
UNIT 2 PUBLIC SERVICE ADVERTISEMENTS

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2.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

- define advertisement and state its need and function;
- explain the two types of advertisements: commercial and public service;
- describe the different social themes taken up for public service campaigns;
- state the differences between radio and press/TV advertisements; and
- script a radio advertisement.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit we spoke about advertising with special reference to print advertising. Here we are going to take up Public Service Advertisement—mainly for radio.

Radio has a significant role to play in the shaping of our society. This is especially true of our country where more than 95% of the population listens to the radio. Till

a few decades back, radio was primarily used as a medium for mass entertainment and for broadcast of news and features. But today it is being increasingly used in the service of the public to communicate important messages, announcements and information. In this context, we shall discuss the effective use of radio for public service announcements and commercial advertisements. You are well aware of the strengths and limitations of radio as a medium of mass communication. We shall also discuss the specific use of language in the preparation of the copy for radio advertisement and announcements.

2.2 THE ADVERTISEMENT: NEED AND FUNCTION

What is advertisement? It is a means of communicating to people on a nonpersonal basis. It uses the media of mass communication such as radio, television, newspapers, magazines and public display hoardings. Advertising is defined as “...paid, nonpersonal communication through various media by business firms, nonprofit organizations and individuals who are in some way identified in the advertising message and who hope to inform or persuade members of a particular audience.” (S.S.Dunn and A.M.Barban p.8)

From the above definition, it is clear that advertising is not restricted to **products** but encompasses **services** and **ideas** also. It is also evident that the two basic functions of advertisement are (1) **to inform** and (2) **to persuade**. Thus advertising leads to **promotion of sales, change of attitude and arousal of awareness**. Because of its persuasiveness, advertising has to be specially concerned with the economic, social ethical and moral issues of advertising.

2.2.1 Advertising Campaign

There are many types of advertising campaigns. But basically any campaign strategy has to address the following questions:

- 1) Who is advertising?
- 2) For whom is the advertisement intended?
- 3) What is being advertised?
- 4) What is the purpose of the advertising campaign?
- 5) Which geographic area does it cater to?
- 6) Which medium is to be used?

The process also involves five important decisions to be made—namely, advertising objectives, estimation of the budget in the selection of the medium, creative strategy as to how to communicate the message, media strategy with reference to the delivery of the message and evaluation of the effectiveness of the message.

2.2.2 Advertising Classification

Advertising can be classified into a few broad categories. These are:

- 1) **Product Reputation Advertising:** Here the word “product” includes both goods and services. Firms that produce or distribute goods or provide a service devote the major portion of their advertising efforts to selling these. (Examples: Consumer goods, Courier Services etc.)

- 2) **Institutional Advertising:** Here advertising is towards selling ideas. There are three forms of Institutional advertising:
- a) **Patronage Institutional Advertising** which sells the ideas of patronizing a producer or retailer other than specific product merits. For example “**Ford** has a better idea” without mentioning the individual product (Car/ Truck/Bus) tells the listener the importance of the manufacturing firm FORD, so that he or she patronises the firm.
 - b) **Public Relations Institutional Advertising:** Designed to improve a firm’s image or reputation either through presentation of the firm’s point of view in any labour dispute or through an elaboration of the benefits and utilities for the public by the firm’s concern. Examples are the advertisement releases given by major Public Sector and Private Sector firms such as BHEL, OIL INDIA, Larsen and Toubro etc.
 - c) **Public Service Advertising:** This is a means of using advertising to promote non-controversial causes in the interest of the public such as road safety, cleaner environment, hygiene, family planning, child welfare etc.

2.3 PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS

Radio, more than any other medium of mass communication reaches more than 95% of the public and hence its use in making Public Service Announcements (PSA) is more effective than that of newspapers and television. If PSAs are carefully and precisely worded for broadcast over the radio medium they are likely to reach a large segment of our population and to be equally well understood by it.

2.3.1 What is PSA

The main purpose of a PSA is the dissemination of information on a public problem and in the public interest.

For example,

“THERE IS ONLY ONE INDIA. IT BELONGS TO ALL OF US. WE THE PEOPLE MUST ACT FOR UNITY” (National Integration Campaign)

“SIGHT — YOUR CHILD’S MOST PRECIOUS GIFT. PROTECT IT”.

(Eye Donation)

These are advertisements issued in national/public interest.

