

Promoting Health: Government Programs for Women Well-being in India

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Abstract

In India, the general health and economic stability of communities and the country as a whole are significantly impacted by the health and well-being of women. Women's health is an equally crucial component of public health and societal development. In India, where women constitute nearly half of the population, women's health is key for accomplishing broader socioeconomic objectives, enhancing public health outcomes, and promoting sustainable development. Healthy mothers are more likely to give birth to healthy babies, which leads to fewer cases of childhood illnesses, malnutrition, and delivery problems. The ability of women to engage in the workforce and make economic contributions is largely dependent on their health. Acknowledging this, the Indian government has started several initiatives to strengthen women's healthcare. These initiatives are not only about providing medical care but also about empowering women, ensuring their well-being and building a healthy nation. These programs indirectly support communities, families and children by addressing women's health needs. The study explores the importance of these programs in terms of improving women's health outcomes as well as their wider socio-economic impact. The primary objective of this qualitative paper is to analyse a few extensive advertising campaigns that support these initiatives aiming to raise awareness and ensure mass participation. The findings underscore the critical role of these promotional activities.

Keywords: women health, government, India, healthcare initiatives, advertisement, media, promotion, awareness

Introduction

Women's health care is a complex issue in India, where gender disparities and socioeconomic challenges often prevent access to essential health services. Especially, women in rural and poor areas are often malnourished due to dietary restrictions and lack of access to healthy food. Proper accommodation of these nutritional needs is essential for health and productivity. Many women in India cannot go to health services due to a lack of finances, transport, and/or societal norms that hamper seeking help at a medical facility. Better accessibility will ensure their good health and empowerment. Reproductive health is directly linked with maternal and infant mortality among women. Critical to the reduction of these rates and support of healthy pregnancies and births is access to prenatal, birth, and postpartum health care. In addition, women are at risk for a multitude of chronic conditions, most notably breast and cervical cancers, cardiovascular diseases, and osteoporosis. These can be effectively managed and the health status and longevity of women enhanced through early detection and preventive services. One of the very prevalent issues in the lives of these women includes mental health problems, major depression, and anxiety disorders, which are worsened by socioeconomic stressors, domestic violence, and cultural expectations.

Healthy women play a significant role in improving productivity and economic growth by contributing to the workforce. Improving the health of them also has an effect on the health and development of future generations, which in turn creates a more robust workforce for the future. They are more likely to pursue education and vocational training with an inclination toward greater empowerment and socio-economic advancement. Educated and empowered women can work

towards social change and the development of communities. Preventive health and early intervention reduce the burden of diseases and decrease health costs for the family and the government. A healthy woman in stils gender equality and social stability. When women are healthy and empowered, they can play their parts fully in all aspects of society, and there will be more inclusive and more equitable development. Women frequently play key roles in community health and education and can take on leadership roles and contribute to community initiatives much better, therefore contributing to overall development and well-being.

Government initiatives, therefore, become very instrumental in taming the various dimensions of women's health in the country. These initiatives would therefore be very important in promoting equal access to healthcare, reducing disparities between genders, and improving overall national development. Government efforts toward infrastructural development, mobile health units, and financial aid can substantially improve the access of women to healthcare services. Subsidies, free services, and insurance or other health systems may lighten the financial burden on women and their families. Communication and education to the masses concerning these stride-making initiatives are very critical in achieving maximum impact. Still, many women, especially those in rural and disadvantaged areas, do not know the healthcare programs available to them. Unaware of these facilities, they may not seek proper treatment due to a lack of required knowledge, hence suffering from untreated health conditions and consequently leading to undesirable health lives. This information will allow women to use these healthcare services for their benefit. Making the public aware of government initiatives for healthcare will also see increased community involvement and support. If communities are aware of the various healthcare programs, then they can work together to ensure all members, especially women, get this service. Community leaders, health workers, and local organizations may be of assistance in spreading information and convincing women to access healthcare initiatives. Such integration also enhances government programs, working for the betterment and reinforcement of the community's health. Transparency guarantees the productive use of resources, where the resources are deployed to the service of the key target. This accountability holds the key to long-term sustainability and success in healthcare initiatives.

