

A Study on the Role of Media and Celebrities in Sustainable Development

Seema Bajaj

*Assistant Professor, Dept. of Commerce
D.N. College, Hisar, Haryana*

Abstract - This paper explores the role that the media can play in contributing to a sustainable development. The biggest challenge that our economies are facing today is the depletion and pollution of the natural resources. The way we, individuals as well as organizations, are meeting our present needs indicates that we are not worried about the well being of our future generations. Today, we have reached the point of time when understanding the true worth of natural resources has become utmost important for one and all. We cannot afford anymore to ignore the theme of sustainable development. Our Media can also play a significant role here. The celebrities can help in the sustainable development of the economies mainly by educating people about the eco-friendly ways and their benefits through endorsement process. This research focuses on the media initiatives for sustainable development. The present research aims to find the extent to which the celebrities are focusing on sustainable development in India by endorsing eco-friendly products and by educating people about the eco-friendly ways and their benefits. A content analysis is then used to analyze the recorded advertisements. The results show that out of 243 total ads, only 98 ads featured celebrities in it. Only two ad, that featured a celebrity, presented the theme of Swacch Bharat. It shows that that there is a wide gap in the actual and the expected status of celebrity attention being given to eco-friendly products and customer education about sustainable development by the process of celebrity endorsement. So the Media can play a leading role in the sustainable development by involvement of celebrities. One more point which is noticed in the research is that in the ads and other Medias related to sports contain very less number adds which can help in sustainable development and these channels and media are more popular among the people as compared to others.

Keywords: - Sustainability, Media, Celebrities

I. INTRODUCTION

Development and Sustainable Development

Development is defined as the systematic use of scientific and technical knowledge to meet specific objectives or requirements. Development also includes an extension of the theoretical or practical outlooks of a concept, design, discovery, or invention. Development causes economic and social transformation centered on complex cultural and environmental elements and their collaborations. Sustainable development aims to attain human development objectives.

Sustainable development goals are a high priority for the economy and society. The philosophy of sustainable development is in sustaining finite resources for future generations, so that life on the planet continues. It visualizes a desirable future for human societies in which the living conditions are stable; in addition, the available resources continue to meet the demands of human without deterioration of the integrity, stability, and beauty of the natural biota. Sustainable development should always be inclusive of economic and financial development. Economic development ensures economic, political, and social well-being of the citizens. Sustainable development is one of the most popular terms that economists and politicians use in the 20th and 21st centuries.

II. RELATED STUDY

Vigyan Prasar conducted a survey regarding science coverage in media during November, December, and January; the survey was conducted between 1999 and 2000. Out of the 52 newspapers selected for the study, 31 were in English and 21 in Hindi. In an average, 3.3 science items were published. Hindi dailies had lesser Science news coverage, only 2.5, in comparison to the English newspapers, which was at 4.3. Items related to Health and Medicine was prominent

(31.8%) among the other items, which were Information Technology (9.8%), Environment (8.1%), Space Science (6%), Agricultural Sciences (4.4%), and General Scientific Research (4.5%). Healthcare news was reported more in Hindi newspapers (37.9%) than English newspapers (27.2%). However, information technology found more coverage (11.3%) in English newspapers than in Hindi (7.8%). Science articles were published more on Sundays, and Science news was prominent on other weekdays as well.