Communications which urge its audience to implement or support some kind of social or economic cause deemed beneficial by the consensus of the general public is Public Service Advertising. It is also likely that most of the PSAs do urge some kind of action.

2.3.2 Difference between Commercial Advertisement and PSAs

In elementary terms, we can say that commercial advertisement seeks to share the market while PSA seeks to share the mind. By advertising specific consumer products, commercial advertisement satisfies a felt need of the consumer. In contrast, PSA provokes the audience to recognize a need. For example, by advertising a slogan “Save Water” the PSA makes its audience recognize the need to save water for a dry season. So the arousal or awakening of one’s awareness is primarily a

function of the PSA, while the commercial advertisements cater to the felt need of the consumer. PSA is created by advertising professionals and exhibited free of charge by the media which donates both space and time. Many business firms sponsor PSAs without any reference to their own sale products. This is a manifestation of the new philosophy of business.

PSA by Eleemosynary institutions: Besides business firms, PSA is done by charitable institutions, known as Eleemosynary institutions such as Helpage, Care, Unicef etc. Their messages are sometimes contributed to by business concerns, but more often, they are funded by these charitable organizations themselves.

PSA by Government: Developing countries have the need for an informed citizenry. PSAs are effective means of reaching the public with necessary information. Such advertising is used to promote issues without any bias and partisan slant in the interest of public good.

2.3.3 Themes in PSA

We can look at the theme from three aspects — regular PSA, current PSA and Public Service Campaign. They all deal with affairs related to our daily living, social issues and information on essential matters. Through electronic media, these PSAs reach out to all segments of society all over the country. For the PSAs to make an impact on the listeners and for them to be effective, the time of broadcast, and its duration are of considerable importance and the message has to be precise and in unambiguous terms. Often it is said that television, being an audio-visual medium, can prove more effective than radio which has no visuals to support it. But television can only cater to a few inches of one's imagination but the appeal of radio gives full scope for the free play of imagination.

2.3.4 Regular PSA

- 1) Railway bulletins
- 2) Inter-state bus timings
- 3) Employment news
- 4) Weather bulletins
- 5) Market rates/Bazaar rates
- 6) Announcement of new policies, programmes and proposals on important days.
- 7) Book reviews/ New publications
- 8) Lost persons
- 9) Highlights of the day's broadcast programmes

While preparing the text for such announcements, care is to be taken to provide correct information and details so as to leave no doubt in the minds of the listeners. In preparing Railway bulletins, the name of the train — mail or express, the destinations, both to and fro, the number of the train and the time are to be given in a serial order. Instead of making announcements in terms of "a.m." and "p.m.", it will be better to give the time in figures. For examples, 4 p.m. can be stated as 16 hours. If there is a delay in the arrival or departure of a train, the original scheduled time and the new time have to be given.

All India Radio has a special form to be filled in for "Lost Persons" announcement.

This form has the following format:

Name of the person	: Mahesh
Father's Name	: Sunderlal
Age	: 10 years
Name of the place where he disappeared from	: Kanpur
Dress worn	: Blue shorts and checked bushshirt
Identification Marks	: A cut on the right cheek
Colour	: Wheatish
Height	: 4 feet
Places where he is likely to be found	: Kanpur, Lucknow and Allahabad
Address for intimation	: Sunderlal, House No. 32, Gali No. 22, Station Area, Kanpur

The copy to be made for the announcement from the above form will run thus:

Shri Sunderlal informs that his son, Mahesh, aged 10 has been lost since April 23, 2018 from Kanpur. He is of wheatish complexion and is four feet tall, with a cut on his right cheek. He had worn blue shorts and a checked bush shirt. If you have any information about his whereabouts, please pass it to Shri Sunderlal at the following address: (Address)

The following points are to be borne when preparing the announcement:

- Easy language — simple and direct sentences
- Precise and clear diction
- A certain degree of friendly appeal without being casual and informal

2.3.5 Current PSA

Under this category, information and announcements relating to basic daily amenities are given:

- 1) Water supply at low pressure in certain areas
- 2) Dates of examinations/results
- 3) Security warnings to workers in factories
- 4) Warning about weather— floods/storm/hurricane/earthquake etc.
- 5) Latest sports results
- 6) Blood donation for a patient in need in a hospital
- 7) Power cuts
- 8) Road and traffic jams and diversions

On the radio, there are specific times allotted to such PSAs. Usually these announcements are sandwiched between two programmes i.e., at the conclusion of a programme and before the commencement of the next programme. The most important announcement is given precedence over the others and the rest made according to their order of importance. If there is time left at the end of all these announcements, the first and the most important one is repeated. Here is an example of a current PSA:

This is All India Radio, Gwalior. Here is an important announcement.

