



## Are Social Marketing Practices of Corporates and Clubs in India sustainable and withstanding?

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**Abstract:** *This study explores the social marketing practices of corporates and clubs in India, examining their strategies, impact, and challenges. The research aims to provide insights into how these entities engage in social marketing initiatives, their motivations, and the effectiveness of their efforts in addressing social issues. Key social marketing practices observed include raising awareness, advocating for social causes, engaging in community projects, and collaborating with non-profits and government agencies. However, the study also identifies challenges faced by corporates and clubs in their social marketing endeavours. These challenges include maintaining authenticity, measuring the impact of initiatives, ensuring long-term commitment, and addressing stakeholder expectations. The research concludes that while corporates and clubs in India are actively involved in social marketing, there is room for improvement. Recommendations include aligning social marketing efforts with core values, fostering collaboration, practicing transparency, and measuring social impact. These suggestions can enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of social marketing practices in India. This study contributes to the existing body of knowledge on social marketing by providing insights into the practices of corporates and clubs in the Indian context. It offers valuable information for practitioners, policymakers, and researchers interested in understanding and improving the social marketing landscape in India.*

**Keywords:** *Social Marketing, Corporate Responsibility, Factors, Effects, Challenges*

### 1. Introduction

Social marketing refers to the use of marketing principles and techniques to bring about positive social change. Unlike commercial marketing that focuses on promoting products or services, social marketing aims to influence behaviors and attitudes that benefit society as a whole. It applies marketing strategies to address social issues, promote health and well-being, protect the environment, and encourage responsible behaviors.

The primary goal of social marketing is to create behavior change by addressing the underlying motivations, barriers, and influencers that shape individuals' actions. It involves understanding the target audience, conducting research to identify key insights, and designing tailored interventions to effectively communicate messages and drive desired behaviors.

*Key Components of Social Marketing:*

**Behavior Change:** Social marketing focuses on promoting positive behavior change. This could include encouraging healthy lifestyles, promoting environmentally friendly practices, advocating for social causes, or influencing public policy.

**Target Audience:** Identifying and understanding the target audience is crucial in social marketing. Audience segmentation helps in tailoring messages and interventions to specific groups based on demographics, psychographics, and behavioural characteristics.

**Insight and Research:** Conducting research and gaining insights into the target audience's attitudes, beliefs, values, and motivations is a foundational step in social marketing. This research helps in developing effective communication strategies and interventions.

**Marketing Mix:** Social marketing applies the traditional marketing mix elements—product, price, place, and promotion—in a social context.

The "product" may be a behavior, service, or idea that is being promoted. The "price" refers to the costs and benefits associated with adopting the desired behavior. The "place" involves determining where and how to reach the target audience, while "promotion" includes the communication strategies and channels used to convey messages.

**Partnerships and Collaboration:** Social marketing often involves collaboration with various stakeholders, including government agencies, non-profit organizations, community groups, and businesses. Partnerships help in leveraging resources, sharing expertise, and amplifying the impact of social marketing initiatives.

#### *Examples of Social Marketing Initiatives:*

**Anti-Smoking Campaigns:** Social marketing has played a crucial role in raising awareness about the harmful effects of smoking and promoting tobacco control. These campaigns aim to discourage smoking initiation, encourage quitting, and advocate for smoke-free environments.

**Public Health Campaigns:** Social marketing is used to address public health issues such as promoting vaccinations, encouraging healthy eating habits, combating substance abuse, and promoting safe sexual behaviors.

**Environmental Conservation:** Social marketing initiatives promote sustainable behaviors, such as recycling, reducing energy consumption, conserving water, and adopting eco-friendly practices. These campaigns raise awareness about environmental issues and encourage individuals to make positive changes.

**Road Safety Campaigns:** Social marketing efforts are employed to raise awareness about road safety, encourage responsible driving behaviors, and reduce accidents and fatalities on the roads.

**Social Causes and Advocacy:** Social marketing is utilized to raise awareness and support for social causes, including human rights, gender equality, education, and poverty alleviation.

Overall, social marketing harnesses the power of marketing techniques to address societal challenges, promote positive behaviors, and contribute to social well-being and positive change.

