

Entertainment-Education Media Strategies for Social Change: Opportunities and Emerging Trends

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Abstract

Since 1970's it was insisted that the mass media could play a greater role for development by providing technical information about development problems and possibilities, and about appropriate innovations, in answer to local requests and by circulating information on the self-development problems so that other such groups may profit from other's experience and perhaps be challenged to achieve a similar performance. More recently a major movement to combine media and social change has emerged. Many countries are plagued with problems such as disease, particularly HIV/AIDS, hunger, illiteracy, poor family planning, domestic violence, poverty, etc. To combat these major issues several countries have turned to various media to teach the public different ways of conducting themselves in order to bring about the changes that are needed to improve their society. The purpose of this paper is to understand the effects of entertainment-education strategy. This paper investigates the basic tenets of the entertainment education communication strategy, including its historical roots and recent applications in the developing countries like Tanzania, South Africa and India by looking at some of the case studies that were conducted in the developing world.

Introduction

Miguel Sabido, a television writer –producer in Mexico and leader of the Mexican Institute of Communication Studies, introduced in 1974 what he called as Entertainment- education strategy primarily use soap operas to promote development and social change and these soap operas are also called pro-development soap operas because they were specially created to promote development.

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The concept of using media to push for social changes is referred to as entertainment-education. (Mcphail, Thomas, 2009) . As per Singhal et al (2004, p. 5)

“Entertainment-education is the process of purposely designing and implementing a media message to both entertain and educate, in order to increase audience member’s knowledge about an educational issue, create favourable attitudes, shift social norms and change overt behaviour. Entertainment-education is not a theory of communication. Rather, it is a communication strategy to bring about behavioral and social change.” Entertainment-education approach tries to maximize on the attraction and influence of popular media to demonstrate individuals how they can improve their lives so that they can subsist leading safer, healthier, and happier lives (Singhal and Rogers 1999,p.12) . Entertainment-education is an amalgamation of design and technique where education is woven into the narrative of entertainment in order to usher in change among the target audiences.

Singhal and Rogers defines entertainment as a ‘performance or a spectacle that captures the interest or attention of an individual, giving pleasure, amusement, or some form of gratification’. Education is defined as a formal or informal programme of instruction and training that has the potential to develop an individual’s skill to achieve a particular end by boosting his or her mental, moral or physical powers. Various attributes of entertainment like popularity, pervasiveness, enjoyment, feasibility provides a framework of appropriateness of using this genre for disseminating messages which have pro-social characteristics. “Entertainment-education is defined as the intentional placement of educational content in entertainment messages” (Singhal and Rogers, 2002, pg 117). An entertainment education soap opera is a ‘melodramatic serial that is broadcast in order to develop or promote some aspects of development’. (Nairman, 1993:2).

These soap operas are based on Miguel Sabido’s entertainment-education strategy and they are unique because these, without sacrificing commercial appeal, are designed according to elements of communication and behavioural theories in order to reinforce specific values, attitudes and behaviours that viewers can use in their own personal and social advancement or development.

The purpose of entertainment-education programming is to contribute to directed *social change*, defined as the process by which an alteration occurs in the structure and function of a social system (Singhal & Rogers, 1994). This change can occur at the level of individual, community, or some other system.

Behavior change that is triggered by entertainment-education messages occurs in stages, and a number of theoretical frameworks have been used in previous research to explain how individuals proceed from one stage to the other and finally to adopting/rejecting an innovation. For instance, Rogers (1995) suggested that the adoption of a new behavior is a 5-stage innovation-decision process starting from a stage of knowledge gathering and moving on to the stages of persuasion, decision, implementation, and finally to confirmation of a behavior. Similarly, the five stages of the trans theoretical model (Prochaska et al., 1992) ranges from pre contemplation, contemplation, preparation, action and maintenance. In the first stage of pre contemplation, individuals are completely unaware of the behavioral options available to them. As individuals begin to think about the behavior that is putting them at risk, they *contemplate* the need for change and then *prepare* for the change by acquiring more information about the new behavior, which leads to the *action* of performing the new behavior. Finally, after the new behavior is adopted, steps are taken to avoid any lapse into the former risky behavior and towards proper *maintenance* of the new behavior. McGuire's (1989) Hierarchy of Effects Model and later Piotrow et al. (1997) Steps to Behavior Change Model stress the importance of *knowledge* or understanding of the innovation/behavior, *approval* of the new behavior, and *intention* to use it as stages that lead to adoption or *practice* of a new behavior. Finally, an acknowledgement of the benefits of practicing the new behavior results in advocacy and encouragement to others to practice the behavior.

