their website would rank higher on the search engine results page after the search engine optimization.

Contextual advertising: It uses context targeting. This implies scanning the keywords on the website a consumer is visiting and then displaying ads to the same consumer based on that. For example, if you are searching for a particular course on a search engine and visit a particular website. Sometime later you would find advertisements of various colleges or universities offering that very course popping up on your screen (pop-up ads).

Advertorials: These are advertisements in the form of editorials, appearing mostly in magazines, newspapers and websites. They are paid and designed to look like the articles that appear in the publication.



Figure 7.3 Example of an advertorial

Source: <https://www.behance.net/gallery/19802815/Beautiful-You-Booklet>

Other changes include **change in the content of the advertisements** or the concepts underlying ads. For example, TV advertisements today portray to a larger extent the “high aspiring working class”, rather than the typical

“middle class”. This is largely due to the changing nature of Indian consumer whose purchasing power and disposable income has risen considerably (Mahapatra, 2014). Another change is the emphasis in ads on improving the quality of life and health of the consumers if they use a certain product, and not just highlighting their value for money. Women also are being increasingly shown as the decision makers in family. Ads highlighting societal changes and issues like changing gender roles (e.g. Ariel’s ‘Share the load’ campaign or Titan Raga’s ‘Her life her choices’ or ‘Break the Bias’), rights and acceptance of transgender persons (Brook Bond Red Label’s ‘Swaad apnepan ka’ or Vicks’ ‘Touch of Care’), environment conservation (like Hindustan Unilever’s ‘The Shower’ or Tata Tiscon’s ‘The song of the forest’), girl child education campaign (Mahindra’s ‘Ladki haath se nikal jayegi’) and many more. Many of these are initiatives of the advertiser’s corporate social responsibility projects. Celebrity endorsements have also increased significantly. Earlier selected brands like Lux, only featured Bollywood actresses. But now every second product is endorsed by celebrities from different fields including sports and music.

Check Your Progress 1

Answers True or false

- 1) Increasing awareness of rival brands is a goal of advertising.
- 2) Editorials in the form of advertisements are called advertorials.
- 3) Keywords are an important component of search engine optimization.
- 4) Some of the contemporary ads also reflect changing gender roles.
- 5) Culture is an important stakeholder in the development of advertisement.
- 6) Advertisements only lead to sale promotion.

7.2 DEVELOPING AN EFFECTIVE ADVERTISING PROGRAM

Since organizations invest a lot of money in advertising and an advertising agency invests a lot of time and energy in making the advertisements, developing effective advertisements is a necessity. Have you ever wondered why celebrities are used to vouch for a product or why many products make use of scientists or doctors proclaiming the benefits of that product? Why some ads are shown only during a certain program? Why some products go for print media advertising while others advertise on radio or TV? The answer to these questions lies in knowing how to design an effective advertising program. Let us first see what effectiveness of an advertisement implies.

7.2.1 What is an effective advertisement?

An effective advertisement would be the one that has the desired impact on the consumers. It means an effective ad is the one that is persuasive leading

to the customer form a favourable attitude towards the brand. It is basically a change in the consumer's buying behaviour towards the brand being advertised. Two models for understanding effects of advertising on the consumer would help us conceptualize effectiveness of an advertisement. These models also help in setting objectives of the advertisements.

Hierarchy of effects model: According to this model consumers move linearly in a sequence across different stages when making decisions about buying certain product. These stages can be broadly categorized into cognitive (thinking) stage, affective (feeling) stage and finally the behavioural (actual purchase or trial of a product) stage. The specific stages include:

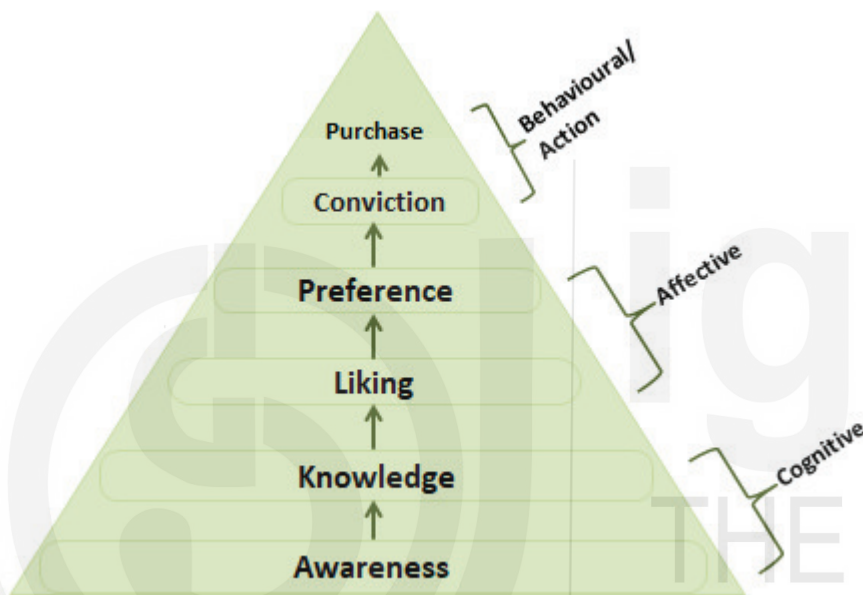


Figure 7.4 Hierarchy of Effects Model

The first two stages are cognitive, trying to create a presence in the mind of the audience. **Awareness:** The first step of any marketing campaign or advertisement is to create awareness in the audience – awareness about the product, brand or issue at large. You must have noticed many simple advertisements that keep repeating the product name. It is done to make the product or the brand name focal.

Knowledge: Apart from awareness about the product or the brand, the target audience needs to have more knowledge about the same. Comprehending the brand and its value, its uniqueness, difference from competitor's brand etc. is done at this stage.

The next two stages appeal to the emotions of the target audience that is how they feel about the product/brand.

Liking: This is the stage where the target audience gets to like the product. In case the target audience does not like the product, the reasons for the same are found out and also addressed. The renewed product is then advertised.

Emotional appeal is used very commonly for getting the audience like the product. Remember the “Daag acchche hain” campaign for Surf excel!

Preference: Liking does not imply that the targeted customer is going to prefer it over other similar products from another brand. In order to get the audience actually buy the product requires enhancing one’s products quality, performance or value in the advertising campaign.

Conviction: Preference ought to be converted into conviction of buying, and conviction among the target audience is built in effective campaigns.

Purchase: After conviction comes the real reason for advertisements, that is, actually buying the product. Even after being convinced about a product, not all of them are going to make the purchase. Sometimes they look for more information or they postpone their decision of purchase. The most effective advertisements are the ones that get the convinced audience to take the final step of buying. Have you noticed how “Hurry, only few items left” make us click the buy button? Or when the product one has thought of buying is offered at a lower price or with some other advantages.

Another model that is quite similar to the previous one is the AIDA model. AIDA Model of marketing effects identifies stages through which an individual/potential consumer goes through before becoming the actual customer. These stages are **A - Attention, I -Interest, D - Desire and A- Action**. An effective advertisement is the one which is able to attract attention of the potential consumers. Use of catchy jingles or attractive colours is aimed at gaining attention. After the ad catches attention, it is imperative to create interest for the products or services of the advertiser. An effective advertisement starts with a point of interest to the audience and ends in something that is of an interest to the advertiser. Merely creating interest is not enough. Effective advertisements are the ones that are able to create desire for the product in the targeted audience. Use of attractive models to advertise for beauty products is a case in point. Other kinds of sales appeal are also used. If all these three goals are accomplished an advertisement must appeal the likely customer to act and make the purchase. Basic information guiding prospective buyers like how to make a booking or where to go for the purchase is present in advertisements to ease the purchase.

Check Your Progress 2

1) What is an effective advertisement?

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2) What is the full form of AIDA?

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3) What are the various levels in the hierarchy of effects model?

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7.2.2 Steps in designing an effective advertising program

To understand how to develop an effective advertising campaign requires us to understand the **Five Ms of advertising** (Kotler, Armstrong, Saunders, & Wong, 1999). These are mission, money, message, media and measurement, explicated in Figure 7.3 below. Based on these 5 Ms are the various decisions that development of any advertisement entails. Let us consider them one by one.