Jiwaji University, Gwalior announces the 2017 B.A. and B.Com. examination dates. They are to begin from March 24, 2017. Candidates have been sent all information regarding time and place of the examination along with their respective hall-tickets. Those who have not received our mail can contact the University directly and get the necessary information. (Contact number and university e-mail ID to be included)

This can be given a second repeat before the end of the programme announcements.

2.3.6 Public Service Announcements/Campaigns:

This does not provide information, but is more in the nature of persuasion. The aim is to make the listeners aware of certain basic issues and principles governing the health and welfare of the society. For example, given below are a few of such PSAs:

- 1) Use/Waste of water
- 2) Observation of rules (traffic)
- 3) Blood donation
- 4) Eye donation
- 5) Family welfare
- 6) Health and environment
- 7) Wild life

In preparing these slogans, the following points have to be kept in mind:

- 1) Absolute precision
- 2) Clarity of expression
- 3) Appeal to emotion
- 4) Friendly intimacy

For example, on “Eye donation”, we have these slogans: (1) “All that stands between darkness and him is your signature” (2) “Set your sights on the nearly blind. Give” (3) “They walk by faith, not by sight, let us give that they may see”.

“Blood donation” “Your blood...someone’s life-blood.”

On “Helmet wearing” :”Accidents get either your head or your helmet”/ “Keep your head, wear your helmet”.

2.3.7 Audience Research

For a successful campaign on the radio, audience research has to be made at frequent intervals with reference to important announcements. The research should relate to

- 1) The area covered by the broadcast
- 2) The degree of clarity of the message in its apprehension by the audience
- 3) The percentage of audience who listen to the message
- 4) What special groups have felt its impact
- 5) The utility value of such PSAs

In India, PSA on radio have been less than adequate in comparison with PSAs through the other media. For example, the cyclone warning for fisherman on radio

or farm news for the farmers have not had as much desired impact on the respective class of people for lack of forceful and mind penetrating copies.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: a) Space given below the question is for writing your answer.

b) Check your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

i) What do you understand by the term Public Service Announcements? How does it differ from commercial advertisement?

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ii) Prepare a copy for a PSA on radio on a free eye clinic to be held on 24 October, 2018 at Govt. Boys' School, Napier town, Jabalpur.

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2.4 RADIO ADVERTISEMENT VIS-À-VIS PRESS/ TV ADVERTISEMENTS

Advertisements, as you have seen, have two functions—to inform and to persuade. They draw the attention of the audience (listener/viewer/reader) to any particular issue and then give the relevant information. A successful communication is measured by the degree of persuasion it achieves. On All India Radio, advertisements are broadcast on the Vividh Bharati channel and they are made between programmes either at the commencement or at the conclusion of a programme. This maximizes the number of listeners for they tune into the radio for those programmes. Some of the important PSAs are now made through the primary channel as well. Advertisements are made through all the major media of mass communication—the most important are newspapers, cinema, radio, television and hoardings both on public sites and buses.

But radio, amongst all these, has got its own characteristics with its plus and minus points, its limitations and scope. Even though radio suffers from its lack of visual appeal, it has certain distinct advantages which gives it an edge over the other media in relation to advertisement. Let us see the difference between radio advertisement and press advertisement:

Radio Advertisement

- 1) On the radio, time is precious. Advertisements are time-bound.
- 2) Music and sound are used.
- 3) Radio advertisements reach all segments of people.
- 4) Audio medium
- 5) Does not call for concentrated attention to hear the advertisements.
- 6) Advertisement announcements are fleeting

Press Advertisement

- 1) Here, space is precious. Advertisements are space-bound.
- 2) Cartoons and pictures are used.
- 3) Press advertisements are only for the literates.
- 4) Visual medium.
- 5) To read the advertisement, you need concentration and time.
- 6) One can pick up the paper advertisements any time and read them.