More recently, a new perspective has emerged in the study of behavior change in family planning that is associated with communication programs.

This new approach has identified 'ideation' and 'social interaction' as important factors in explaining behavior change (Kincaid et al 1999, Kincaid, 2000a; Kincaid, 2000b; Cleland & Wilson, 1987). The ideation model is based on the understanding that communication directly influences some members of the audience to change their behavior. At the same time, communication indirectly influences McKee (2000) points out that 'if entertainers can sing of sexual abstinence and of modifying sexual behaviour, while generating income --- then social and commercial marketing become one. Considering that so much of popular culture supports unhealthy and at-risk life styles, the entertainment -education is one of the greatest communication revolutions of the 20th century" (McKee 2000, p.155).

The general purpose of entertainment-education interventions, such as a radio serial, is to spark intrapersonal, interpersonal, and group conversations, contributing to the process of directed social change, which occurs at the level of an individual, community, or society. The entertainment-education strategy has been implemented worldwide in radio and televisions soap operas, popular music, comic books, and other entertainment genres to promote a broad range of educational issues, especially in the developing countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

The entertainment-education strategy in development communication abrogates the needless dichotomy in almost all mass media content: that mass media programs must either be entertaining or educational (Singhal and Rogers, 1999). The larger purpose of entertainment-education programming is to contribute to the process of directed social change, which can happen at the level of an individual, community or society. The entertainment-education strategy can contribute to social change in two ways:

- 1) It can influence audience awareness, attitudes and behaviours towards a socially desirable end. Here the anticipated effects are located in the individual audience members. An example is provided by radio soap opera, '*Twende na Wakati*,' in Tanzania that convinced several hundred thousand sexually active adults to adopt HIV prevention behaviours such as using condoms and reducing their number of sexual partners (Rogers et al; 1999).
- 2) It can influence the audience's external environment to help create the necessary conditions for social change at the group or system level. Here the major effects are located in the social-political sphere of the individual's external environment. The entertainment-education media can serve as a social mobilizer, an advocate or agenda setter influencing public and policy initiatives in a socially desirable direction.(Altkin and Wallacck, 1990).

The case of Lutsaan, the Indian village that rejected dowry as a result of community based listening' of a radio based soap opera "*Tinka Tinka Sukh*" illustrates the system-level change resulting from entertainment-education(Papa et al.,2001).

The Rise of Entertainment-Education

The idea of combining entertainment with education goes as far back in history as the timeless art of storytelling. Mythology, epics, chronicles have been significant in the historical evolution and teaching the moral principles of life.

'The Tales of Hatim Tai', still enjoy popularity across the world. For thousands of years, music, drama, dance and various folk media have been used in many countries for recreation, devotion, reformation, and instructional purposes. (Singhal & Rogers, 1999; Valente, Kim, Lettenmaier, Glass & Dibba, 1994). The earliest well-known illustration of the education entertainment strategy can be traced to the radio drama "The Lawsons" from Australian Broadcasting Corporation in 1944, followed by "The Archers" in 1951 from British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) a radio soap opera and the Peruvian television soap opera "Simplemente Maria" in 1969. The Archers continued to be broadcast till 2001, addressing contemporary issues like HIV/AIDS, environmental conservation and like. "The Archers" that carried educational messages about agricultural development is now the longest running radio soap opera with more than 15,000 episodes broadcast.

Currently it is broadcast on BBC Radio 4 and has a loyal following. The implementation of entertainment-education strategy have travelled a long journey since "The Lawsons", "The Archers", "Simplemente Maria", were broadcast and televised in different parts of the world. "Hum Log" (We people) was the first of its kind on Indian television which was enjoyed huge viewership. The educational messages in "Hum Log" included fair and equitable treatment of women, family harmony, appreciation of cultural diversity, family planning and national unity (Singhal and Rogers 1989a). As a result of the success of these programmes, other nations also started programmes with pro-social purpose. Nigerian 'Cock Crow at Dawn', a 30-minute television weekly serial promoted agricultural practices among lower and middle class viewers and consequently led to an increase in farming practices (De-Goshtue, 1986, Ume Nehgho, 1986).

