

Duration of Trailer Time related to use of Tobacco and Alcohol related products in Tamil Movies released in 2015

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Received : 05.03.2016

Review Completed : 10.03.2016

Accepted : 15.03.2016

Introduction

Exposure to mass media may impact the use of tobacco, a major source of illness and death in India. At the same time, research has shown that mass media can be successful in discouraging all forms of tobacco use¹. Initial research in India showed that specific media content such as media advertising is associated with higher smoking rates and exposure to cigarette brand names or actors smoking on television have been found to be related to increased youth smoking in India². Despite dissemination and availability of the WHO- Framework Convention on Tobacco Control recommendations on smoking cessation and treatment of tobacco dependence, few countries had taken sufficient action. The Surgeon General report in the year 2012, concluded that exposure to onscreen smoking in movies causes young people to start smoking and exposure to these made the viewer's attitude and beliefs about smoking and smokers more favourable.³

When tobacco is glamorized in movies, it provides a powerful message that tobacco use is an appropriate and desirable activity. Warning label is required when actors and actresses light up a smoke or use of alcohol is depicted. What the young person sees is someone he or she looks up to, living a life that he or she would like to live and doing it by using tobacco⁴.

Before 2012, movies and television channels in India carried no health warnings, about tobacco. But nowadays regardless of the language and contents, anti-smoking messages are displayed before, during and after the broadcast⁵. The reason for this being the federal law passed in the year 2011, mandating that all films that show even one scene including oral or smoking should carry health messages at the beginning and in the middle. They must also display prominent anti-tobacco messages at the bottom of the screen for the duration of the segment⁶.

With this background this study was contemplated to assess the duration of trailer time related to use of tobacco and alcohol related products in Tamil movies in 2015.

ABSTRACT

AIM: This study was aimed to access the duration of trailer time related to use of tobacco and alcohol products in Tamil movies released in 2015. **METHOD:** The total movies released in 2015 were accessed from www.prokerala.com and www.Wikipedia.com. The total numbers of movies released were 192 and the trailers were watched by 4 investigators. The movies trailers were categorized into those with or without scenes depicting onscreen use of tobacco and alcohol products. The former were further divided into one which did not have statutory warning and other one which had statutory warning. The total time duration of scenes which had tobacco & alcohol related products were recorded. **RESULT:** Among 192 trailers, 28 trailers (14.58%) depicted the use of tobacco or alcohol related products. In these 28 trailers, 18 trailers (9.37%) had statutory warning whereas 10 trailers (5.20%) had no statutory warning. **CONCLUSION:** Among 192 movies released in 2015, about 14.5% of the film trailers depicted the use of tobacco or alcohol products. Among these 9.37% trailer displayed statutory warnings and 5.2% were without statutory warning which is in contradiction to the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act.

KEYWORDS: Statutory warnings, Movie trailers, Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act.

Materials and Methods

The permission to conduct the study was obtained by the institutional review board of Ragas Dental College and hospital. The databases of the Tamil movies released in the year 2015 were assessed from the websites such as www.prokerala.com and www.wikipedia.com during March 2016. After obtaining a list of all the Tamil movies, the official trailers for each movie were accessed and viewed from www.youtube.com. The trailers were thoroughly viewed and the movies were divided into two categories such as trailer with scenes related to use of tobacco and alcohol products. The trailers which depicted use of tobacco and alcohol products were further divided into two groups such as those with the warnings displayed and no warnings displayed. The total duration of the trailers were recorded and the duration of the smoking scenes were also recorded in seconds.

Results

The total number of Tamil movies released in the year 2015 was 192 with the mean trailer duration of 115.8 seconds. Out of the total movie released, the movies which had no scenes related to use of tobacco and alcohol products in the trailers were about 164 (73.2%) and the trailers which had use of tobacco and alcohol products scenes were 28 (14.5%). The movies which had statutory warning in the trailers were 18 (64.3%) and movies which had no statutory warnings were 10 (35.7%).

Total trailer time for the 28 movies which had use of tobacco and alcohol products depicted was 3661.84 seconds and the total time of the appearance of on scenes in these trailer were 163.84 indicating 4.47% of total time was used to display scenes related to use of tobacco and alcohol products. Among the trailers which depicted smoking only 18 trailers had statutory warning of total time 106 seconds. This indicates about 5.88% time was allotted for the warning along with the display of the smoking scenes. The movies according to their release time in the year were grouped as Group 1 containing movies released during the time period from January to April, Group 2 from time period May to august and Group 3 in the time period from September to December.