Sustainable development is a challenging concept which has been formulated by theories given by researchers and organizations. This concept requires some clarity regarding the issues which are to be classified as environmental, societal or economic or mix of three (Giddings et. al, 2002). The Brundtland report (WCED, 1987) defined Sustainable development as the process of meeting the needs of present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. It comprises of relationship between socio-economic and environmental concerns. Neoclassical economist defines development as change in social welfare (Lele, 1991). Development also signifies the type and amount of welfare provided to individuals. Sustainable development aims to minimize the conflicts between its three sectors namely, Economy, Environment and Society. Most people use the phrase Sustainable development interchangeably with Ecological sustainable and Environmentally sound development (Tolba, 1984) as in most of discussions relating to Sustainable development, either economy or environment is given preference over society (Giddings et. al, 2002). It can also be seen in the Local Agenda 21 agreements at the Rio Conference which focuses mainly on the environmental issues (County Durham, 1997; Northumberland County, 2000). Previous research has demonstrated that Sustainable development is related to use and disposal of green products but there lies a significant research gap in Sustainable development in terms of society. Society comprises of large number of human actions and social interactions. These interactions occur within the environment. The society element of Sustainable development is affiliated with well being of people. The human life depends on the environment (Giddings et. al, 2002) and the problem of sustainability lies in finding balance between personal and societal needs and nature's capacity to support ecosystem. The Brundtland Report (WCED, 1987) shows that the social element of Sustainability development is about finding balance between present generations (i.e. intragenerational equity) and also between the present and future generations (i.e. intergenerational equity). The principle of Intergenerational equity broadens the horizon of the concept and makes it long term in terms of its applicability. Sustainability development is being carried out on the macroeconomic as well as microeconomic level. However, on the macroeconomic level, the intragenerational equity is divided in to two parts: Domestic and International component (Hardi and Zdan, 1997). The domestic component comprises of the difference in income and wages level within a company branch in a country. However, International equity refers to the distribution of income between different countries. It also records other internal and external social improvement required in regards to quality of life. Internal social improvement comprises of the various collective issues of the employees such as education and observing fulfillment of human rights whereas External social improvements deals with social benefits of stakeholder such as customers, suppliers, communities etc. Further, Meadows et al. (1992) also confers that expansion will not be the solution to all the problems of the society. A sustainable society must rely on a cautious balance between long-term and short-term goals. It must also observe adequacy, parity, and good quality of life and use maturity, knowledge, and compassion.

III. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The Official Agenda for Sustainable Development, which was adopted on 25 September 2015, had 92 paragraphs. The main paragraph (51) summarized the 17 sustainable development goals and it's accompanying 169 targets. The included goals are the following:

- No Poverty: End poverty in all its forms everywhere. Poverty is not just the lack of income or resources. It also involves lack of basic services, such as education, social discrimination, and exclusion, and lack of participation in decision-making.
- Zero Hunger: End hunger and achieve food security and improved nutrition to promote sustainable agriculture. Worldwide, 1 in 9 people are undernourished, with most living in developing countries.
- Good Health and Well-Being: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages. A crucial objective is to significantly reduce the number of deaths and illnesses caused by pollution-related diseases.
- Quality Education: Ensure inclusive and unbiased quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. Major improvements have been made for education access, particularly at the primary school level, for both sexes.
- Gender Equality: Attain gender equality to empower all women and girls. Providing the female sex with equal opportunities in education, healthcare, decent work, and representation in political and economic decision-making processes will stimulate sustainable economies and be an advantage to the society and humanity at large.
- Clean Water and Sanitation: Ensure access to water and sanitation for all, and at the same time guaranteeing sustainable development.
- Affordable and Clean Energy: Ensure availability of affordable, dependable, sustainable, and modern energy for all.

- Decent Work and Economic Growth: Encourage sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, as well as full and productive employment and decent work for all.
- Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure: Prioritize resilient infrastructure, endorse inclusive and sustainable industrialization, and promote innovation.
- Reduced Inequalities: Reduce income inequality within and among countries.
- Sustainable Cities and Communities: Cities and human settlements should be inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable.
- Responsible Consumption and Production: Ensure sustainable consumption and production prototypes.
- Climate Action: Take urgent action to tackle climate change and its effects by regulating emissions and encouraging developments using renewable energy.
- Life below Water: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas, and marine resources for sustainable development.
- Life on Land: Defend, restore, and endorse the sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems. Sustainably managing forests, combating desertification, and halting and reversing land degradation and biodiversity loss accomplish this.
- Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all, and construct effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions for all establishments.
- Partnerships for the Goals: Reinforce the means of implementation and revitalize global partnerships for sustainable development.

IV. ROLE OF MEDIA IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Our Media and Celebrities can also play a significant role here. In India, Companies have been hiring celebrities to endorse their brands for a huge sum of money. A celebrity endorser is an individual who enjoys public recognition and uses this recognition to endorse a brand in an advertisement (McCracken, 1989). Celebrities such as movie stars, TV stars, sports stars, politicians, the members of the royal family, chefs, business tycoons and company executives are commonly used as endorsers in advertisements. As celebrities are instantly recognizable and attract consumer interest, they are able to bring attention to a brand in a way that no other type of advertising can. The celebrities can help in the sustainable development of the economies mainly by educating people about the eco-friendly ways and their benefits through endorsement process. This research focuses on the celebrity initiatives for sustainable development. The present research aims to find the extent to which the celebrities are focusing on sustainable development in India by endorsing eco-friendly products and by educating people about the eco-friendly ways and their benefits.

