



From Panels to Profits: The Power of Comics in Pharmaceutical Entrepreneurship During COVID-19 in India

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Abstract:

E-pharmacy has become the backbone of cities under lockdown to fight against the pandemic. Online pharmacies in India like Medlife, 1mg and PharmEasy are providing contact-less home delivery of medicines in bulk, different types of medicines on one platform, and also provide online prescription services with their registered set of doctors. Because of these advantages, an increasing number of people are purchasing medicines and vital supplements from these platforms. This, in turn, benefits Micro, Small, and Medium-Sized Enterprises (MSME). During the COVID-19 pandemic, ordering medicines online has shown to be both convenient and safe for people. With the advent of the modern era, there are numerous advantages that make things more accessible than ever in online pharmacies. Online pharmacies always save and analyse massive amounts of consumer data from around the country, which can be highly beneficial for developing various public health policies. This, in turn, benefits Micro, Small, and Medium-Sized Enterprises (MSME). During the COVID-19 pandemic, ordering medicines online has shown to be both convenient and safe for people. With the advent of the modern era, there are numerous advantages that make things more accessible than ever in online pharmacies. Furthermore, customers can consult their enrollment paperwork or the websites of the major health plans for advice on how to handle pharmacy benefits online. Additionally, all E-pharmacies, such as Medlife, 1mg, and PharmEasy, have their own app that sends frequent reminders for your medications. In these hectic times, this tool is quite useful for keeping track of your health while on the go. Of course, pharma isn't new to animation. Spokespersons, for example, have Animation also helps with the optics of some diseases, as seen in the AbbVie commercial, where animated psoriasis conveys the message without displaying pictures of the actual affliction. Aside from the obvious benefits of pandemic-era animation, it can also be eye-catching and even cost-effective.

Keywords: Awareness, Comics, Promotion, Health, Covid-19

1. INTRODUCTION

Businesses are being hampered by state-wide lockdowns and social alienation at a time when the entire planet is paralyzed by a COVID-19 pandemic. Companies of all sizes are feeling the effects, regardless of how long they have been in operation. This is causing them to reconsider how they manage and conduct their business, including a re-examination of their working business strategy. The shift to animation in advertising was one of the most visible adaptations to the "new normal" of the COVID-19 pandemic when filming on a set was nearly impossible. And the pharmaceutical industry jumped right in. Despite this dismal outlook, there are a few Indian start-ups that are doing well. These start-ups are exploding in size and offering a positive example for other businesses on how to deal with and survive the lockout. According to this survey done in February 2021, many Indian businesses valued expansion over profitability, but this was after the COVID-19 era. This company plan may alter. Many businesses are concerned about the long-term impact of the COVID-19 virus on their overall sales, which could last for the rest of the fiscal year. Rising numbers of new businesses, entrepreneurs, and venture capitalists in India are accelerating the growth of the top technology-driven startup ecosystem. According to a KPMG assessment on India's start-up ecosystem, the number of start-ups has increased from 7,000 in 2008 to 50,000 by 2020. Many Indian companies are collaborating closely with authorities at the central, state, and district levels to help the people of the country and strengthen the monitoring system through tech-enabled innovations throughout the COVID-19 outbreak. Each state faces its unique set of challenges. As we observed in the case of Kerala and other states in the early weeks of the COVID-19 outbreak, many of them have looked to entrepreneurs for solutions. The Government of India has been implementing strategies and numerous action plans to ensure that businesses and the economy prosper and recover from these difficult times. By supporting the *Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan*, policymakers are focusing not only on business continuity and sector revitalization, but also on enhancing the ease of doing business throughout the country. India is one of the world's largest manufacturers of vaccinations and generic pharmaceuticals. It is home to around a half-dozen of the world's largest vaccine manufacturers, as well as a few smaller ones. They are all involved in the development of vaccinations for diseases such as Polio, Pneumonia, Rotavirus, Meningitis, BCG,

Mumps, Rubella, and Measles, among others. Currently, seven Indian businesses are working on COVID-19 vaccine development. As a result, they have joined the worldwide effort to identify a rapid preventive solution for the deadly viral infection. It also needs to be speedier in order to prevent the virus from spreading swiftly over the planet. Because stay-at-home directives and social isolation made it difficult to gather people for TV and video commercial production, pharma devised some ingenious solutions. Intra-Cellular Therapies hired actors and their real-life families to play out situations for Caplyta, a schizophrenia treatment. Merck & Co. used pre-existing video for a public service announcement reminding parents to take their children to the doctor. The more noticeable change, though, was the transition to animation. Novo Nordisk's first DTC ad for Rybelsus, a Type 2 diabetes medicine, presented a cheerful, maskless animation world full with happy cartoon people doing things that real people couldn't. While the spot succeeded in conjuring up images of happier times, animation was not the initial intention. With major manufacturing centres closed and travel restrictions, Novo Nordisk weighed its options, and animation came out on top. Indian entrepreneurs diversify their operations in order to counter losses caused by COVID-19. Flipkart, the world's largest e-commerce company, plans to establish a hyperlocal service that would allow customers to buy things from local merchants and have them delivered to them in an hour and a half or less. Yatra, an online travel and hotel ticketing firm, is venturing into a completely new business line: office supplies.

