



## Social awareness campaign by newspapers of Raipur: A study on application of agenda setting theory

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### Abstract

Print media in India itself is a revolution. The objectives of this media have been changing as per the need of the hour. Print media is moulding itself according to the desire of the nation from it, as per the nature of citizen, as per the scenario and whatnot. The Constitution of India in its Article (1) (a) guaranteed to the citizen right to freedom of speech and expression; and because of this right the media in India is able to express itself in the diverse forms. Calling itself the fourth pillar of Indian democracy, the Indian media carries with itself a bundle of responsibilities and duties towards the nation and towards the citizen. Today, the print media is so powerful that it has the ability to inform, educate, entertain and influence its readers. And when print media is blessed with the power to reach the mass of the country and to convey not only information but also a thought process then it becomes the responsibility of the print media to not limit itself at the news but to use itself as channel that will create awareness among its citizens. India is land driven by faith, culture, and history and in midst of this there prevails certain ill practices, ideologies, wrong conceptions which act as barriers to the development. And to a certain extent print media is able to spread awareness in the society in the form of what it serves. Among several mass communication theories developed by great thinkers, one is the "Agenda setting" developed by Max McCombs and Donald Shaw in 1968. This theory is based on the ability of news media to influence the importance placed on the topics of the public agenda. The agenda can be anything as per the vision and objectives set by the media organization. This research is carried out with an objective that aims at studying the relevance of the social awareness campaign run by newspapers as an application of agenda setting theory. The methodology of the research is driven by the comparative study of the newspapers followed by the qualitative analysis of the articles based on social awareness campaign of the respective newspaper.

**Keywords:** agenda setting theory, social awareness, newspaper, campaign

### Introduction

Social awareness campaigns aims at creating conscious among the public regarding any specific relevant issue prevailing in the society. These campaigns aware the masses and make them realise their role. When these campaigns are executed in the due time and involve the participation of the masses then they actually tend to form the public opinion and the way the people thinks on a particular issue. We live in a beautiful society but not everything and every practice performed by the people is something that makes us proud it. Despite living in 21<sup>st</sup> century we are still tangled in the ill practices that have been prevailing here since so long. And print media being the mainstream media has the responsibility on its shoulders to take initiatives to eradicate such problems from the society and bring necessary changes.

**Relevance of social awareness campaigns:** The citizens always rely on the media for information, entertainment and infotainment. Today media is not some vehicle whose job is only to serve news to its consumers but its job begins when its start providing its consumers the thing beyond news. Today the news is something we can easily get on our fingertips but what else than news are we getting from the media. People are the consumers of media and the major role of the media is to cater the demands of the masses by

providing information they really require. The social awareness campaigns are relevant in print media because no doubt how fast other Media are growing but nothing can replace the charm of print media and print media has significant reach and anything that is communicated by print media reaches millions of people at a time and people have faith in this media because it is one of the most authentic and trustworthy newspaper. Because of such characteristics of print media the social awareness campaigns have their significance.

### Social awareness campaign as an application of agenda setting theory

The theory put forth by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw states that the media sets the public agenda, in the sense that they may not exactly tell you what to think, but they may tell you what to think about (Davie, 2010). The Agenda-Setting Function of the Mass Media and on the other hand if we look at the social awareness campaigns then the social awareness campaigns are also set so as to make the public think on the particular aspect of any issue present in contemporary scenario and it somehow tends to form the public opinion out of it. Social awareness campaigns are set with the agenda to target the minds of the readers regarding a particular thing and to bring the change in the society. Agenda are set so as to reach a particular

target and get the desired outcomes. The print media organisations set agendas in several ways; these agendas are reflection of any media organisations. Sometimes people misunderstand the agendas as the propaganda by the organisation, but the agendas are not same as propaganda, having agendas for any organisation is necessary. The agendas define that how the organisation will work in a particular direction and setting agenda helps in reaching the goal. Hence the social awareness campaign by any print media reflects its agendas and vision, apart from these campaigns there might be other hidden agendas of any media.

