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Impact of Anti Smoking Campaigns on Youth

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Abstract

This paper evaluates the impact of State sponsored anti-smoking mass media campaign and smoking behavior of youth through individual self reported exposure to advertisement. The study has been conducted using a cross sectional survey using Stratified Non-probability technique by using Both Computer Assisted Personal Interviews (CAPI) and Paper and Pencil Interview (PAPI) method to conduct the survey. The study has been conducted in five major institutes of, Noida, a fastest growing region in National Capital Region (NCR). The overall results suggested that target sample is not only exposed to anti-smoking mass media campaign but also brings significant long term benefits in lessening smoking by inducing more initiating intentions among youth to quit smoking.

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1. Introduction

Smoking is the most ordinary form of recreational drug used among Youth. Everyone knows smoking is bad for health but only few people, however, realize the different ways in which it cause irreversible damage to one's body and mind. Smoking cigarette harms nearly every organ of the body. Smoking is a greater cause of death and disability than any single disease. Nearly 6 million people worldwide die due to smoking cigarettes and leads to one death every 6 seconds each year as per World Health Organization (WHO).

Media is the most important source to publicize information and create awareness among the society. The inherent health hazards of smoking have caused government to launch Anti smoking campaigns every year in an attempt to curb tobacco smoking. The First legislation in India regarding tobacco was the Cigarettes (Regulation of Production, Supply and Distribution) Act, 1975, which mandated statutory health warnings on all cigarettes packs since 1975. The Anti Smoking campaign emerged since smoking ban in public places in the early 20's. In India, anti smoking campaign started by the display of pictorial health warning on all tobacco products in 2008, followed by the screening of first two anti tobacco advertisements titled 'mukesh' and 'sponge' in movie theatre and television nationwide in 2012. Two more advertisements were introduced named 'child'

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and ‘dhan’ a year later. Many government campaigns have been issued in the interest of public health but no anti smoking campaign was released before 2008.

It is evident that smokers find it extremely difficult to quit smoking and many a time because of the lack of information about its side effects. These anti smoking campaigns are trying to fill this gap and motivate people to quit smoking. Government spends 100’s of crore annually for anti smoking campaigns every year, but this amount needs to be justified with respect of decreasing smoking rate among youth. This research primarily focus on evaluating the impact of anti smoking campaign among youth especially students in NCR region along with examining the smoking habits among them. The secondary purpose of our research is to assess the attitude towards smoking and attitude towards quitting smoking as the effect of anti smoking campaign among young crowd.

2. Literature Review

Many anti smoking campaigns have been launched all over the world and earlier studies have examined the impact of campaign on change in smoking behavior using aggregate level data. O’Keefe points out in the population-based statistical survey data, that the influence of such mass media campaign is quite limited [1]. In California, Hu et al., have tried to identify the separate effect of anti smoking media campaign on tobacco smoking, with the industry’s magazine advertising response and with controls for tobacco tax policy [2 – 3]. As per their findings media campaign reduced per capita cigarette consumption by 7.7 packs per 100 packs during the period of 1989-1992, they have also suggested that it is necessary to conduct intensive survey studies about how such media campaign influences individual behavior, including individual exposure to message perception of media campaign and change in smoking behavior and attitude. Stavrinou studies the case of Greece and found that health warnings conveyed by anti smoking campaigns reduced the cigarette consumption by 7.3% in short run and by 13.5% in the long run, which might be more effective than tobacco policy [4]. Mattila suggested that anti smoking advertisements with emotional appeals generated higher awareness compared to rational and just informative advertisements [5].

Biener et al., demonstrated that both adult smokers and non smokers in Massachusetts were highly exposed to anti smoking media campaign, but the effectiveness of the campaign was mostly perceived by either non smokers, quitters or smokers with intention to quit smoking. This stated that only those people who had propensity to quit perceive anti smoking advertisements as an effective advocate, whereas the majority of smokers may have more awareness of smoking’s harmful effects but would not change their behaviors [6]. However McVey, D. and J. Stapleton studied the effectiveness of anti smoking television campaign with a controlled trial in England, and find out that UK anti smoking advertisement has a significant negative effect on smoking prevalence through motivating current smokers to quit and preventing former smokers from relapsing [7].

Meyrick mentioned that the message of advertising became more effective if the target audience experienced a feeling of involvement towards anti smoking advertisements, besides, youth might have optimistic bias on them. This was majorly because they felt overconfident about themselves and had self-esteem which might cause the failure of anti smoking advertising to reach them due to their optimism bias [8]. Wolburg mentioned that social anti smoking advertising was usually not effective, majorly because advertising messages generally encouraged consumption rather than discouraging consumption behavior due to media being the wrong platform for promoting anti consumption message like “don’t smoke” [9].

While studying Florida’s ‘Truth’ anti tobacco campaign which utilizes the natural teenage rebellious phase to allow them to rebel them against smoking, Sly et al., reveal that these awareness campaigns not only have a direct effect, but also an indirect effect on smoking behavior of an individual, which goes through its effects on perceived influence of message theme and individual anti smoking attitudes [10]. In addition to their study Farrelly, M. C., et al., found that self reported exposure to ‘Truth’ tobacco advertisements significantly changes youth’s attitude and behavior towards smoking [11]. However these studies are mainly based on traditional or descriptive regression analysis of some subgroups in the population and don’t have enough control for

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