'Tushauriane' (Let's discuss) became the most popular programme in Kenyan television history with pro-social objectives. (Muehiri 1989; Muroki 1989). Turkey's 'Serceler Goc Metez' (Sparrows Don't Migrate) on family planning (Kincaid et al, 1993; Singhal and Rogers 1989b), Egyptian 'Wa Ma Zala Nanneel Yagree' (And the Nile Flows) on family planning, India's 'Humrahi' (Co-traveller) on gender equality (Ram, 1993) China's 'Ke Wang' (Aspirations) on family harmony, respect for elders (Wang and Singhal 1992) are some of the entertainment-education programmes that were aimed to promote specific values, beliefs and practices that are often found lacking.

Latin American Experiments

The idea of telenovela with a pro-social theme originated in Peru in 1969 with the show *Simplemente Maria* which told rags to riches stories of a single mother who achieved financial success through her proficiency and hard work on her Singer sewing machine (Singhal and Rogers 1988, 1999). Inspired by the success of the Peruvian soap opera, the Mexican commercial television network Televisa produced four programs on Mexican cultural history and pride between 1967-and 1970, under the leadership of Maguel Sabido, a writer producer at the Televisa (Singhal et al. 1993). Sabido made then several more themes, some of which ran over a year on Televisa. One of the shows called *Ven Comingo* dealt with adult literacy while another *Accompaname*, stressed family planning (Singhal and Rogers 1988). *Simplemente Maria* attracted very high audience ratings and the sale of singer machines boomed in Peru.

So did the number of young girls enrolling in adult literacy and sewing classes. When *Simplemente Maria* was broadcast in other Latin American languages, there were similar effects. Audience identification with Maria was very strong especially among poor, working class women. She represented a Cinderella role model for upward social mobility. Studies conducted in other Latin American nations indicated similar effects where *Simplemente Maria* was broadcast subsequently (Singhal and Rogers, 1999). Between 1975 and 1982, Sabido produced seven entertainment-education television soap operas which helped motivate enrolment in adult literacy cases, encourage the adoption of family planning, promote gender equality, and so forth (Nariman, 1993). Sabido's entertainment-education soap operas were also commercial hits for Televisa, the Mexican television network, demonstrating the educational messages do not limit the popularity of entertainment programs. Encouraged by the popularity and appeal of the telenovelas, Sabido restructured the strategy and created a entertainment-education methodology which garnered prominence as Sabido methodology.

Singhal and Roger (1999) note that the review of literature depicts that this was a pioneering move by Sabido which became a dominant concept in entertainment projects around the world

Through these events of the past several decades, the idea of combining education with entertainment in the mass media was born and has since spread to over one hundred fifty projects in fifty countries, spurred by the efforts of institutions like Population Communication International (PCI), a nongovernmental organization headquartered in New York City and John Hopkins International University Population Communication Services. The top rated CBS drama "Maude" dealing with unexpected and undesirable pregnancy was a result of the initial work done.

"The broadcasts of Maude represented an important event in Hollywood's brush with entertainment-education and demonstrated that situational comedies need not be looked on as mindless genre (Miller,1993).The entertainment-education strategy has been widely invented and recreated in television, radio, film, print and theatre including the well known multimedia Soul City edutainment series in South Africa.

The entertainment-education programs have the following specific characteristics that differ from the conventional education programs.

- 1) The conscious aim of entertainment-education soap operas are to convey purposely an educational issue and to reach large audiences. In contrast, conventional programs are not purposely educational; the viewers may get certain educational benefits, but such learning is largely incidental.
- 2) The entertainment-education soaps are designed to promote and reinforce particular pro-social beliefs and values. For example the main objectives of entertainment-education Indian soap opera, *Humraahi (Co-travellers)* that was on air during 1992-1993 on Doordarshan, India was to promote and raise the status of women and encourage family planning and the adoption of the small family norm in India. On the contrary, since the primary purpose of conventional programs is to attract large audiences, they mainly depict the issues as violence, greed and materials. These are not intended to promote specific pro-social values (Single and Rogers 1999:60-61).
- 3) In most of the entertainment programs no clear distinction is made between good and bad behaviours. But entertainment-education soaps seek to avoid confusing signals to their audience. The good characters are rewarded and the bad characters are punished and thus the audience are encouraged to imitate the positive role models. In some entertainment education soaps are respected authority figure in an epilogue reinforces these moral distinctions and guides the audience to follow the good characters. For example in *Hum Lag (We People)* at the end of each episode a famous Hindi film actor, Ashok Kumar epilogues the episode in an appealing manner in a 60 second epilogue which provided viewers with appropriate guides to action in their lives.