The government can diffuse into the mass media—television, radio, newspaper, and online—to reach a wider audience for the needed advertisements. These channels would reach a wide demographic, thus spotting healthcare initiatives for women in both urban and rural areas. The demographics data derived from the survey and media consumption patterns can be utilized in tailoring advertisements accordingly for the respective groups. For instance, campaigns may target women of specific age brackets, socio-economic backgrounds, or geographic locations, so that the message filters through to those most in need of the information. On their part, government healthcare programs usually have a myriad of detailed information regarding eligibility, services rendered, and how to access them. The advertisement simplifies all this information through a clear and concise message so that women easily get what is available and how to benefit from these programs. Ads use visual and audio aids for message delivery. Infographics, animations, and dramatizations of the benefits of health services and steps to get them to make the information relevant and memorable. India is a multilingual country, and language can be one of the issues in communication. Campaigns in multiple languages ensure understanding by women regarding knowledge of healthcare initiatives from different linguistic backgrounds. Visual communication assumes paramount importance for populations with low literacy rates. Therefore, advertisements that incorporate pictures, icons, and illustrations continue to share vital information with illiterate women, hence healthcare awareness is universal. The advertisement can announce community outreach programs, health camps, and sessions for health knowledge. Through the same programs, women will be able to seek more information on healthcare programs, ask more questions and receive services spot-on. In social media, there is an interactive platform whereby women can interact with healthcare information. Social media advertising will not only spread awareness but make it two-way: women can ask questions, share experiences, and get real-time support.

Review of Literature

Bindlish, Singh and Singh (2022) in their study “*Government initiatives for women empowerment*” narrated several policies and schemes at the national, state, and local levels toward ensuring equality, welfare, education, and health of girls and women. For example, the introduction of the Women Helpline Scheme for instant emergency response to women facing violence, the One Stop Centre for providing integrated support services to women affected by violence, and Sukanya Samridhi Yojana for encouraging parents to save for a girl child’s higher education. The Ministry of Women and Child Development has been established exclusively by the State to ensure the holistic development of women and children, enactment/ amendment of legislation, formulation of plans, policies, and programs, and coordination of efforts of various organizations working in the field of empowerment of women. Despite these, the financial, social, health, and political scenario of women in India has been found to be in a poor state in most respects, such as lower literacy rates compared to men, rising violence against them, and dominance by men in all aspects of society.

Dhaka, Verma, Agrawal, & Kumar (2018) in their paper “*Ayushman Bharat Yojana: a memorable health initiative for Indians*” discussed the benefits and details of the government program Ayushman Bharat. In India, the average annual total medical expenditure is too expensive that the rural populace has no kind of medical attention due to financial constraints. Meanwhile, based on the WHO survey, 3 out of 4 Indians spend all their money buying prescription medications and undergoing medical treatment. It will provide insurance health cover up to Rs 5 lakh rupees per annum for secondary and tertiary care hospitalization to over 10 crore families. It precisely specified the deprivation criteria for rural BPL families. Ayushman Bharat will improve living standards in a way that enhances patient satisfaction, productivity, efficiency, and the development of jobs.

Frolova (2014) in the thesis “*The Role of Advertising in Promoting a Product*” examined advertising’s effect on consumer purchasing behaviour and a product’s life cycle. The urge to advertise is increasing day by day, and the cost of advertisements is also growing. Advertisement increases sales, which extends the life cycle of the product. An advertiser must decide how often the ad will appear and how much of the market it will cover before choosing the most effective advertisement distribution method. The frequency of advertising is highest in the following media: newspapers, radio and television, and the least in the following: telephone directories, any outside advertising, magazines and direct mail. The channel of distribution affects the effect of the advertising message; the stability of the message indicates how often the number of times people view the ad, and how it is remembered.

Domazet, Djokic & Milovanov (2018) in their research “*The Influence of Advertising Media on Brand Awareness*” discussed the role of advertisement. One of the most important tools of promotion of a brand is advertising, which may influence consumers’ awareness and perception. It applies multiple media channels to deliver information about a brand effectively to the consumer. The greatest influence on brand awareness is television, followed by the Internet and billboards. The smallest impact is made by newspapers and radio stations. This therefore calls for a marketer to have a prioritization of his advertisement’s media based on its effectiveness. The relation of the effectiveness of advertising media also relates to some of the sociodemographic factors, which are age, family income, education, and gender. This would imply that different consumer segments would call for different marketing strategies.