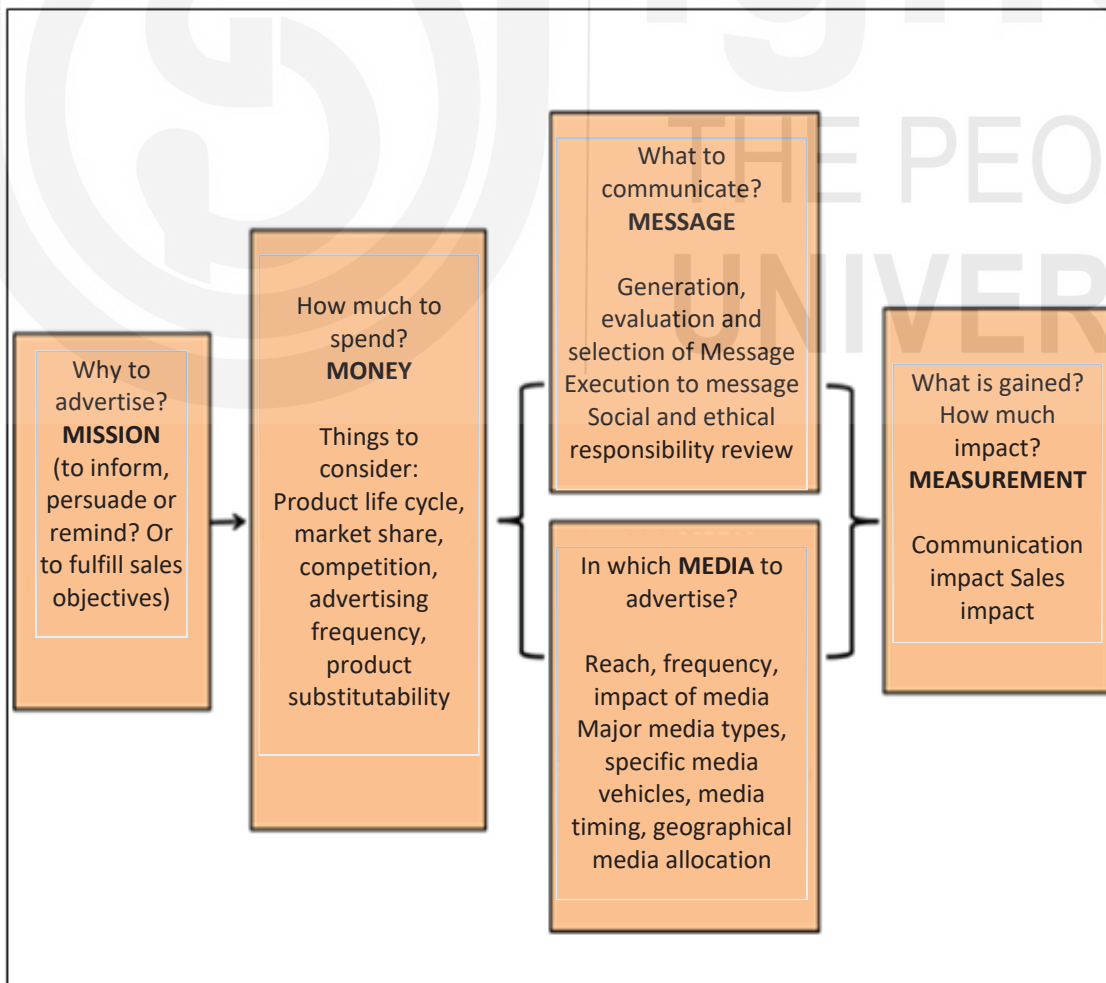


Figure 7.5 Five Ms of Advertising (Based on Kotler et. al. 1999)

i) Selecting the advertising objective

The first step towards anything is goal setting. Before developing any advertisement, it is necessary to know the objective for advertising. We have already covered these objectives in the first section. Based on the different objectives, advertisements can be of the following types:

Informative advertising is to create awareness about a new product or new features of an old product.

Persuasive advertising is to persuade the audience to like, prefer, get convinced and purchase a product. The customers are persuaded to believe that the brand that is being advertised is the best for them.

Comparison advertising shows how a particular brand is better than its competitor. However, it should not be denigrating the rival brand. Some countries have strict rules for competitive advertising so that it is not unfair.

Reminder advertising is to keep the product in the minds of the customers so as to facilitate repeat purchase.

Reinforcement advertising aims at communicating to the existing customers how they made the right choice by buying that product.

Depending upon the marketing situation of a product – that is whether the product is new in the market or if it is the number one purchase or if it is losing its market share to another rival product – these factors determine what we want to communicate with people through our advertisement or in other words the kind of advertising that would be developed.

ii) Deciding on advertising budget

Did you know that Hindustan Unilever Limited is the top advertiser in India spending around Rupees 3400 Crores or 34 billion on its advertising budget (Pitch-Madison Advertising Report, 2019)? A report by Statista states that Coca Cola has been spending on an average 4 billion dollars every year from 2014 to 2020 on its advertising world-wide (Conway, 2021). Coca Cola is the largest beverage company in the world and is known for its highly innovative advertising campaigns and its commitment to advertising.

These examples indicate the value advertisers place on advertising. Fixing the budget necessitates an understanding of the input cost (that is the cost of producing the advertising campaign) and the output (that is the expected or actual return from the campaign in terms of revenue). Deciding the appropriate budget is an important decision and a host of factors are taken into consideration like:

Stage in the product life cycle: A new company and a new product require more amount to be spent on advertisements, than an old company which has already established its brand.

Market share and consumer base: Likewise, if a brand has captured the market and has huge consumer base, it might not need to spend too much on advertising. Newcomers need to expand the market as well as their market share. In this context competition plays a very crucial role. Coca Cola despite being an established brand spends a lot on advertising so as to not lose its market share to its rival Pepsi.

Advertising frequency: The number of times advertising would be broadcasted also determines the budget.