Flipkart and Yatra are not the only companies looking to expand into new business areas. In recent weeks, dozens of companies in the country have expanded their offers by launching new services, in part to compensate for the interruption to their main offerings caused by the COVID-19 outbreak.

Swiggy and Zomato, two of the country's largest food delivery businesses, began delivering alcohol in select areas last month. The decision comes only weeks after the two companies, both of which are getting fewer sales and have had to lay off hundreds of employees, began accepting orders for grocery items, challenging existing online market giants BigBasket and Grofers.

According to TechCrunch, Udaan, a business-to-business marketplace, has just begun to accept bulk purchases from some housing societies and is exploring further prospects in the business-to-business area. Snapdeal and DealShare, two e-commerce companies, launched grocery delivery services in late March. The move was quickly followed by

Meesho, a social-commerce firm, Cure.fit, a fitness start-up, and BharatPe, a company best recognised for facilitating mobile payments between merchants and users. ClubFactory, best known for selling low-cost beauty products, has begun to deliver groceries, as has NoBroker, a Bangalore-based business that connects apartment hunters with property owners. And MakeMyTrip, a behemoth that offers solutions for booking airfare and hotel reservations, has joined the food delivery sector. Another such behemoth, BookMyShow, which sells movie tickets, has hurried to support online events in recent weeks, assisting comedians and other artists in selling tickets online. In the following days, the Mumbai-based firm intends to make additional inroads into this business concept. Organizations providing on-demand video streaming services, like online learning firms, have witnessed a considerable increase in the number of consumers they serve. For some start-ups, the epidemic has resulted in a faster product launch cycle. CRED, a Bangalore-based business that aims to help Indians improve their financial behaviour by paying their credit card bills on time, has launched an instant credit line as well as apartment rental services. Since March 2020, the number of customers who utilise the online learning programme on a daily basis has increased to 700,000. “We've also witnessed a 200 percent rise in weekly viewers for the platform's free live classes. Furthermore, there has been a 50% rise in paid subscribers and a 50% increase in average watchtime per day among our subscribers,” stated Gaurav Munjal, co-founder and CEO of Unacademy. “The pandemic has also increased the uptake of internet services in India across all demographics,” according to the report. Many people who would not have considered buying goods and services online are starting to do so at a faster rate.” Roosh, a Mumbai-based game development studio created by multiple industry veterans, has launched a new app ahead of schedule that allows social influencers to promote games on platforms like Instagram and TikTok, according to Deepak Ail, co-founder and CEO of Roosh. Startups aren't the only companies that have hurried to enter new markets. Carnival Group, India's third-largest multiplex theatre operator, has announced its intention to enter the cloud kitchen market. As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, the AtmaNirbhar Bharat (Self-Reliant India) mission was started. The Government of India (GoI) has embarked on a perilous journey to turn a crisis into an opportunity. Nonetheless, the country shown that it is doable. The successful construction of an indigenous supply chain of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) kits in under 60 days demonstrates to local producers that self-reliance in a high-quality product is a goal that can be attained. Local manufacturers lacked the capacity to make

PPE kits such as body coveralls, which are required during pandemics and are designated as class-3 protection level under ISO 16603 standard. Because India was fully reliant on imports, another crisis in the form of global export restrictions on crucial medical goods exacerbated the health crisis. Furthermore, the Government of India established an empowered committee to manage operational problems and ensure the supply of time-critical medical supplies. The Cabinet Secretary also kept track of all the obstacles and issues and dealt with them promptly. The underline of the mentioned strategic business decisions is meaningless if they can't be perceived by the target customer. Thus, effective communication with the target audience to bind their mind towards the message is of utmost importance. Graphical representation, Cartoon characters, Animation, etc. plays an integral part in the industry.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The pharmaceutical business is just one of many that have been impacted by the global spread of COVID-19. The pharmaceutical business in India is a major economic driver, responsible for a sizable chunk of the country's total exports. Supply networks have been disrupted, demand has dropped, and new regulations have been implemented as a result of the pandemic. To that end, many company owners in the field have begun using comics as a means to combat industry problems and improve their operations. Graphics have been implemented in a number of contexts, including instructional, promotional, and interpersonal ones. In recent years, comics have acquired popularity in the realm of entrepreneurship as a way to present complex ideas in a way that readers will find both interesting and easy to remember. Drug safety, clinical trials, and regulatory compliance are just some of the topics on which comics have been used to teach pharmaceutical industry stakeholders.