- 4) The most important characteristics of entertainment-education soaps is that they are based on human communication theories which guided Sabido's entertainment-education strategy. They are Social learning theory by Albert Bandura (1977 and 1986); Eric Bentley's dramatic theory (1967); Carl Jung's theory of collective consciousness (1970) and Miguel Sabido's own theory of soap opera tones. On the contrary conventional programmes have no theoretical base.

"The theories behind entertainment-education represent diverse disciplinary fields and range from logical, positivistic perspectives to critical theory and humanistic perspective" Singhal, et. al, pg 119). Singhal and Obregon (1999) note that Miguel Sabido integrated his theory of tones with theoretical elements from Bandura, Bentley, Jung and Macleans triune brain theory (1973).

Sabido and his research team at Televisa employed a three step process to reinforce pro-social values by 1) depicting social problems and value conflicts associated with such problems 2) motivating the audience towards pro-social values and 3) creating role models through soap operas characters who symbolically represented specific value orientations (Nariman, 1993: 30-32).

An analysis of the *Hum Log* characters created by Manohar Shyam Joshi, the scriptwriter of all the 156 episodes show how Carl Jung's theory was applied in creating the programme's characters. Joshi depicted the grandfather in Hum Log family, Subedar Ram as a self sufficient, hardworking morally upright, strict disciplinarian, intended as a positive role model. In contrast father in the Hum Log family Basesar Ram had a serious drinking problem, mistreated his family and was financially irresponsible. The eldest son ,Lallo was also intended to be a negative model.

A distinctive genre was successfully used for entertainment-education in the form of "Sesame Street" which was aimed at children's formative years of learning. As per Singhal and Roger (1999) Sesame Street was developed by Children's Television Workshop in 1969 and is watched by an estimated 12 million American children (CTW,1987). Singhal and Roger note that the purpose was to develop the cognitive learning skills of preschool children, teaching letters, numbers, geometric forms and pro-social values like kindness and cooperation.

Key Elements in creating Entertainment-Education Strategy

In the media-saturated and market driven environment, it is important to understand the socio-cultural context in which media operates and have an understanding of the existing conditions which will expedite and accelerate the effects of pro-social message based programmes to the degree where the members of a group or community are receptive to these intentional messages.

Creating a Moral Framework and Values Grid: Prior to launching an entertainment-education strategy, 'moral-framework' of the specific education issues to be emphasized in an education –entertainment network should be created (Singhal and Rogers, 2001). The moral framework can be derived from a nations constitution, its legal status or from documents such as human declaration for human rights to which the country is a signatory.

Formative Evaluation Research: Once a moral framework and value grids are available, formative research evaluation is conducted with the intended audience to design for entertainment-education strategy. Formative evaluation is a type of research that is conducted while an activity, process or system is being developed or is ongoing, in order to improve its effectiveness (Rogers, 1986, p.193). Research –based information about the characteristics, needs and preferences of a target audience can sharpen the design of entertainment-education. For example, a formative evaluation survey in Tanzania in 1992 found that many adults, including those using the rhythm method of contraception, did not know the days in the women's menstrual cycle when fertility was most likely. Correct information was then provided in a radio soap opera, *Twende na Wakati* (Let's Go With the Times).

Theory Based Message Design: The messages for the entertainment-education intervention are designed on the basis of various theories of behaviour change. Human communication theories are seldom used in designing most media messages. At the heart of understanding the process of entertainment-education is Albert Bandura's social Learning theory (1977; 1997), which states that learning can occur through observing media role- models.

Multimedia Broadcasts and Campaign Activities: Launching a multi media broadcast and various supportive activities is crucial to realizing an effective entertainment-education strategy. The effects of entertainment – education strategy are greater when various supplementary activities are part of an integrated communication campaign. For instance, when in the late 1980's John Hopkins Population Communication Services utilized rock music songs to promote sexual responsibility among teenagers in the Phillipines the songs were appearances by two singers, label buttons urging 'say no to sex' accompanied by print and broadcast advertisements, personal (Piotrow et al., 1997).

Process and Summative Evaluation: Entertainment-education strategy are strengthened through such process as evaluation activities and analysis of audience letters, monitoring of clinic data and content analysis of entertainment-education messages if the scripts are consistent with the moral frame work and value grids. Feedback can thus be produced in a timely manner to entertainment-education producers for appropriateness midcourse connections. Summative evaluations can measure the effectiveness of the entertainment-education behaviours on the audience behaviors. For example *Tinka Tinka sukh* in Hindi speaking India was evaluated by a field experiment, content analysis of the episodes and viewer's letters, and a study of one village in which the program had strong effects (Papa et al., 2001).