The total number of movies which included scenes related to use of tobacco and alcohol products in trailers in group 1 were about 11 in which 7 movies had statutory warning and 4 did not any warnings. The numbers of movies in group 2 were 10, which included 5 with statutory warnings and 5 without warnings. In group 3 there were total of 7 movies among which 6 were with warnings and 1 were without any warnings displayed.

Table: 1 Distribution based on Duration of use of Tobacco and Alcohol products among Tamil Movie Trailers in 2015

Total no.of Trailers released in 2015		Total no.of Movie Trailers with Tobacco and Alcohol products with statutory warning		Duration of Tobacco and Alcohol products scenes with statutory warning	Movie Trailers with Tobacco and Alcohol products scenes without statutory warning		Duration of Tobacco and Alcohol products scenes without statutory warning
Number	Seconds	Number	Seconds	Seconds	Number	Seconds	Seconds
192 (100%)	22236	18 (9.37%)	2413	106	10 (5.20%)	1249	58

Discussion

Among the Indian population nearly 250 million tobacco users, Cigarette users comprise just 14% of the total tobacco using population, the rest being the other tobacco products. This presents a big opportunity for cigarette manufacturers who are increasingly looking at youth to grow their sales. The Indian government has recognized the harm that is caused by tobacco and has prohibited tobacco manufacturers from advertising tobacco products on television and imposed a partial ban on advertising on print. So the strategies generally adopted are surrogate brand extension, outdoor, events sponsorships and cinema.

Research studies and surveys have documented the volume of smoking and related product placements in movies and how exposure to this imagery increases smoking levels among the youth.⁷ The WHO has also stated to rate movies as R rated movies, that portray tobacco use in a bid to prevent children and adolescents from starting to smoke cigarettes and use other forms of tobacco.⁸

A review of 275 Hindi films and 60 Tamil and 60 Telugu films was done from the year 1996-2002. They found tobacco portrayal is prevalent in 76% of the films. Cigarette incidents account for 85% of all tobacco incidents in 2002, which is very high compared to 1991.¹¹ There was tremendous decrease in this after the law passed by the Ministry of Health and Family welfare in the year 2011 which stated all new films and television programmes have to submit "strong editorial justification" to the censors, the Central Board of Film Certification, to depict smoking at all, and such films are automatically classified UA, which means that children cannot watch them in the cinema without adult supervision.⁵

A recently published study found that the Bollywood film industry, the largest in India, delivered some 14.3 billion images of tobacco use to its audience, nearly 15 times the number estimated to be presented by Hollywood films to UK audiences.⁹ In our study among the Tamil movies released in the year 2015 we found about 164 of the 192 movies released had no smoking scenes. There were about 28 movies which had scenes related to use of tobacco and alcohol products in the trailers. The general mood in India is that films and film stars glorify smoking and other forms of tobacco use, and that this has an adverse effect on impressionable minds, which explains why these government measures enjoy widespread public support.¹⁰

In a study by Heatherton TF, 2009 reported that on-screen smoking is only 1 to 2 minutes, on average, per film. In our study we found average time of smoking scenes in the movies to be around 130.78 seconds which is approximately 2 minutes. Heatherton TF also stated that the exposure preceded the behavior nearly, 20% of those in the highest-exposure quartile tried smoking compared to only 3% in the lowest-exposure quartile.¹²

Another study done by Shmueli D, et al 2010, reported that there is a direct link between viewing smoking scenes and immediate subsequent smoking behavior.¹³ Our study findings showed that about 163.84 seconds of the total 3661.84 seconds were the depiction of smoking scenes in the trailers indicating 4.47% of total time was used to display smoking scenes. This would indicate high amount of people watching the same and might be influenced by it according to the above study. There is a need of further research to assess the influence of this duration of smoking scenes in trailer in Tamil movies.

There are various Governmental bans to use tobacco and alcohol related products on screens which have resulted in the reductions of the usage of same from the past. Still there is need to impose strict bans regarding the usage and further research to indicate the strong influence of the same to promote or initiate smoking the young ones. Smoking in the movies should be monitored just as we would monitor any environmental exposure that adversely affects health. Various studies have provided a validated metric to determine this effect and progress should be made in reducing depictions or completely remove the depiction of smoking by the entertainment industry.

Conclusion

Among 192 movies released in 2015, about 14.5% of the film trailers depicted the use of tobacco alcohol products. Among these 9.37% trailer displayed statutory warnings and 5.2% were without statutory warning which is in contradiction to the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act. About 163.84(4.47%) seconds of the total 3661.84 seconds of trailers had smoking scenes. Among this about 106 seconds of the smoking trailers had statutory warnings indicating the rest without any warnings. It was also found that movies released in the first two quarters of the years had more smoking scenes and warnings than the rest of the year.

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