## **2. Objectives of the study**

The general objective of the study is to analyse the practices of social marketing by corporates and service clubs in Andhra Pradesh

The specific objectives of the study is to

1. Identify the social marketing activities being accomplished by the corporates in Andhra Pradesh
2. Identify the factors influencing social responsibility by corporates in Andhra Pradesh
3. Assess the performance of the clubs in conducting the social marketing activities in Andhra Pradesh

## **3. Literature review**

Venugopal, K. (2013) stated that the rural places would be the best places to establish social marketing activities in the way of transforming the technology for their necessitate activities and for which the corporates are supposed to strive in the form of corporate social responsibility.

Santosh Ranganath N. et al. (2012) explored that the environmental consciousness among the marketers which would route to philanthropy centered activities through green marketing and the way that the marketers promote their operations can be benefited in the form of social marketing.

Another study from Santosh Ranganath N. and Venugopal, K. (2011) stated that Indian entrepreneurs hailed from rural places have an enthusiasm of doing business with certain social responsibility since most of their businesses are associated with agriculture and the derivatives of concerned always have the maximum possibility of adding noble value to the customers could come under social marketing.

Koppala Venugopal (2022) in his article entitled 'Intricacies between Organised and Unorganised Sellers during Covid Pandemic' concluded that the pandemic has made the business more critical which allowed many detrimental activities through unorganised business practices irrespective of rural and urban places.

There have been many ill practices in the businesses in the name of social marketing especially in online shopping which has

been well-spread to the integral parts of India and many are getting cheated by certain online fraudulent activists promoting bogus philanthropic services (Gopalakrishna, V., et al. 2021).

Global business operations have narrowed the concept of social marketing and in future it can also be turned into one of the promotional activity in comparison with the domestic brands (Koppala Venugopal, et al. 2020)

There have been many companies promoting their businesses through social media especially by touching some emotional elements such as activities bringing up the emotion of mercy and kindness since most of the social media platforms are run on the basis of emotional exchange and relationships (Koppala Venugopal et al. 2020).

After Covid, it is observed that there is a change in the customers in the way of the preferences of products and services, at the same time the change in the attitude of the marketers is not changed and the traditional ways of commercialisation is continuing. Health insurers are advised to make the claim more feasible since the health issues are sensitive and vary between the information given at the time of application and claiming (Murlikrishna, P.N., et al. 2020).

Some of the philanthropic activities are generally witnessed by most of the persons as well as corporates at the religious places and destinations of religious tourism since it attracts masses. These charities are also considered as a part of social marketing since many deprived communities depending on such needy help (Koppala Venugopal and Vishnu Murty, D. 2019).

Employees should be able to understand the philosophy of the corporates with respect to the activities associated with social marketing and corporate social responsibility which can be well and better executed with additional quality and productivity (Gashaw Tibebe et al. 2018).

Gopalakrishna, V., et al. (2018) have expressed that the emotional buying behaviour pretty lucrative element in India

which is applicable through associating the emotional element with the product or services and concluded that some segment of customers buy the products of Patanjali because it is produced and marketed by a divine personality.

#### 4. Methodology of the study

The methodology of this study was with exploratory design and qualitative approach. The researchers have carried out this research through secondary data of the material from books connected to the topic, media, newspapers, pedagogical pieces, reports from industry-based websites, and research publications

#### 5. Social marketing by corporates

Social marketing by corporates refers to the strategic use of marketing techniques and resources by businesses to promote social causes, address societal issues, and bring about positive social change. It involves leveraging the power of marketing and corporate influence to drive behavioural change, raise awareness, and contribute to the well-being of communities and the environment. Here are some key aspects and examples of social marketing by corporates:

*Purpose-driven Branding:* Many corporations today embrace purpose-driven branding, aligning their values and missions with social causes. They integrate social and environmental initiatives into their core business strategies and communicate their commitment to these causes through branding and marketing efforts.

Example: Patagonia, an outdoor clothing company, is known for its strong commitment to environmental sustainability. They use their marketing campaigns to educate consumers about the impact of their products on the environment and encourage responsible consumption.

*Cause-related Marketing:* This involves partnering with non-profit organizations or social initiatives to promote a specific cause or campaign. Corporates collaborate with these organizations, and a portion of their sales or profits is donated to support the cause.

Example: The partnership between Starbucks and (RED) to fight against AIDS is an instance of

cause-related marketing. Starbucks donates a portion of its sales from (RED) products to the Global Fund to support HIV/AIDS programs.

*Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR):* CSR initiatives involve corporations taking responsibility for their impact on society and the environment. Through CSR, companies address social issues, contribute to community development, and engage in philanthropic activities.