In entertainment education programs, audience involvement too plays an important role and is a key factor in the effectiveness of the entertainment education interventions. "Audience involvement is characterized as being composed of two dimensions: (a) affective-referential involvement and (b) cognitive critical involvement. Involvement appears to be a precursor for increasing self-efficacy and collective efficacy and in promoting interpersonal communication amongst individuals in the audience", (Sood, 2002). Sood further suggests that audience involvement with an entertainment education is a complex process and is one that deserves more scholarly attention and research.

A central idea underlying the entertainment- education strategy is that people learn from positive role models with whom they can identify (from social learning theory). Therefore, it is important to make sure that positive role models support all of the values important to the message. Other kinds of role models may also be included, for example negative roles that reject the values promoted. There may be yet others who are in between and eventually see the light and become believers.

The script is written and characters developed so that the audience hopefully will want to identify with and imitate positive role models, and avoid behaviours associated with negative role models.

The success of both Mexico and India with their pro-development soap operas prompted other developing countries such as Kenya, Nigeria, Tanzania, Brazil, Jamaica, Bangladesh and Turkey to adopt this entertainment strategy to their specific needs (Singhal and Rogers, 1988,1999). Examples of popular programs include *Tinka tinka sukh*(India), *Tushauriane* (Kenya), *Ushikwapo Shikimana* (Kenya) and *Twende Na Wakati* (Tanzania).

The Impact of Pro-development Soap Operas:

The pro-development soap operas had a great impact on the people in the developing countries and helped them to identify the reality of their social problems and seek possible solutions in their personal and social advancement. Many research studies have been conducted analysing the reasons for the impact and influences these predevelopment soap operas had on people. Out of many reasons some of them are as following

Audience Identification: One of the primary goals of pro-development soap operas is to create a high degree of audience identification with the soap opera who would serve as models for their personal and social development. Identification is a process through which the individuals thoughts, feelings and actions are being shaped by those of another's person who serve as a role model (Bandura, 1986).For example in two Indian soap operas *Amanat* and *Aashirwaad*, Gokulsing found that Lala Lahori Ram the main and positive character in *Amanat* inspired many viewers to take care and have positive attitude towards their daughters (Gokulsing, 2004). Frequent viewers of *Hum Log* were learning more pro-social behaviours from their characters.

Brown and Cody observed that 80% of women viewers regarded Bhagwanti the mother in *Humlog* as a positive role model to follow the traditional values of Indian society, while 16% of viewers considered Badki and Chutki as a positive role model for women's equality and freedom for women to work outside their homes (Brown and Cody, 1991:136-137).

Para-social Interaction: A second important reason for the influence of pro-development soap operas on their viewers is the interaction with the characters and the content. Horton and Wohl originally defined para-social interaction as “perceived relationship of friendship or intimacy by an audience member with a remote media character” (Sood and Rogers, 2000:388). The audience forms a relationship with the character that is perceived as analogous to the interpersonal relationships of people in a primary, face to face group. Audience members view their relationship as one of friendship or intimacy with the remote media persona and cognitively and affectively involved with these characters. Para-social interaction with *Hum Log* characters was vividly exemplified with many young Indian women went to the home of the actress who played Badki in the series to tell her she needed to resolve her indecisiveness and marry her boyfriend Ashwini. When the two were finally united in matrimony on the programme, people throughout India closed their business early to celebrate their marriage. Viewers also sent personal telegrams and cards of congratulations to the couple, wishing them along and happy married life.

Reinforcement of Personal and Social Values: Although all soap operas will advocate by design or accident specific values and beliefs, pro-development soap operas have been specifically designed to reinforce or to promote values and beliefs that will improve health, education, social relationships and the overall quality of life in the developing countries. Several studies indicate that entertainment television programmes can be a very effective means of changing or reinforcing audience values and beliefs. Mexico’s predevelopment soap operas changed viewer’s beliefs regarding health education, literacy, family planning and family relationships. For example *Ven Conmingo* promoted adult literacy and about one million illiterate people registered for adult education classes in a single day following an episode in which an older man broke down in tears when he could finally read his granddaughter’s letters.

Indian soap operas have changed beliefs and behaviours of the viewers with regard to gender equality, freedom of women to choose a career and life partner and right to have education (Gokulsing, 2004; Singhal&Rogers, 1999; Brown and Cody, 1991; Singhal, Rogers& Cozzens, 1989).