Product substitutability: If the product is unique and differentiated from other products in the market (like *Maggi*), advertising budget is smaller. However, if all brands offer same type of products (like tooth paste) their expenditure on advertising is more.

iii) **Developing the advertising campaign**

The most crucial stage in designing an effective advertising campaign is **message generation and evaluation**. This becomes even more central given the plethora of information that any given customer is exposed to. There is a lot of information clutter and the consumers can easily tune out advertisements using their remote controls. Hence, emphasis is on creative content development and its delivery, which would set a given advertisement apart from others. Advertising has also become increasingly costly. One of the ways that has been devised to capture the attention of the viewers is to merge advertisement with entertainment – the output is ‘adertainment’ (making the ads so entertaining that people want to watch them) or branded entertainment (when brands are a part of some other form of entertainment like central characters in a movie using a particular product to popularize it).

An effective message is the one that connects the brand/product with the audience in an emotional way. Most advertising agencies are engaged at this stage. The bases of generating effective advertising messages are the researches done in the area of persuasion. In message generation the Elaboration Likelihood Model of persuasion is especially useful. Let us first see this model and how it is applied in case of message generation in advertising.

Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) of Persuasion: The model is a dual processing model proposed by **Petty and Cacioppo** (1983). According to the model there are two routes to persuasion or attitude change – the central route and the peripheral route. Based on the route taken the kind of processing of the message differs. In the central route there is careful and systematic processing of the information presented in the message, while in the peripheral route there is heuristic (mental shortcuts) processing of the information that takes into consideration the cues used in the message.

As can be seen in the Figure 7.4, systematic processing occurs when the issue is of importance to us and we have time to process the information, while the

peripheral processing occurs for unimportant issues or when we do not have enough resources like time to process deeply.

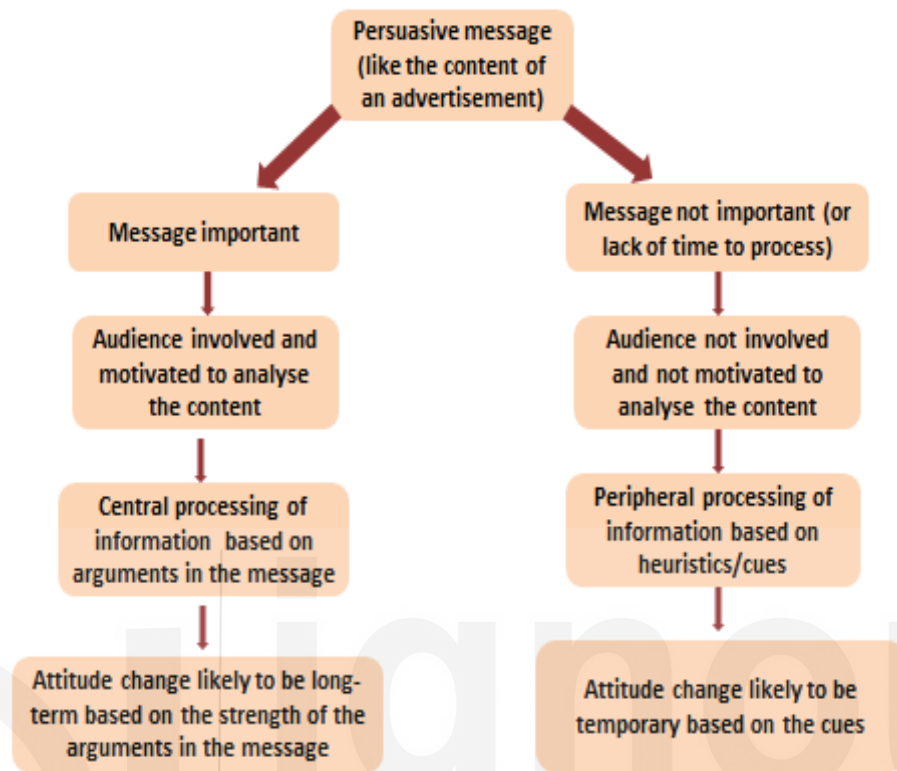


Figure 7.6 Elaboration Likelihood Model of Persuasion

Now let us apply this model to advertisements. If the consumers are interested and involved in a product (for example, a mobile phone with some special features), they would process the message in its advertisement systematically. Thus, while targeting a highly involved audience the arguments in the message should be strong and rationally appealing. Since it is easier to change attitude while heuristic processing is taking place, most advertisers push the consumers into the peripheral mode of processing. This is done by making use of surface cues like attractive models or distractions like beautiful locations, rather than the quality of the message.

Creative development of the message entails crafting the message in a creative manner. It is also called **message strategy**. The purpose of this creative development is to keep the consumer engaged (based on the ELM discussed above). Following are some creative message strategies that are used in advertisements:

- Using benefits as advertising appeal, something that is part of all ads. Apart from those, appeals should be meaningful and believable, and not appear exaggerating. The various ‘Fevicol’ ads have also been very appealing over the years.
- Developing a highly persuasive *big idea* which is unique and memorable. Contents like “*Kya chal raha hai?... Fog chal raha hai*” (for Fog

deodorant) or “*Pour-rub-pour*” (for Surf excel matic liquid detergent) or “*Have a break, have a Kit-Kat*” became very popular. Titan has focused on the “joy of gifting” through its affordable watches, like the couple wrist watch “Bandhan”. There are numerous advertisements of electronic products like, air conditioner or washing machine, which focus on highlighting their unique technology or energy saving features.