Example: Unilever's Sustainable Living Plan focuses on sustainability and social impact. They strive to reduce their environmental footprint, improve the livelihoods of small-scale farmers, and enhance hygiene and sanitation practices worldwide.

*Public Awareness Campaigns:* Corporations can use their marketing and advertising platforms to raise awareness about social issues and influence public opinion. They create compelling campaigns to educate and mobilize the public towards positive change.

Example: Always' "Like a Girl" campaign challenged gender stereotypes and promoted female empowerment. The campaign aimed to change the negative connotations associated with the phrase "like a girl" and empower young girls to redefine it positively.

*Employee Engagement and Volunteering:* Corporates encourage employee involvement in social initiatives and provide opportunities for volunteering. They organize volunteering programs, offer paid volunteer leave, and support employees in their personal social impact pursuits.

Example: Google's "Google Serve" program allows employees to dedicate their skills and time to community service. Employees can volunteer in various initiatives such as education, technology, and environmental sustainability.

Overall, social marketing by corporates demonstrates their recognition of their role in addressing societal challenges and making a positive impact beyond profit-making. Through strategic initiatives and leveraging their marketing resources, corporates can contribute to social change, foster sustainable practices, and create a positive brand image.

## 6. Factors influencing social responsibility by corporates

There are several factors that influence social responsibility by corporates. These factors shape their approach towards addressing societal and environmental issues and determining the extent of their commitment to social responsibility. Here are some key factors:

1. *Stakeholder Expectations:* Corporates are influenced by the expectations of their stakeholders, including customers, employees, investors, and communities. Stakeholders increasingly demand that businesses demonstrate responsible behavior, ethical practices, and a commitment to social and environmental well-being.
2. *Reputation and Brand Image:* Corporates are aware of the impact of their reputation and brand image on their success. They recognize that consumers prefer brands that align with their values and support social causes. Maintaining a positive reputation and brand image often necessitates engaging in social responsibility initiatives.
3. *Regulatory Environment:* The regulatory environment plays a crucial role in shaping corporate social responsibility. Governments enact laws and regulations related to environmental protection, labor rights, product safety, and social issues. Corporations must comply with these regulations and, in some cases, may go beyond compliance voluntarily.
4. *Global Sustainability Goals:* International frameworks and agreements, such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Paris Agreement on climate change, set global sustainability goals. These goals provide a roadmap for corporates to align their operations and initiatives with broader societal and environmental objectives.
5. *Business Ethics and Values:* The ethical principles and values upheld by a corporate influence their commitment to social responsibility. Companies with strong ethical foundations tend to prioritize responsible business practices and proactively engage in initiatives that benefit society and the environment.
6. *Competitive Advantage:* Social responsibility can provide a competitive advantage for corporates. Differentiating themselves through

sustainable practices, philanthropy, and positive social impact can attract socially conscious consumers, enhance brand loyalty, and attract top talent.

7. *Employee Engagement and Retention:* Employees increasingly seek purposeful work and meaningful engagement. Corporates recognize that emphasizing social responsibility enhances employee morale, engagement, and retention. Employees are more likely to be motivated and satisfied when their company demonstrates a commitment to social causes.
8. *Long-Term Sustainability:* Corporates understand that long-term sustainability relies on the health and well-being of society and the environment. Recognizing the interconnectedness between their business operations and the communities they operate in, they invest in social responsibility to ensure the long-term viability of their business.
9. *Investor Influence:* Investors are increasingly considering environmental, social, and governance (ESG) factors in their investment decisions. Corporates that prioritize social responsibility are more likely to attract responsible investors and secure long-term investment.
10. *Business Case for Social Responsibility:* Evidence suggests that social responsibility can contribute to long-term profitability and business success. Corporates recognize the potential benefits, such as improved brand reputation, enhanced customer loyalty, and reduced risks, which further motivate their commitment to social responsibility.

While these factors influence corporates' approach to social responsibility, the specific emphasis and extent of engagement can vary across industries, company size, and regional contexts. However, an increasing number of corporates are recognizing the importance of integrating social responsibility into their business strategies to create sustainable value for all stakeholders.