For example Indian soap opera aired on Doordarshan, *Humraahi* changed people’s attitude towards age of women marriage and 85% felt it would change attitudes towards the use of family planning methods as well as role of women in society. They also observed that *Humraahi* significantly changed the attitudes of women in a pro-social direction.

Television Dependency: Viewers degree of dependency on television to obtain information is another important reason for the high degree of influence of pro-development soap operas in the developing countries. Television dependency, a special kind of media system dependency, is defined as the extent to which the attainment of personal goals is contingent on the information resources provided by television (Ball-Rokeach et al., 1984:3-5). Television dependency occurs when the people believe they need to watch television to obtain information for the interaction with others and to understand the physical and social environment. Hum Log's impact on the lives of the nearly 50 million viewers who regularly watched the programmes, paved the way for greater audience involvement with subsequent Indian pro-social television programmes.

The Process of Social Teaming: The pro-development soap-operas involve the process of social teaming through television role models. The characters of soap operas produced in United States are not usually purposefully created to be role models for audience members to emulate. Nevertheless, audience can still learn from media characters regardless of intention of the producers. But role modelling is considered to be an important goal of pro-development soap operas produced in the developing countries. The Mexican soap opera *Ven Conmigo* featured role models for adult literacy. *Accompaname* in Mexico, *Hum Log* in India, *Tushauriani* in Kenya features both positive and negative role models for family planning. *Hawa Ki Beti* in Pakistan and *Hum Log* created popular role models for women (Singhal & Rogers, 1988: 113-114).

Some Case Studies

Soul City in South Africa: Exploring the power of Entertainment- Education

South Africa faces enormous health and development challenges; HIV/AIDS knows no borders or nationalities. For example an estimated eight percent of South Africans adults (Over 5 million people) are HIV positive which is highest in the world. For children under five years of age, the biggest single cause of death is diarrhoea. This dismal health record existed despite a highly developed mass media system in South Africa. Some 98 percent of South Africans regularly listen to radio, 65 Percent regularly watch television and over 40 percent regularly read newspapers and magazines.

The Soul City Institute for Health and Development Communication, a non-governmental organization headquartered in Houghton 9 a suburb of Johannesburg) was established in 1992 to harness the power of mass media for health and development in South Africa. In the realm of entertainment-education programming, Soul City has pioneered several new directions, including the strategy of having an 'on-going' multi media vehicle to address high priority national health issues. Each year a series of mass media interventions are implemented, including the flagship Soul City, a 13-part prime-time television drama series broadcast on South Africa's most popular television channel, a 60 episode prime time regional stations, and some 2.5 million health education booklets, designed around the popularity of the TV series' characters which were serialized by 11 major newspapers and distributed nationally.

The first *Soul City* series in 1994 focused on maternal and child health and HIV prevention and control. The second Soul City series in 1996 focussed on HIV prevention and control, housing and urban reform, alcohol abuse, and domestic violence. The fourth *Soul City* series in 1999 focussed on violence against women, and included a treatment of youth sexuality and AIDS, hypertension, personal finance, and small business management.

Soul City IV extended on the core entertainment vehicle to include partnership with the National Network on Violence Against Women (NNVAW), a coalition of over 1,500 activists and community organizations in South Africa. The five main objectives of this partnership were:

- 1) To inform audience about women's rights, spur interpersonal discussions about the topic, and change audience attitudes, practices, and social norms about gender-based violence.
- 2) To connect audience members to a toll-free domestic violence telephone helpline.
- 3) To harness the *Soul City* media intervention and NNVAW network to spark individual and community action to combat domestic violence.
- 4) To harness the *Soul City* media intervention and the NNVAW network to advocate for enabling legislation thereby creating a supportive policy environment to combat domestic violence.
- 5) To develop training materials on gender based violence for counsellors, the police, the judiciary and health workers in South Africa.

Soul City-NNVAW ensured the speedy and effective implementation of the Domestic Violence Act which was passed in South African Parliament in 1998. Extensive formative research was conducted to design the *Soul City IV* series, including an extensive literature review on domestic violence, as well as focus groups and in-depth interviews with audience members, activists, and various gatekeepers to assess prevailing knowledge, attitudes, practices, and social norms related to domestic violence. Formative research suggested that there was widespread belief among both men and women that domestic violence was 'normal' and 'justified', that it was a private affair and the abused women were expected to "endure" the violence in order to "make the relationship work". These insights helped shape the storyline of the *Soul City IV* multimedia materials.