- Apart from powerful phrases we just saw, use of powerful imagery or jingles are also common message strategies.
- Leveraging on the diverse human motivations that drive consumerism like altruism, avoiding embarrassment, desire to appear competent, need for achievement, self-image, self-enhancement, identity or better relationships are also used in creative contents. Advertisements for beauty products, for example, often highlight success or achievement. Many advertisements show how using a particular product makes you smarter or healthier, or makes you popular.
- Highlighting the difference between the advertised product and the competitor product, like comparison between shampoos, hair oils, detergents, coke and pepsi, etc where the advertised product is shown to be comparatively better on different dimensions like cost effectiveness, quality etc.

Apart from the content, it is also the **execution of message** that is important. Execution of message implies converting the idea and content into an actual advertisement. Not just what is said, but how it is said is also crucial for ads to be effective. Finding the right way and format of putting the idea across is central. There are different styles for message execution, like placing the product in the routine life of “typical” people or improving the lifestyle. Some advertisements also use elements of fantasy like the ‘Fevicol’ ‘alien’ advertisement where the aliens challenged the villagers that they would suck away the earth’s gravity, which was countered using the ultimate glue ‘fevicol’!

Advertisements also rely on building **positive mood or emotions** around their product or service. Umpteen ads weave feelings of *beauty* (Godrej hair color’s ‘Fathers are our first heroes and heroes never age’), *love* (Titan watches and Tanishq jewellery ads, Cadbury Silk ad), and *curiosity* (“Relax it’s I-phone” ad; Kaun Banega Crorepati generated curiosity in the viewers by narrating a story in three parts). Some ads also portray *calmness*, *compassion* (Mankind Pharma advertisement showing Ganesh Chaturthi being celebrated, Star Sport’s ad for Dream 11 of making a watchman feel special for all his efforts during the pandemic), and *happiness* (coca cola open happiness). Feelings of *security* (like the ads for life insurance or mutual funds’ investments) and *adventure* or *fun* (the Mountain Dew ad “Darr ke aage jeet hai”) are also used to arouse interest of the customers. There are advertisements that make use of the mother-child relationship to emotionally

appeal to their consumers. Ariel's 'Share the Load for equal sleep' and the recent ad of Himalaya BabyCare portraying mother as the first teacher on the occasion of Teacher's Day are good examples. Some ads also use negative emotions like *fear* (healthy oil ads which arouse fear of heart ailments for example), *anger* and *sadness*.

Some advertisers also use *humour* to cut through the commercial clutter. Amul's outdoor ads are a good example of this. **Jingles and musicals** are also commonly used. Many ad songs are quite popular due to their melodious tunes or catchy rhymes. Vodaphone's "You and I", Amul's "Mero gaam", Airtel's "Har ek friend zaruri hota hai" and Bajaj's "Buland Bharat ki buland tasveer...hamara Bajaj" are some such ads. **Personality symbols** like MDH's "Dada ji", washing powder Nirma's dancing girl, Lijjat Papad's Bunny in the TV ad are all famous characters that represent their respective product.

Use of attention getting phrases is also common. In print ads, illustrations hold a great value in drawing attention, followed by the headlines that need to be short, simple and catchy. Likewise, the details should also be strong, simple yet convincing.

It should be noted that imagery, music and emotional appeals are used to take the audience processing of the advertisement to the heuristic mode (as explained by the ELM). There are some other ways of executing advertisement message that have been borrowed from the extensive research done in the field of persuasion. The factors taken into consideration while implementing the ad have been discussed in the **Hovland-Yale model of persuasion** (Hovland, 1954). These factors can be summarized as, 'Who says what to whom and with what effect?' 'Who' is the source of the message, the communicator. 'What' is the content of the message, which we have discussed earlier. 'Whom' is the characteristics of the target audience. Effects are the changes produced in the target's thought, perception, attitude or behaviour. Let us consider some of the source related factors that are employed in advertisements. **Source credibility:** when the target audience sees a credible source giving them the information or delivering the content of the ad, it has greater effectiveness. Therefore, in advertisements we see experts like 'doctors' or 'scientists' working in their labs or clinics delivering the ad content. Be it a health drink or a growth tonic or dental products like tooth paste or even beauty products; we see the ad featuring an expert or someone with technical knowledge. Ads also underscore the unique technical expertise of the makers of that product. Credibility is also enhanced by presenting **scientific evidence** regarding the brand's superiority. You will surely recall ads that present statistical data for their efficacy (kills 99.9% germs or gives better immunity!). **Trustworthiness** and **likeability** are other factors that are keenly integrated with the source of the message. Celebrity endorsements are used for their likeability and charm as well as the trust their fans have in them. With celebrities a certain degree of positive affect is

already present along with their charisma which helps in persuading the targeted customers.