Let us see the difference between Radio and TV advertisement:

Radio Advertisement

- 1) Only an audio medium.
- 2) You can listen to it even outside your room/home. Even when you are moving,
- 3) Sound is important.
- 4) Music and sound are used.
- 5) Jingles are specially made for radio advertisements.
- 6) Time factor is significant.
- 7) This is an inexpensive set.
- 8) Production is less expensive.

TV Advertisement

- 1) Both an audio and visual medium.
- 2) You have to sit before your TV set to follow the advertisement.
- 3) Visuals are important
- 4) Here also sound and music are used.
- 5) Jingles are used, though they are not very essential.
- 6) Time factor is equally significant.
- 7) TV is an expensive item.
- 8) Production is very expensive.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: a) Space given below the question is for writing your answer.
 b) Check your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

- i) Give three distinguishing features of Radio, TV and Press advertisement

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2.5 SCRIPTING THE ADVERTISEMENT

Advertisement is a form of communication. Communication, says Wilbur Schramm, the noted communication specialist, “is a fundamental social process.” It is a relationship between the sender and the receiver, “an act of sharing”. This means

that the receiver is not a passive decoder of information and the effort should be to get the message through, getting it accepted and getting it decoded in approximately the same form as the sender intended.

Thus the communication objectives are a two way process and the advertiser (sender) has to meet the objectives and felt needs of the audience (receiver).

2.5.1 Target Audience

Radio reaches a large segment of the lower income groups and, therefore, is a very effective medium for dissemination of information to the illiterate poor. The PSAs over radio can make this group aware of issues and motivate it towards action. So those who write and design advertisements — commercial and PSAs – must know the consumers who are expected to listen to them. The target group should be measured both quantitatively and qualitatively.

2.5.2 Creative Strategy

Creative strategy is related to the content of the message. The basic message content is to be understood and analysed before preparing the copy. The creative message is usually based on such questions as

- 1) What features of the product are unique to the product? (in the case of PSA, what features of the message are to be highlighted?)
- 2) What features or attributes of the product are important to the consumer?
- 3) What attributes of the product are to be highlighted in relation to other comparable brands?
- 4) What 'position' has the product in the consumer's mind?
- 5) What benefits are the consumers likely to get?

The creative process of a copy involves six phases:

- 1) Orientation: Pointing to the problem.
- 2) Preparation: Gathering pertinent data.
- 3) Analysis: Breaking down the relevant material.
- 4) Hypothesis: Piling up alternate copies to convey the ideas.
- 5) Synthesis: Putting the pieces together.
- 6) Verification: Judging the resultant ideas.

2.6 THE SELLING APPROACH

The basic purposes of advertising messages (commercial/PSA) are to inform, to persuade and to remind. All advertising messages have one or two or all these elements embodied in them. The objectives of the messages are **to stimulate** a demand for a commercial product and develop awareness (PSA), to **promote** a brand/idea and **to cause** direct or indirect action to be taken by the consumer (buy/motivate to act).

The role of the informational aspect of an advertisement is to build awareness in the consumer. This is done by introducing a product or an idea. The persuasion aspect concentrates on why the consumer should buy the product/idea. The consumer is first made aware of a problem and then he is told how to solve the problem. The goal here is to influence his attitudes. The reminder advertising is to make the

consumer take, not necessarily, direct and immediate action, but to bring a gradual change in his attitudes so that he takes to a new idea through his own reasoning.

Any strategy for advertising a product or an idea has to have (2) Appeal strategy, (2) Humour strategy and (3) Comparison advertising.

2.6.1 Appeal Strategy

Advertisement, if it has to have an appeal, should engage the attention of the consumer, create interest in the idea or message, promote his desire or awareness and motivate him/to take action. For example, a statement “Tomorrow morning when you open your eyes, think of those who can’t” arrests the attention of the listener. He wonders what the message is aiming at. After a pause, comes the rest of the PSA: “Sight”. “A gift only you can give.” Yet another begins thus: “On your birthday, give the earth a present”(pause) follow it with “Plant a tree”. A few more examples:

“Don’t just practice, Preach”(Pause) “Tell someone who is less aware, less experienced, less educated how simple it is to plan a family”

“Your daughter will never be as good as a son” (Pause). “unless you give her a chance”

“We are two; we are three” (Pause) “We are one. Let us act for unity.”

“The only thing Priya can do with her eyes....is cry” (Pause) “You can give her sight.”