"*Soul City*" is comparable to Britain's BBC radio series "*The Archers*" when it was first launched in the 1950's with the purpose of informing the British population living in the countryside about modern farming methods. However, unlike the British precursor, 'soul city' has stuck to its original mission of informing about HIV/AIDS, getting the audience to take heed of its implications, by means of entertainment.

"*Soul City*" reaches more than 16 million viewers and 70 percent of South Africa's youth watches the program. In a country where 76 percent have access to television, by African standards a high proportion, it makes complete sense to reach out to its audience by the means of an educational television program to convey educational information about HIV/AIDS.

The venture also had its first spin-off, a separate radio, TV and booklet series aimed at the 8-12 year olds called "*Soul Buddyz*". This program was a huge success and re-broadcasted four times since its start in 1999. It conveys potentially lifesaving messages before they become sexually active. Every episode they address and solve all kinds of issues and problems that face young South Africans in real life, from love, sex and HIV/AIDS to bullying, racism, abuse and smoking.

African Experiment:

One of the best experiments on entertainment-education comes from Tanzania. In 1993 a radio soap entitled "*Twende na Wakati*" ('Let's go with the Times') started in Tanzania. This was primarily created to serve two purposes.

One was to inform the population about the different ways to deal with the AIDS problem, and also to inform public about the family planning techniques. The effects of the radio program in Tanzania include a reduction in the number of sexual partners by both men and women and to increase condom adoption (Vaughan, Regus and St Catherine, 2000, 81). The radio soap opera influenced three behavioural variables through certain intervening variables, including self perception of risk of contracting HIV/AIDS, interpersonal communication about HIV/AIDS and identification with, and role modelling of, the primary characters in the radio soap opera. Another major result that came from this popular soap opera in Tanzania was the effect it had on family planning in the country. *Twande na Wakati* was an excellent model in allowing the audience to view first hand what solution would work to improve the state of their community. "In general, positive, negative and transitional role models for family planning were perceived as such by the soap operas listeners. The entertainment-education strategy was effectively implemented in Tanzania by RTD (Radio Tanzania) with this program", (Rogers, Vaughan, Swalehe, Rao, Svenkerud and Sood 1999,200).

Indian Experiment

Hum Log was India's first long –running soap opera. This pioneering program utilized the entertainment-education strategy by intentionally placing educational content in this entertainment message (Singhal and Rogers, 1999). Population Communications International, a non-profit organization headquartered in New York, helped introduce Sabido's entertainment-education strategy to Doordarshan officials.

Some 156 episodes of *Hum Log* were broadcast in Hindi for 17 months in 1984-1985. The television program promoted such themes as gender equality, small family size and national integration. At the end of each 22 minute episode, a famous Indian film actor in an epilogue of 30-40 seconds summarized the educational lessons from the episode. Kumar connected the drama to the viewer's everyday lives. For instance, he might comment on a negative character who is drunk and beats his wife by asking "Why do you think that people like Basesar Ram drink too much, and then behave badly? Do you know anyone like this? What can be done to reduce incidents of alcoholism? What can you do?"

One study of *Hum Log's* audience effects showed that a high degree of parasocial interaction occurred between the members and their favourite Hum Log characters (Singhal and Rogers, 1989). For example *Hum Log* viewers reported that they routinely adjusted their daily schedules to 'meet' their favourite character "in the privacy of their living rooms". (Singhal and Rogers, 1989)

Hum Log achieved audience ratings of 65 to 90 percent in North India and between 20-45 percent in the main cities of South India. About 50 million individuals watched average broadcast of Hum Log. One unusual aspect of this soap opera was the huge number of letters over 400,000 that it attracted from viewers; so many that most of them could not be opened by Doordarshan officials.

Tinka Tinka Sukh

Tinka tinka sukh (Happiness lies in small things) was a 104 episode entertainment-education radio soap opera broadcast in India from February 1996 to February 1997. Its purpose was to promote gender equality, women's empowerment, small family size, family harmony, and environmental conservation and HIV prevention. The first project focused on the effects of a radio soap opera, *Tinka Tinka Sukh* (Happiness Lies in Small Things), in the Indian village of Lutsaan. This radio soap opera is set in the village of Navgaon (literally "new village"), a farming community struggling to understand the value of modern traditions while moving in progressive directions. Chaudhri (literally "elder leader"), his wife Chaudhrian, and son Suraj represent a model family. They promote women's causes (anti-dowry, gender equality, and women's empowerment) and the importance of creating a self-sufficient, harmonious village.