Another new line of message execution is having the ordinary people (who are highly believable as they are relatable) endorse the product. In this category **consumer generated messages** are frequently seen. We have come across several weight loss programs where people who have transformed physically using that particular weight loss program endorse its efficacy. It is also called testimonial evidence. Some companies are also launching ad-creation competitions, which if done well can help integrating the voice of the customer in the brands and enhance its value.

All these different formats of advertisements impact the cost as well as effectiveness of the ads. Message creation and execution is a crucial step in advertising effectiveness. However, this process is not without ethical considerations. It is necessary for all ad makers to review their ads content for social responsibility and that they are within the social and legal norms.

iv) **Selecting the right media**

The channels via which a message can be communicated are many and each medium has its advantages and disadvantages. The different media types that are used for communicating advertisement message include *audio-visual media* (television, radio), *print media* (magazines and newspapers), *internet media* (social media, websites, e-mails), *telephone*, etc. In today's world social media and websites play an important role to communicate promotion messages. In television ads, we can communicate our product's attributes and the benefits dramatically. Print media like magazines and newspapers are also effective for the brand but the pictures, headlines, and content must be engaging. In radio ads the voice of the narrator, music etc. play an important role.

After the message is designed selecting the right medium/media to carry the message becomes imperative. Choosing the appropriate media which is effective as well as cost efficient requires following steps:

- determining reach, frequency, impact, and engagement of the media
- choosing among major media types
- selecting specific media vehicles
- choosing media timing

Deliberations of **reach, frequency and impact** of the different media types is necessary to decide which media type would help achieve advertising objective. In simple words, reach is the number of people who are exposed to the advertisement. Frequency is the number of times a person in the targeted audience receives the advertisement. Impact implies if the advertisement in a particular medium would generate involvement, interest, belief in the brand etc. in the targeted audience. An ad about electronics for example, might not

have much value in a fashion magazine. Reach is the main criterion when launching a new product. However, when multiple players are there in the market for the same product, frequency also needs to be increased to keep the product in the memory of consumers.

Choosing among major media types requires assessment of the advantages and disadvantages of each probable media type that can be used to transmit the message. Which medium will have the highest reach based on the kind of targeted audience, needs to be seen. For example, if the target audience is farmers for a product, like harvesting machine or fertilizer, then placing the ad as a billboard or hoarding in a shopping mall will not be effective. Print ads in local newspapers or hoardings in the local market of the village might be more effective. Thus, the first thing is reaching one's targeted audience and that too in a cost-effective way. Choosing the right public place to position outdoor ads would imply identifying those places where the targeted audience spends considerable time. A review of the pros and cons of different media types has been summarized in the table below.

Table 7.1 Advantages and Limitations of different Media Types

Type of Media	Advantages	Disadvantages
T.V.	Helps in mass marketing; Low cost per exposure as frequency can be increased; Sensory appeal with sight, sound and motion; family audiences can be targeted; impactful stories can be narrated; Most suited for products that require demonstration; or when before-after effects need to be highlighted	Total cost of producing and airing the TV ad is very high, audience selectivity is limited; challenge of cutting through the advertising clutter, challenge of making the ad interactive and involving; 30 seconds exposure can limit the information that can be transmitted
Radio	Local effectiveness; high geographical selectivity; reaching customer sub-segments (rush hour targeting for commuters, late night targeting of youth etc.); cost effective, able to reach rural areas	Lacks sensory appeal as only auditory; low involvement and attention, lacks mass coverage; fleeting exposure; requires advertising simultaneously on several stations to reach the target audience; Listeners cannot revisit ads to go over important points; radio ads require more frequency for audience attention

Newspapers	High reach in a given geographical area, flexibility of ad size and placement within the newspaper; multiple exposure as readers can revisit the ad; flexibility to change the ad quickly based on changing market reality; can be placed quickly for audience consumption	Depending upon the newspaper, Ad spaces can be expensive; compete against the clutter of other advertisers including the giant ads; poor photo reproduction; shorter shelf life; declining readership of newspapers; not suitable for illiterate people
Magazines	High geographical and demographic selectivity of audience; more credible based on magazine's credibility; long life; reader involvement is higher and hence more attention is paid to the ad; Better quality paper of magazines permits better colour reproduction and full-colour ads (in contrast to newspaper ads)	High cost as compared to other print media ads; takes more time (from weeks to months) to be placed for audience consumption as compared to newspaper ads; limited flexibility of ad placement and format; not suitable for illiterate people
Direct e-mail or mail	Personalized and targeted, high audience selectivity; flexibility of content, generates more positive response, flexibility in the length of content as space is unlimited; easy to assess effectiveness of response to the campaign; greater control of advertiser over the presentation of their advertising message; Ad campaign is hidden from the competitors;	Image of 'junk mail' that is not attended to; Maintaining data of customers
Outdoor	Low cost, repeated exposure, positional selectivity is good, does not require owning and operating a device	No audience selectivity, lacks sensory appeal, limited space for creativity
Digital, Mobile and social media marketing	Highly interactive, responsive to real time changes, reduced cost, more involving and engaging; builds connections with customers; wide reach	High audience control of content and exposure; low return on investment as targeted customers are diverse and might not get persuaded;