2.6.2 Humour Strategy

Humour as a strategy enhances the audience’s attention, at least when they listen to the advertisement, for the first few times. Those who advocate humour in an advertisement, say that the consumer will accept the message. There is the opposite view that humour detracts attention from the message.

The advertiser who prefers humour as a creative strategy should bear in mind the following points:

- 1) Humorous messages attract attention.
- 2) They may detrimentally affect comprehension.
- 3) Humour increases persuasion.
- 4) Humour tends to enhance source credibility.
- 5) A humorous context may increase liking for the source and create a positive mood.
- 6) To the extent that a humorous context functions as a positive reinforcer, persuasive communication placed in such a context may be more effective.

One of the effective slogans with humour as its creative strategy is that of Limca, which presents the conversation of a few collegians. One of them tries to give a rational explanation as to why he drinks Limca — because it contains isotonic salts....He is intercepted by another who gulps Limca down saying “I drink Limca because I like it” followed by laughter. Onida’s advertisement with the devil beating the drums to the chant of “give us work”, suggesting that Onida TVs don’t require after service care, is equally humorous and stays in the viewer’s mind.

2.6.3 Comparative Advertising as a Creative Strategy

While in commercial advertisement, this strategy generates heated controversy in respect of advertising ethics, in PSAs, this comparative strategy does enhance the audience's attention. In the family planning advertisements, the comparison between a planned family household to the disadvantage of the latter is more effective than a slogan that says "a small family is a happy one". The slogan can be an effective punch line, but its message gets credibility and authenticity through an institution of comparison between the two types.

2.6.4 Samples of Radio Advertisements

In conjunction with the strategies given above, let us see what are the different kinds of radio advertisements that prove effective:

Simple and direct slogan: "The tyre that never tires" (Modi tyres)
 "Utterly, butterly delicious – Amul"
 "Neighbour's envy – Owner's pride – Onida"

Dialogue/Dramatisation: This can be a 30 seconds ad. With two or three engaged in a conversation. This is useful more in PSAs than commercial. Example: Limca ad (see 2.6.2)

On Eye Donation:

- A: "If your heart goes out to the blind during your lifetime
 B: Let your eyes go out to them after death
 C: Donate your eyes today
 D: It may be the most important gift you can give."

Jingles: Sung to the accompaniment of music, jingles prove effective.

Example: "Don't let litter spoil the glitter"

"Don't tap your life in ashes. Devote it to your country"

(anti-drug campaign)

"Keep your house clean. Keep your country green".

"Keep your head. Wear your helmet"

"Woman is more than man's equal-

If it weren't for her, he wouldn't be here"

"Mango Frooti fresh and juicy"

On the whole, the points to remember while preparing radio advertisements are:

- 1) Use of short simple sentences to make the maximum impact.
- 2) Clear and simple diction that can be easily understood.
- 3) Conversational tone to increase sense of involvement and participation.
- 4) Appeal both to emotion and intellect.
- 5) Urgency to invoke action.
- 6) Presentation with maximum conviction.

Check Your Progress 3

- Note:** a) Space given below the question is for writing your answer.
 b) Check your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

Make copies for radio advertisement for the following products/issues:

i) A detergent powder

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ii) Promotion of awareness about environmental pollution

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iii) Communal harmony

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2.7 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, you learnt about:

- The need and function of advertisement.
- Advertising campaign strategy.
- The definition of public service announcements and the difference between commercial advertisement and PSAs.
- The themes taken for public service announcements.
- Radio advertisements and their distinct characteristics vis-à-vis press and TV advertisements.
- How to write a copy incorporating three strategies appeal, humour and comparative advertising.

2.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

- i) PSAs i.e. Public Service Announcements disseminate information on a public problem and in the public interest. They differ from commercial advertisements in the sense that PSAs provoke the audience to recognize a need whereas commercial ads satisfy a felt need of the consumer. In short the awakening of one’s awareness is the primary function of PSAs while commercial ads cater to the felt needs on the same lines.
- ii) Read 2.31 again and prepare a PSA on the same lines.

Check Your Progress 2

- i) Radio Ads: On radio, time is precious, music and sound are used; announcements are fleeting.
- ii) TV Ads : Visual medium, expensive medium, time factor is important.
- iii) Press Ads: Space is precious; press ads are only for the literates; Visual medium.

Check Your Progress 3

For this you will have to let your creative juices flow.