### Review of Literature

**Nelliyyullathil, M. (2016, May). Minority Media and Community Agenda Setting a Study on Muslim Press in Kerala. *IJELLH International Journal of English Language, Literature and Humanities* ISSN: 2321-7065. Volume IV, Issue V.**

This research paper being based on the Muslim media organisations in Kerala focused on the effectiveness of these newspapers in forming public opinion among community members and setting agenda for community issues. It throws light on the functional perspective of minority media. This study has a deep theoretical significance in the present day scenario where Muslims are being politically marginalised. Study is based on two theoretical concepts i.e. the agenda setting theory and the Viswanath and Arora's conceptualization of Minority Media Functions.

**Scheufele, D. and Tewksbury, D. Framing, Agenda Setting, and Priming: The Evolution of Three Media Effects Models. *Journal of Communication* ISSN 0021-9916**

This issue is devoted to the theoretical explanations of news framing, agenda setting and priming effects. It examines the relation between these three models and how the effects of mass media are based on the potential relation of these three models. In the study few key dimensions along which one can compare, framing, agenda setting, and priming have been highlighted. Conclusion is based on the description of the context within which these models operate and the broader implications that these conceptual distinctions have for the growth of our discipline.

### Objectives

1. To study social awareness campaign as an application of agenda setting theory.
2. To study relevance of social awareness campaigns.
3. To study the agendas behind social awareness campaign.

### Hypothesis

1. Social awareness campaigns are the agendas set to frame the thoughts of public and the way they think.
2. Social awareness campaigns help the newspaper organisation to distinguish itself from other organisation
3. Social awareness campaigns portrays the ideology and vision of newspaper organisation

### Methodology

This research is based on the comparative study of the social awareness campaign article published in two prominent

newspapers of the Raipur and the interview of the editor/news editor of the newspaper. Qualitative approach of research is the method for analysis of articles/news publishes in the leading dailies on the basis of five different parameters. The parameters are i) Campaign approach, ii) Tagline and logo, iii) Frequency, iv) Illustrations and v) Information provided. The interview will be based on a questionnaire of ten questions that deals with different aspects of social awareness campaigns, its relevance and the agenda setting theory. Two prominent newspapers of Raipur are selected for content analysis based on the RNI report, both the news paper are in 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> news paper of Raipur based on the circulation.

### Data Analysis

#### Campaign Approach

Prominent Hindi daily Dainik Bhaskar (DB) initiated social awareness campaign “#Mor Pani Mor Jimmedari”, on the occasion of World Water Day on 22 March 2018, this Chhattisgarhi phrase meant My water, My responsibility. This campaign welcomed the stories and strategies adopted by the citizens of Raipur to prevent the wastage of water. On the other hand Hindi daily Patrika began its social awareness campaign “Amritam Jalam” during April 2018. The approach adopted was the cleaning and beautification of Danganiya pond with the cooperation of social, religion groups and private hospitals on every weekend.

#### Tagline and Logo

The title “# Mor Pani Mor Jimmedari” itself is the tagline with the trending hashtag. The tagline is inspired from the theme song of Mor Raipur Swachh Raipur. The campaign did not have any logo of it. “Amritam Jalam” on the other hand is seasonal campaign in practice since so long by Patrika and has a beautiful logo and tagline “Aao Bhagirath Bane”

#### Frequency

Stories and articles of campaign “#Mor Pani Mor Jimmedari” were published every day (approx.) in the supplementary City Bhaskar in front page. On the other hand “Amritam Jalam” articles and story was published twice in week on Sunday and Monday in the supplementary Patrika Plus and the page varied.