Family planning/population size issues were stressed in *Tinka Tinka Sukh*. Research indicated a steep rise in new enrollments of girl children in the village school, and the like. The poster-letter stated that was written by the villagers: "Our society has to take a new turn in their thinking concerning family size. As the cost of living rises, having more children than one can afford is inviting trouble.... This message of *Tinka Tinka Sukh* comes across very clearly."

'Balika Vadhu' (Child-Bride) is based on child marriage. The storyline encourages gender equality, widow remarriage, education, and caste and communal harmony. The story revolves around Anandi, a young girl who is married at the age of eight and belongs to a economically lower class family. The boy, Jagaya is around ten years old to whom she is married and belongs to a rich, affluent family in Jaiser village Rajasthan, India. Anandi is an idealistic, intelligent, and polite girl who aspires to get education and serve her community. Later as she grows up she works with a network of friends to empower rural women. The narrative of the soap opera depicts how child marriage leads to discord and incompatibility between two people and their inability to understand each other. The other pivotal character in Balika Vadhu is 'Dadi Sa' who is a stern matriarch and is against the development of women. The soap opera traverses the journey where prosocial message is communicated in an entertaining manner without harping or being monotonous in its approach. Each episode closes with a moral message. The voiceover who reads the message which is displayed in Hindi is a female and is pro-social in nature. Overall, *Anandi's* characters portrayed numerous new behaviors, challenging existing social norms: a friendship between a doctor from a rich feudal and a victimized woman; the stopping of a child marriage; a daughter-in-law stepping out of the home to start a school for children and be Sarpanch (leader) of the village; a first time celebration of a girl's birthday, and others. These messages are reinforced repeatedly over the telecast of the soap opera.

Though programmes like 'Humlog' or 'Humrahi' have sent a benchmark as far as entertainment-education strategy is concerned on Indian television, soap operas like 'Balika Vadhu' is seen emerging as a significant programme in dealing about women's issues. Discussion about the programme reveal that the problems identified in the programme are current and are faced by women in different situations. The treatment given to these issues enables the viewers to take stock of their own problems and are inclined towards bringing about a change in their life as well.

Entertainment Education –The Way Ahead

The strategy of entertainment-education is an effective tool to reach to marginalized groups and communities. The entertainment-education strategy contributes to social change in multiple ways. Entertainment-education can influence audience members' awareness, attitudes, and behavior toward a socially desirable end. Here the anticipated effects are located in an individual or a collective of which an individual is a part.

Often entertainment-education programs spark conversations among audience members about the social issues that are addressed, leading to dialogue, decisions, and individual or collective actions. Conscious efforts have been made to promote pro-social messages through radio, film, print, music and the new media besides television in many countries.

Scholarship in entertainment-education strategy including Singhal and Roger note that future attempts to use this strategy would embrace a marriage between the traditional forms of communication with modern technology. Entertainment-education programmes have moved the content which focused on family planning, health and hygiene, HIV/AIDS and now includes other social issues that confront modern society like teenage problems, girl child, women's safety. The rapid expansion of mass media channels and the accompanying proliferation of entertainment options provides development planners with an unusual opportunity to reach millions of people with pro-social messages. The ubiquitous nature of entertainment can be used to educate people in every social, political, economic and geographical environment. Entertainment-education strategy being persuasive in nature has been recognized as an important tool that can attract huge audiences and is commercially feasible as well.

Conclusion

Research on the effects of entertainment-education strategy in developing countries confirms that this strategy changes behaviour. The effects investigated mainly are short term behaviour changes like adoption of family planning methods and HIV prevention. The bottom line for entertainment education strategy is to change overt behaviour. This means that entertainment –education strategy is mainly motivational than informational.

Research and theorizing in recent years suggest that suggest that entertainment-education strategy has certain effects as a catalyst in triggering in triggering interpersonal peer communication leading to changes in social discourse of the audience, to motivate audience to talk to each other about what they learned from entertainment-education message and to engage audiences individually in socially supporting behaviour change. The effects of entertainment-education strategy occur particularly as a result of para social interaction and role modelling by audience individuals with positive and negative media characters.

Audience as individuals incorporate the language of their role models in talking to others about the entertainment-education message and in carrying out new behaviours in their real life contexts. However, there are many areas which require further effort and rigorous research in order to examine the growing potentialities and possibilities of entertainment education method and strategies that can bring about change at the individual and community level and in other systems.

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