### **7. Debate on the Practices of Social Marketing:**

Social marketing, as a concept and practice, has garnered both praise and criticism. The following are some key points of debate surrounding the practices of social marketing:

**Effectiveness:** One area of debate is the effectiveness of social marketing campaigns in achieving desired behavioural change. Critics argue that social marketing campaigns often fail to bring about significant and lasting behavior change. They argue that influencing complex social issues requires a more comprehensive approach beyond marketing techniques.

**Commercialization of Social Issues:** Critics argue that social marketing can sometimes lead to the commercialization of social issues. They contend that corporates may exploit social causes for their own gain, using marketing techniques to enhance their brand image without making substantial contributions to addressing the underlying issues.

**Oversimplification of Social Issues:** Critics also highlight the risk of oversimplifying complex social issues through social marketing campaigns. They argue that reducing complex issues to simple messages or slogans may undermine the depth and complexity of the problem, leading to superficial understanding and ineffective solutions.

**Ethical Concerns:** There are ethical concerns related to social marketing practices. Critics argue that corporations may engage in "cause washing," using social marketing as a mere public relations tool to create an appearance of social responsibility without making substantive changes to their business practices.

**Blaming Individuals for Social Issues:** Critics contend that social marketing campaigns often place excessive emphasis on individual behavior change, potentially shifting the responsibility away from structural and systemic factors contributing to social issues. This may overlook the role of larger societal factors and institutions in perpetuating the problems.

**Sustainability and Long-Term Impact:** Some argue that social marketing campaigns often focus on short-term behavior change rather than addressing the underlying causes of social issues. Critics argue that sustainable change requires more systemic and structural approaches that go beyond marketing tactics.

**Lack of Authenticity:** Critics point out that some social marketing campaigns may lack authenticity and genuine commitment to social causes. They argue that corporates must demonstrate consistent

and long-term commitment beyond marketing campaigns to be truly effective in addressing social issues.

***On the other hand, proponents of social marketing argue that:***

**Behavior Change:** Social marketing campaigns have the potential to influence behaviors positively. They contend that by leveraging marketing techniques, campaigns can raise awareness, educate, and motivate individuals to adopt behaviors that benefit themselves and society.

**Collaboration and Resources:** Social marketing can bring together various stakeholders, including businesses, nonprofits, and governments, to collaborate and allocate resources towards addressing social issues. It can mobilize collective efforts and resources to achieve greater impact.

**Public Engagement and Empowerment:** Social marketing campaigns have the potential to engage the public and empower individuals to take action. They can create a sense of collective responsibility and encourage individuals to become advocates for social change.

**Behavior Reinforcement and Norm Shifting:** Proponents argue that social marketing can reinforce positive behaviors and contribute to norm shifting within society. By promoting socially desirable behaviors, campaigns can influence social norms and create a culture of positive change.

**Scalability and Reach:** Social marketing campaigns have the advantage of scalability and reach, allowing messages and interventions to reach a wide audience. This enables them to have a broad impact and contribute to the spread of social change.

**Integration of Marketing Techniques:** Proponents argue that integrating marketing techniques can make social interventions more engaging and effective. By applying marketing principles such as segmentation, targeting, and persuasive messaging, campaigns can tailor their approach to specific audiences, increasing the likelihood of behavior change.

In conclusion, the practices of social marketing are subject to debate, with critics raising concerns about effectiveness, commercialization,

oversimplification, and ethical considerations. Proponents argue that social marketing can bring about positive behavior change, encourage collaboration, engage the public, and leverage marketing techniques to achieve societal impact.

## **8. Clubs performance as a part of social marketing**

Club performance can indeed be considered as a part of social marketing, especially in the context of social causes and community engagement. Here's how club performance can contribute to social marketing:

***Raising Awareness:*** Clubs, such as music bands, theatre groups, or dance troupes, can use their performances as a platform to raise awareness about social issues. By incorporating themes or messages related to specific causes in their performances, they can captivate audiences and spark conversations about the issues being addressed.

***Advocacy and Messaging:*** Club performances can serve as a medium for advocating for social causes and delivering important messages. Through their performances, clubs can convey powerful narratives, inspire empathy, and encourage audience members to take action or support relevant initiatives.

***Fundraising and Philanthropy:*** Club performances can be utilized as fundraising events to generate financial support for social causes or charitable organizations. By organizing benefit concerts or performances, clubs can leverage their talent and audience reach to raise funds and make a positive impact on social issues.