When compared to more conventional forms of expression, comics offer many benefits. For starters, they're eye-catching, which helps them get people to peruse what you've written. The second benefit is that they make difficult concepts understandable to more people. Thirdly, their reach and effect can be amplified because of the ease with which they can be shared on social media and other digital channels. Last but not least, they save money if compared to other methods of contact.

Comics have been used to address some of the difficulties the pharmaceutical business in India is having in light of the recent COVID-19 pandemic. Many business owners, for instance, have turned to comic books to inform their target audiences about the

significance of isolation, mask use, and other precautions. To combat vaccine skepticism and educate the public on the history and dissemination of COVID-19 vaccines, comics have been used. Additionally, comics have been used to emphasize the role of the pharmaceutical industry in combating the pandemic and showcase innovative solutions created by entrepreneurs in the industry. Several academic investigations have demonstrated that cartoons can serve as useful business tools. A study by Kang and Lee (2017) showed that comics were more successful than traditional text-based communication in enhancing the understanding and recall of information among college students. Comics, according to separate research by Maimunah and Suryana (2018), is a useful medium for encouraging high school students in Indonesia to pursue business opportunities. Comics were also found to be an effective means of communicating health information to patients with poor health literacy in a study by Simonds et al. (2016).

Comics have emerged as a valuable tool for entrepreneurship in the pharmaceutical industry in India, particularly in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Comics have been shown to improve the comprehension and retention of information by a variety of audiences, and they have many benefits over more traditional forms of communication. That's why it's no surprise that cartoons are being used increasingly in business, particularly in the pharmaceutical industry.

With the World Health Organization declaring the coronavirus an epidemic and 75 COVID-19 cases in India, everyone, including kids, is worried. Many of the viral spread and prevention tips on the internet, social media, and news networks are incorrect and causing unnecessary panic. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare of India has published a COVID-19 illness awareness comic book for children.

The comic book "Kids, Vaayu & Corona" discusses coronavirus and safety. A group of curious kids call superhero Vaayu, who lives in the foothills of the Himalayas, to help them comprehend coronavirus since everyone is talking about it. Vaayu teaches them about the pandemic and how to keep calm while fighting coronavirus. More crucially, Vaayu repeatedly tells the children not to panic and to stay alert to stay safe. He advises them to keep their space, avoid handshakes, and say "Namaste," "Hello," or "As-Salaam-Alaikum." Vaayu also mentions earlier pandemics like SARS, Swine Flu, and Ebola, which had higher mortality rates, so Coronavirus can be contained if proper measures are taken on time.