Advertising analysis of government programs to promote women’s health

➤ Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan (PMSMA)

The Government of India initiative, which targeted maternal and infant mortality reduction by ensuring comprehensive and quality antenatal care, was launched in 2016. Under this, PMSMA provides free antenatal check-ups on the 9th of every month to all pregnant women across the country, particularly those in the second and third trimesters. The program ensures basic diagnostic facilities, such as blood pressure and sugar level monitoring, haemoglobin testing, and ultrasound tests. Emphasis has also been given to early detection and management of high-risk pregnancies to

prevent complications. The special focus under PMSMA would be on rural and underserved areas to bridge the gap in health accessibility.

➤ **Beti Bachao Beti Padhao**

It was launched in 2015 by the Government of India to address the falling CSR and promote girls' education and empowerment. Termed literally "Save the Daughter, Educate the Daughter," this campaign aims to break certain deeply entrenched age-old social norms and gender biases that are causing foeticide and death among the girl child. This is a joint initiative of the Ministry of Women and Child Development, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, and the Ministry of Education. Anchored in multi-sectoral action across 100 districts with the worst CSR, the program will involve massive awareness generation in girls' education, ensuring their survival and protection, and community participation to improve CSR. This is achieved through several different strategies: using mass communications campaigns, providing incentives for local governments, and organizing community leaders for the creation of a supportive environment in which girls are valued as equals. The initiative has gained much support and resulted in higher girls' enrolment in schools and a gradual societal attitudinal shift toward gender equality.

➤ **Ayushman Bharat**

It is also referred to as the Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana. It is the brainchild of the Government of India for a health insurance scheme that was launched in September 2018. It seeks to deliver accessible and affordable healthcare to over 100 million vulnerable families, thereby covering about 500 million individuals. The scheme provides an annual health cover of up to Rs 5 lakh per family for secondary and tertiary care hospitalization across public and private empanelled hospitals in India. Ayushman Bharat is an integral component of a bigger mission for Universal Health Coverage and aims to reduce the financial burden on poor and vulnerable groups arising out of catastrophic hospital episodes. The scheme also emphasizes preventive healthcare through Health and Wellness Centres that would cater to comprehensive primary healthcare services, including maternal and child health services, free essential drugs, and diagnostic services. Spanning far and wide, with comprehensive coverage, Ayushman Bharat is a long-awaited scheme to uplift healthcare access and equity in India.

Results & analysis

Public awareness advertisement

TV and Radio Advertisement: Information advertising and jingles are broadcast across national and regional channels to spread maximum coverage to the most unreachable areas in rural and deprived parts of the region.

Print Media: These include putting up posters, pamphlets, and brochures at places such as hospitals, health centres, schools, and community centres. Articles and advertisements are placed in newspapers and magazines.

Digital and social media: Sharing of infographics, videos, and success stories across Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and other platforms helps engage the online audience. Government websites and mobile applications carry details about the program and its benefits.

Community Participation: The message is propagated by the local government bodies and NGOs through rallies, street plays, and cultural programs. Camps, workshops, and seminars in rural and urban areas are organized to educate people about the scheme and help them in the process of enrolment. The local leaders and the health workers extend their services to spread awareness and facilitate access to the schemes.

Advertisement of the government initiatives concerning women's health in media is imperative. It ensures wide reach and maximum coverage to different groups both in urban and rural settings. Through the effective use of television, radio, print media, and digital media, awareness among women will be created about the services provided in healthcare, such as free antenatal check-ups and maternal health programs. This is important awareness to improve health outcomes, reduce maternal and infant mortality rates, and improve the general well-being of citizens. The ad can also help break through cultural and societal barriers by encouraging women to attend hospitals on time and making

the atmosphere socially friendly towards women's health. The government can therefore appropriately engage different media in conveying important health information, involving communities, and promoting behavioural change to ensure a much healthier and robust population.

Future scope of the study

The future implications of the research are huge, covering several directions in which further study may prove useful and result in practical applications. This study discussed about three government programs for women's healthcare facilities and its promotional activities. Future research can build on these findings by analysing the impact on women's health improvement from a grassroots level with different methodologies. Such future research on the subject can give better approaches and solutions that will ultimately promote growth and advancement in the field of interest.

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