***Community Engagement:*** Club performances provide opportunities for community engagement and participation. Clubs can organize interactive performances, workshops, or community events that encourage active involvement of the audience. This engagement fosters a sense of community, encourages social interaction, and promotes collective action towards social causes.

***Collaboration with Non-profits:*** Clubs can collaborate with non-profits or social organizations working on specific causes. By partnering with such organizations, clubs can use their performances as a platform to amplify the messages

and campaigns of these organizations. This collaboration strengthens the impact and reach of both the club and the non-profit, benefiting the cause they collectively support.

*Challenging Stereotypes and Promoting Inclusivity:* Club performances can challenge societal stereotypes and promote inclusivity. Through diverse casting, performances that celebrate different cultures or marginalized communities, or addressing social issues related to discrimination and prejudice, clubs can foster an inclusive and tolerant society.

*Inspiring Social Change:* Club performances have the potential to inspire social change by showcasing alternative narratives, promoting empathy, and challenging the status quo. By presenting thought-provoking performances that tackle social issues, clubs can inspire individuals to reconsider their perspectives and actively contribute to positive social transformation.

It's important for clubs to align their performances with authentic values and messages, ensuring that their social marketing efforts are genuine and impactful. By leveraging their artistic expressions, clubs can contribute to social marketing initiatives, engage audiences, and create awareness and action towards social causes.

## 9. Discussions:

The practices of social marketing by corporates have been the subject of discussions and debates among various stakeholders. Here are some key discussions surrounding these practices:

1. One ongoing discussion revolves around the authenticity of corporates' social marketing efforts. Critics argue that some companies engage in social marketing primarily for reputation management or to enhance their brand image, rather than genuinely addressing social issues. The intentions behind social marketing initiatives are often scrutinized to determine the true commitment of corporates.
2. The effectiveness of social marketing campaigns by corporates is another topic of discussion. Critics question the actual impact of these campaigns in bringing about meaningful change and argue for more rigorous evaluation and measurement of outcomes. There is a need to ensure that social

marketing efforts translate into tangible improvements in the targeted social issues.

3. Discussions also center on the accountability and transparency of corporates in their social marketing practices. Stakeholders expect corporates to be transparent about their social initiatives, including the allocation of resources, measurable goals, and reporting of results. There is a call for increased accountability and disclosure to ensure credibility and build trust.

## 10. Conclusions:

While the discussions surrounding the practices of social marketing by corporates are ongoing, there are some key conclusions that can be drawn:

1. Effective social marketing requires an integrated approach that goes beyond superficial campaigns. Corporates need to align their social marketing efforts with their overall business strategy, integrating social responsibility into their core operations and decision-making processes.
2. Meaningful engagement with stakeholders is crucial for successful social marketing. Corporates should actively involve stakeholders in the development and implementation of social initiatives, listen to their concerns and feedback, and address societal needs and expectations.
3. Authenticity is essential in social marketing. Corporates must demonstrate a genuine commitment to social causes, going beyond short-term campaigns and incorporating social responsibility into their long-term business practices. Consistency and sustained efforts are key to building trust and credibility.

## 11. Suggestions:

Based on the discussions and conclusions, here are some suggestions for corporates regarding their practices of social marketing.

1. Ensure that social marketing initiatives align with the core values, mission, and purpose of the company. This alignment will foster authenticity and resonate with stakeholders.
2. Regularly assess the impact and effectiveness of social marketing initiatives. Implement measurement frameworks and evaluation methodologies to gauge the outcomes and identify areas for improvement.

3. Collaborate with relevant stakeholders, including nonprofits, government agencies, and local communities, to create synergistic partnerships. This collaboration will enhance the impact and reach of social marketing efforts.
4. Practice transparency by openly communicating about social marketing initiatives, their goals, progress, and outcomes. Share information about resource allocation and be accountable for the results achieved.
5. Take a long-term perspective when developing social marketing strategies. Focus on addressing root causes, engaging in sustained efforts, and achieving lasting social change.
6. Actively listen to the concerns, feedback, and expectations of stakeholders. Incorporate their perspectives into social marketing strategies and initiatives to ensure relevance and effectiveness.
7. Develop robust social impact measurement frameworks to assess the direct and indirect social impact of social marketing efforts. This will provide insights into the effectiveness of initiatives and guide future decision-making.

By incorporating these suggestions, corporates can enhance the practices of social marketing, ensure their initiatives are impactful, and contribute positively to society while aligning with their business objectives.

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