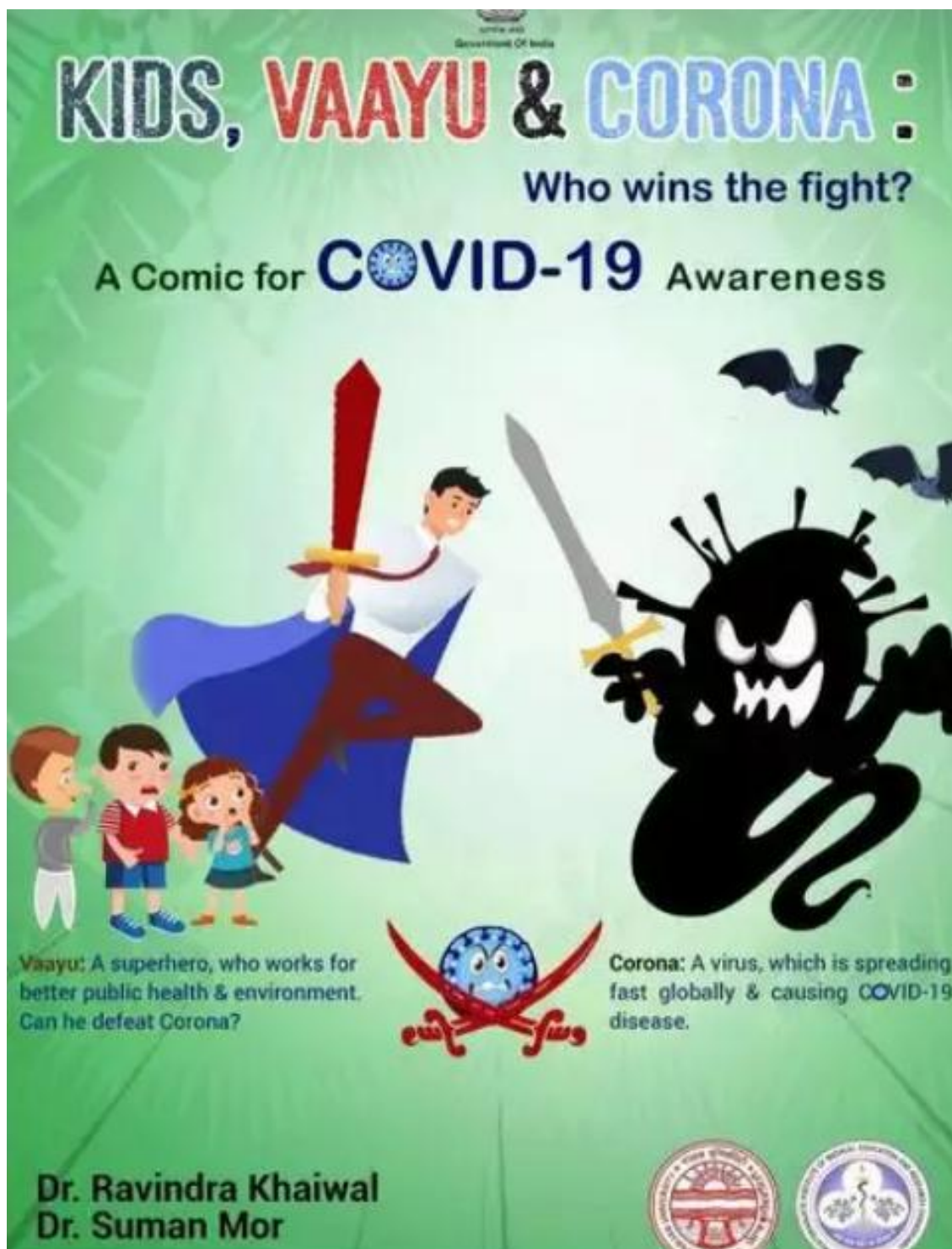


Photo Courtesy: Ministry of Health & Family Welfare- Government of India

Dr. Ravindra Khaiwal, Additional Professor of Environmental Health at PGIMER-Chandigarh, and Dr. Suman Mor, Associate Professor and Chairperson, Department of Environment Studies, Punjab university University, conceived and wrote "Kids, Vaayu& Corona." Sonali Verma and Shruti Govil from Punjab University designed the

book.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Type of Method: Exploratory research

3.2 Sample Size: 100 respondents

3.3 Type of Sampling: Snowball Sampling

3.4 Materials and Methods

Based on the area of study, the following research question was formulated.

Q. Do cartoons have any influence to develop a healthy habit?

3.5 Questionnaire

A quantitative methodology was employed to collect responses for the analysis. A quasi-questionnaire was triggered to gauge the importance of cartoons during the COVID-19 crisis in India. Respondents were asked to select their all-preferred cartoon characters, in which they promoted hygiene and awareness to keep safe. Also, if they have been following the message shared by their favourite characters? Do they encourage others towards inculcating hygiene and follow good habits?

4. DATA; RESULTS & ANALYSIS

People were asked to mention with close-ended responses about hygiene and their approach towards healthy habits. A total of 100 responses were received depicted in the below cross-table format. By seeing the below table, it is extremely unlikely to reach a conclusion. The study was to analyze if there is any influence on the present generation towards the graphical/animated awareness approach.

Table 1. Perception Towards Hygiene and Healthy Habits Awareness

Do you encourage others to follow the GOI guidelines for healthy habits	Do you like to follow animated awareness of hygiene and healthy habits		Total
	Yes	No	
Yes	40	20	60
No	10	30	40
Total	50	50	100

The table above gives the classification of 100 respondents according to their approach toward the Government of India Health Guidelines and Animated awareness campaigns. Now we will take the null hypothesis that there is no association between Healthy Habits and is independent of Awareness Programs. Null Hypothesis (H₀): Healthy habit is independent of the influence of awareness programs. Alternate Hypothesis (H₁): Healthy habit is dependent on awareness programs. The calculated value of Chi-Square is 16.666 with degrees of freedom as 1. Whereas the tabulated value with d.f. 1 is observed as 3.84. The chi-square statistic is 16.6667. The p-value is .000045. Significant at $p < .05$. The chi-square statistic with Yates's correction is 15.0417. The p-value is .000105. Significant at $p < .05$. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H₀) is rejected and the alternate hypothesis (H₁) is accepted.

So, there is a significant influence of animated awareness campaigns to promote healthy habits.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results of the chi-square test and the rejection of the null hypothesis, it can be concluded that there is a significant association between healthy habits and animated awareness campaigns. The findings suggest that the use of animated awareness campaigns can be an effective tool in promoting healthy habits among respondents. Therefore, it is recommended that health organizations and public health campaigns incorporate animated awareness campaigns into their strategies to promote healthy habits and behaviors. Future research could explore the specific aspects of animated awareness campaigns that are most effective in promoting healthy habits, as well as examine the long-term effects of these campaigns on sustained behavior change.

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