Ever since the upsurge of digital, mobile, internet and social media, most advertisers are going for a mix of advertising media to place their ads. For example, TV ads can also be seen while viewing a video on YouTube, and at the same time marketing campaigns with hashtags are started on Instagram or Facebook.

Next step is **selecting specific media vehicle** that is selecting the precise platform on which the advertising message would be communicated. For example, if the chosen media type is television, then the specific media vehicle could be *Big Boss* or *Comedy Show With Kapil*. In the print media type the vehicles could be *India Today* or *Time* or *Sarita* or *Reader's Digest*. Social media vehicle could be *Facebook* or *Twitter* or *YouTube*. The choice again depends on the target market reach of the vehicle, which in turn depends upon where our target customers spend more time. Thorough analyses of the quality and quantity of viewership/readership of the possible vehicles are done and the cost of reaching out a thousand likely consumers is worked out. The vehicle that offers lower cost per thousand persons is preferred.

When media vehicles are decided, **media timing** or how the ad has to be scheduled over time is also decided. Demands of many products are seasonal. For example, sales of air conditioners or coolers or refrigerators increase during the summer months in India. Purchase of many products like electronics also peaks during festival time, especially Diwali. Thus, depending on the months when most sale happen, more advertising is scheduled during those months. Many hotels and travel booking websites ads are placed during summer months. Some firms advertise all the year round, but float a new ad when demand season is high. Digital and social media has allowed companies to quickly respond to events that happen around us, interact with the active audience and engage in current conversations. For example, *Coca Cola* launched a campaign in Brazil where it sold Fanta inside cans of coke. An infamous homophobic slur in Brazil is "This coke is Fanta" implying that a person may look "normal" but is actually homosexual. This campaign was launched on International LGBT+ Pride Day and helped change the discriminatory slur into a symbol of pride. *Uber's* ad during the COVID-19 lockdown titled, "*Thank you for not riding Uber*" was also another such well-timed and well-aimed advertising campaign.

v) **Evaluating the effect of advertising**

In the highly competitive marketing environment of today, it is crucial for the companies to assess the effectiveness of their advertising campaign. If the investment made in creating an ad and launching it on media does not lead to any return in terms of brand popularity and purchase behaviour, the ad cannot be regarded as effective. Measuring advertising effectiveness is paramount so as to ascertain that the investment in advertising is appropriate or not. Measurement involves assessing the effect of the marketing communication in ads and effects on sales and profits.

Communication effect can be assessed through pre-and post-assessments of product awareness or preference of the customers – that is measuring customers' awareness of the product or their preference before the ad is run and after the ad is run.

Effect of ads on sales and profit is a much more objective assessment of its effectiveness. However, it is difficult to assess. As we know sales and profit depend on many factors other than advertising, like packaging of the product, its features, pricing etc. Field experimental studies can be done to assess sales and profit effects. For instance, investments on advertising for different market zones can be varied and comparative assessment of the sales in each area can reveal the effect of the ad. Similarly, ads placed via different media can also be compared. However, assessment of advertising effectiveness is a complex and difficult task, especially in the era of digital marketing.

Check Your Progress 3

Fill in the blanks

- 1) The Elaboration Likelihood model is a _____ processing theory.
- 2) Based on the ELM, most advertisers aim at shifting the audience processing to _____ mode.
- 3) The first step in developing an advertising campaign is deciding on _____.
- 4) _____ media is used for mass marketing at a national level.
- 5) Pre- and post- assessments are done for evaluating _____.
- 6) _____, _____, _____, media and _____ are the 5 Ms of advertising.
- 7) Most interactive media platform is _____.
- 8) Featuring doctors or scientists in advertisements increases _____.
- 9) Deliberations of _____, _____ and _____ of the different media types is necessary to decide which media type would help achieve advertising objective.

7.3 CASE STUDY ON MEDIA AND ADVERTISING

TARGET knows when its customers are pregnant!

Target is an American retail corporation, which sells a wide range of products from groceries and home essentials to clothing, accessories and electronics. In the year 2012 a story of disgruntled customer attracted media attention. A father of a high schooler in Minneapolis was upset that his daughter was being given discount on maternity clothes and baby products by their local TARGET store. TARGET had sent via post brochure containing

advertisements for baby clothing, diapers, baby furniture etc. When the managers were taken to task, they apologized unequivocally, however in a few days it was the father who came back apologizing. His daughter was indeed pregnant and TARGET had found out before he did!