#### Illustrations

“#Mor Pani Mor Jimmedari” used fewer photographs to illustrate the work done by the people but necessary photographs of the unique methods adopted were shown and “Amritam Jalam” used maximum number of photographs from the water pond cleaning drive to show the involvement of the mass and change bought to make the content more effective and welcoming to the readers.

#### Information Provided

“# Mor Pani Mor Jimmedari” included several information from how to be part of campaign on social media, how to get your idea acknowledged, and apart from that the stories and methods adopted by people were included in publication and relevant information and credits to the people were given. “Amritam Jalam” campaign gave varied information on Sundays and Mondays. On Sunday the information included were about the date and timing of the cleanliness drive, where it will be conducted who can take

part, what else activities will be there and whom to contact. And on Monday the information was about the minute details of cleanliness drive, who participated, which intuition became part of it what other activities were carried out and the change bought.

### Analysis of expert interview

#### *Shri Gyanesh Upadhyay, State Editor, Patrika, Raipur*

The interviewee has belief that no good newspaper can sustain for too long without working for the benefit of the citizens. The expert says that in print media the newspaper is the product and readers are the customers and they believe whatever they read in the newspaper. The role of the newspaper is to educate and inform the people and newspapers bear the responsibility of complete awareness among the people and complete progress of the people. He added that since its establishment Patrika has been into initiating social awareness campaigns, in Raipur the recent campaigns are women centric campaign and Change maker campaign which is related with the upcoming elections. He believes that these campaigns help the newspaper to distinguish itself from the competitors in the way it portrays its ideologies and work for the betterment of its readers and the society. Talking about whether print media is good medium for initiating such campaigns he said that of course print media is a good vehicle, print media is the revolutionary media and we've seen its calibre in the independence struggle. The reason behind it is that the newspaper comes in hard copy and that can be used, circulated, preserved and kept for longer time. The interviewee feels that social awareness campaigns are of course an application of agenda setting theory because agenda defines the vision and goal and without agenda no campaign can run efficiently and there is no fault in setting such agendas. The different parameters on the basis of which these social awareness campaigns are designed according to the interviewee are i) what is required and needed by the society, ii) will the campaign get support and appreciation from peoples end and iii) is the campaign result oriented? If the campaign is able to justify these aspects then only it is initiated. Speaking on the public involvement in social awareness campaigns the expert said that usually we see that only prominent people, VIP persons get news coverage, but these campaigns allow common people to share their stories, incidents, photographs and sometimes people join the campaigns so that they can get space and coverage in newspaper and show it, collect it and preserve it, and hence these campaigns allows the direct involvement of common people. Sharing his views on the other applications of agenda setting theory in newspaper, he said that a good newspapers always aims at working for the benefit of the suppressed class, exposing the deeds of the corrupt people, work as a watchdog, and help the needy section of the society by becoming their voice and these things itself forms the agendas of any newspaper or media. Because agendas are the goals set to be achieved, vision with the faith organisation and hence the thought process behind the newspaper, its working, etc is the portrayal of the agenda. Interviewee discussed the current social awareness campaign by Patrika "*Amritam Jalam*", this campaign was initiated 25 years ago and it is still in practice in every summers. As part of this Patrika team work for cleaning and beautification of Danganiya pond with cooperation of several social and religious groups and private hospitals on

the weekends.