If we will start consuming eco friendly products, our various issues relating sustainable development will get resolved. Another important aspect is our awareness and education about the ways and benefits of sustainable development, so that we may bring changes to our present ways of living. Thus, the responsibility does not lie on the shoulders of celebrities only; rather it has to be shared by one and all. However, celebrities may play a role here in educating the folks about the dire need for and the benefits of sustainable development.

Advertising is a powerful medium for the companies to communicate with their customers. Advertising not only creates product awareness, advertising also presents detailed instructions on how to live. It portrays what is good, desirable and worthwhile in life. It communicates the desirable manners, styles, entertainments and lifestyles. This suggests that corporate houses have an opportunity here. The companies may use celebrity advertising not only to promote their products, but also to inform and educate people about sustainable development. Further, our habits, culture and norms are deeply rooted, and thus hard to change. It takes long time to change our beliefs, values and ways of living. This further emphasizes that there is a need to consistently remind people about the eco-friendly ways of living.

V. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The present research analyzes TV advertisements to study the celebrity initiatives for sustainable development. A content analysis of TV ads is conducted to achieve the following objectives:

1. To analysis the various media which is helpful in sustainable development.
2. To analyse the role of various celebrities in sustainable development.
3. To measure the number of TV ads that feature a celebrity focusing on the theme of sustainable development (by marketing an eco-friendly product or by educating people about a sustainable development theme)
4. To study the sustainable development themes covered in these ads.

VI. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Data were collected for three weeks by recording programs and advertisements aired on four popular channels (Sony, Zee News, NDTV and Star Sports) from 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm for three weekends (Saturday and Sunday). On an average, total recording of 12 hours for weekends was done. All data were screened and both program and non-program content (celebrity advertisements) were identified and analyzed. The advertisements that appeared in the form of social advertisements (celebrity advertisements of social responsibilities performed by companies) and public service announcements (a feasible method for providing information to general public) were also included. A total of 243ads were obtained. A content analysis is then used to analyze the recorded advertisements.

VII. RESULTS

Surprisingly, out of 243 total ads, only 98 ads featured celebrities in it. Celebrities endorsed ads focused on product selling through different marketing appeals. None of the celebrities talked about the theme of sustainable development. Only two ad, that featured Vidya Balan and Amitabh Bachchan presented the theme of Swacch Bharat. However, this ad was a public service ad, not corporate sponsored. Almost all the ads are focusing on the core selling propositions of the products, either through direct functional appeals or indirect emotional appeals.

VIII. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The Result shows that the Media can play a leading role in the sustainable development by involvement of celebrities. On more point which is noticed in the research is that in the ads and other Medias related to sports contain very less number adds which can help in sustainable development and these channels and media are more popular among the people as compared to others.

The result posits that there is a wide gap in the actual and the expected status of celebrity attention being given to eco-friendly products and customer education about sustainable development by celebrity endorsement. These findings present the true picture how seriously our celebrities are concerned about sustainable development.

However, it is not difficult task for celebrities to give a message to audiences along with the promotion of the products and services. For instance, the ad about the Class Notebooks may urge people to use paper well and benefits of recycling. The Bathing soap ad and a detergent ad may present the message of saving water. The beverages ads may ask people to judiciously dispose of plastic bottles and may tell them about the recycling benefits. Mobile phone ads may create awareness about the problems caused by e-waste. The companies may also themselves use bio degradable plastic which helps to release methane, a powerful greenhouse gas. McCracken (1989) states that the symbolic meanings associated with a celebrity are transferred onto the brands the celebrity endorses, and in turn, these meanings are then transferred from the celebrity to consumers through selecting brands that communicate their self concept, ultimately forming a self-brand connection. The celebrity are consciously making efforts to promote themselves as an individual who cares about the environment and society but it will only translate into consumer memory when they well start endorsing products which has a feature of sustainability in advertising.

In conclusion, there lies great scope for celebrities in taking initiatives to promote sustainable development through advertisements. Corporate houses and governments should also relay sustainable development related ads for the good of our present, our future and our future generations.

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