Capitalizing on pregnant customers is extremely profiting. They need to buy a lot and usually prefer to buy it all from one place. This further makes them permanent clients once they become parents. TARGET hired a statistician, Andrew Pole, and tasked him to identify potentially pregnant customers. Based on the buying behaviour pattern, Pole came up with 25 key items/products, which helped him give customers a “pregnancy prediction score”. Customers who would buy from these 25 products could then be categorized as pregnant and also zeroed in for the month of pregnancy with a lot of accuracy. TARGET would then, depending upon their pregnancy month, offer special discounts and coupons. For instance, Pole noticed that women stocked on multivitamins for the first 20 weeks of pregnancy, and shifted to unscented soaps, lotions and moisturizers as they neared the due date. Near their due date of delivery, pregnant women buy lots of big bags of cotton balls, hand sanitizers and washcloths.

Knowing such patterns of consumer behaviour helped TARGET identify their potential long-term customers (soon to be parents), who were then targeted with offers and discounts for baby products. This pregnancy score’s accuracy is what led to a teenager receiving coupons for discounted maternity clothes before she could tell her family!

The case study illustrates the increasing use of data mining and data sharing of targeted customers. In the information age of today, knowledge is key. Most companies are making use of the customer data (like the products they are searching on the internet, the ads they are clicking on, the places they are visiting based on google map search) to customise ads for them. Many times, you would have seen that after a particular google search you get ads for similar products in your e-mail or on your social media. Thus, our online activities and digital footprints do not go unnoticed, but are actually valuable resources for advertisers.

7.4 SUMMARY

Let us review what we have learnt in this unit.

- Advertising is related to media and how successful advertisements can be created.
- In the changing times where internet media is dominating, the field of advertising has also undergone sea change. Developing an effective advertisement is necessary as companies invest a lot of money in advertising and marketing.

- The stages of developing an effective ad are related to the 5 Ms of advertising that is deciding on the ad's mission or purpose, allocating the budget (money), developing the advertising campaign (message generation and execution), selecting the right media to place the ads and evaluating the effectiveness of ads through different pre-and post-measurements.
- An average consumer is exposed to a plethora of advertisements on TV, radio, newspaper, magazine, social media, mobile, even on the rear of auto-rickshaw or shopping carts or trolleys, there is a lot of information clutter. Successful ads are those which are able to cut through the clutter by appealing to the consumers cognitively and emotionally, gain their attention, involve them and persuade them to buy the advertised product. This is done by generating persuasive ad messages and placing them on proper media platforms. The entire process requires understanding of the psychological underpinnings of attitude change and persuasion.

7.5 KEYWORDS

Advertorials Advertisements in the form of editorials, appearing mostly in magazines, newspapers and websites

AIDA Model of Marketing Identifies stages through which an individual/potential consumer goes through before becoming the actual customer. These stages are A - Attention, I -Interest, D - Desire and A-Action

Elaboration Likelihood Model of Persuasion A dual processing model which put forwards that there are two routes to persuasion or attitude change – the central route and the peripheral route. Based on the route taken the kind of processing of the message differs

Media Timing It refers to how the ad has to be scheduled over time

Social Media Advertising Targets the users of the various social media. It is a kind of online advertising where ads are placed on various social media networks

Specific Media Vehicle Selecting the precise platform on which the advertising message would be communicated

7.6 REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1) Amongst all the steps that are undertaken for developing an effective advertisement, which step or stage requires maximum creativity and why?
- 2) What is the hierarchy of effects model?

- 3) How are theories of attitude change utilized to create effective advertisements?
- 4) Compare and contrast the pros and cons of different advertising media.

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<https://www.forbes.com/sites/kashmirhill/2012/02/16/how-target-figured-out-a-teen-girl-was-pregnant-before-her-father-did/?sh=41d1ba5e6668> (Case study of TARGET)

7.8 ADDITIONAL ONLINE RESOURCES

- *Advertising strategies for successful advertisements:*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OWz8CzLELLQ>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iDdgZbQJ1mA>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a5PkySpZt0o>

- *Persuasion and advertising:*

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

Answers to Check Your Progress 1

True or false

- 1) False, increasing awareness of one's own brand is the goal of advertising.
- 2) False, advertisements in the form of editorials are called advertorials
- 3) True
- 4) True
- 5) False
- 6) False, advertisements also increase health awareness and might not lead to rise in sales at all.

Answers to Check Your Progress 3

Fill in the blanks

- 1) Dual
- 2) heuristic
- 3) advertising objectives
- 4) Television
- 5) advertising effectiveness
- 6) Mission, money, message and measurement
- 7) digital and social media
- 8) source credibility
- 9) reach, frequency and impact