#### *Shri Tanmay Agrawal, Chief Sub-Editor (City), Dainik Bhaskar, Raipur*

Interviewee feels that social awareness contributes a lot to any media organisation; these campaigns are helping the newspapers to sustain in the era of news portals. The different social awareness campaigns by the Dainik Bhaskar are the health insurance awareness campaign "Health For All", infertility awareness campaign "*Ummid Khushiyon Ki*". These campaigns for sure helps in creating a distinct identity though not all the campaigns are initiated from the view of competition, but they reflect the thought and approach of any newspapers, its employees and the vision. He feels that since beginning newspapers have been setting these campaigns but previously these campaigns were not identified as campaigns but with the time these campaigns started taking face of creative campaigns with the creative approach and later being recognised as social awareness campaign but newspaper has been creating awareness among the mass regarding several issues. Speaking about medium, he feels that there is no better vehicle than print to do any awareness campaign, no doubt the social media is trending, but people are not using it for creating awareness in a broader sense. He shared his experience that even for one of the campaign readers were asked to share their views, photos, incidents, on social media using the hashtags (#) but people don't feel free to express themselves on social media on such issues rather they like to use social media for fun and entertainment. On the other hand even if one newspaper reaches one family then it goes in the hands of on an average four members and hence it is better medium than any other medium. Relating the social awareness campaigns with the agenda setting theory the interviewee said that there are several types of agenda but not all agendas can be linked to the social awareness campaign, yes social awareness campaign portray the positive agenda of any media organisation and there are also no hidden agendas behind any social awareness campaign, these campaigns are crystal clear and rational and this is basis of their success. And people should misunderstand these awareness campaigns as otherwise agendas of any media. The different parameters on the basis of which they decide the agendas of the campaigns are that how relevant and untouched topic and issue it is, is there any creative and innovative approach of the campaign and will the campaign help in increasing readership and help in generating revenue (sometimes), because a lot of the campaign's success and relevance depends on the issue adopted and the approach used, sometimes there might be a cliché issue but an innovative approach will always make it popular likewise if the campaign is becoming popular in any way then it should help in increasing the circulation or the readership and some campaigns may help the media houses to generate revenue and there is nothing wrong in it if is rational. The current social awareness campaign is "*#Mor Pani Mor Jimmedari*" which was initiated on World Water Day, this campaign encouraged people to share their stories, techniques or methods they have adopted to control wastage of water and to preserve water. The best part about such campaigns are that they welcome public participation and people who actively participate get coverage and hence people get attracted towards being the part of any campaign. The interviewee feels that newspaper itself is portrayal of

different positive or hidden agendas of the owner or editor because agendas provide direction and vision. Even the kind of stories a newspaper publish, kinds of photos it publish everything speaks something about the agenda and these agendas are essential for any newspaper or any media.

### Conclusion

The researcher after doing the comparative study of two social awareness campaigns by two prominent Hindi newspapers of Raipur and interviewing Editors of the respective newspapers came to a conclusion that initiating social awareness campaign is an application of agenda setting theory in a sense that these campaigns are rooted in the agendas of any media organisation and portray the vision, thoughts and approach of the newspaper. The agenda setting theory can be well linked to the media, its working and its initiatives. The relevance of such social awareness campaigns lies in how they will be able to create awareness among people through the print media, how people are becoming part of such campaigns and how the creative and innovative campaigns behind this campaigns helps them in approaching public in a different and more appealing way. The agendas behind these campaign is to serve the public and work for their welfare apart from providing them news and information. The success of social awareness campaigns also led to the increase in readership and circulation. Sometimes these campaigns also help in revenue generation. Though social awareness campaigns are not only initiated to compete and stand in market but still these campaigns helps an organisation to create its distinguished identity from others in the way they execute, conduct and frame the social awareness campaign. Based on the research, few suggestions from the researchers end would be that print media through its social awareness campaigns gets an opportunity to express its views and ideologies in a creative way which has impact on society and ability to aware the mass regarding several issues that usually goes unnoticed. And also these campaigns should be done with the cooperation of concerned government bodies and private institutions so that it can attract more people and also the faith that these bodies carry along with them. These campaigns should involve maximum number of public participation and there should be least profit hidden agendas behind it. If these campaigns are designed in a way that there is maximum public participation involved, prominent institutions connected with it and apart from just creating awareness they also offer few benefits to the people than it will attract more and more readers and common people. And of course creative approach and selection of relevant and untouched issues is important because apart from the issues we come across on a regular basis there are plenty of issues that needs the attention of the mass to then spread awareness about it.

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