

Marakkalle- an innovation in HIV/AIDS communication

Condom Promotion Campaign

Hindustan Latex Family Planning Promotion Trust, Kerala

A rational and contextual communication campaign that has obviously made an impact in the society – that is what Kerala Condom Promotion Project’s ‘Marakkalle! *Condom Nallathinu*’ (Don’t forget! Condom is for good) campaign is all about. ‘*Marakkalle*,’ a word frequently used by Malayalis in various contexts has been selected as the slogan as part of its communication strategy. This simple, no-frills language, attracts the audience easily. The message hits directly at the audience without infringing on the sensitivities and the slogan reminds people of condoms, the moment the word is used in any context or situation.

Why ‘Marakkalle’?

- Introduces the problem in a positive light
- Simplifies without losing the impact
- Communicates the message while respecting sensitivities
- Shatters class distinctions and removes inhibitions

Formulating Marakkalle! – The context

KCPP felt the need to design such a communication strategy is to make the usage of condoms, a safe, sensible, socially acceptable, extensive, sustainable and stigma-free practice by communicating through a strong proposition that holds the same values which go beyond the properties developed within the conventional condom promotion framework. The key insights that helped formulate the campaign were:

- A significant chunk of respondents skip using condoms, even when aware of the benefits of condoms and potential threats of not using condoms
- Good intentional preaching is not considered very effective because people think they are old enough to know better.

‘*Marakkalle*’ was selected as the proposition because it

- Eliminates cultural social and communication barriers
- Is extendable and has high recall value
- Is relevant and memorable
- Is simple and acceptable
- Is sustainable and easily comprehensible
- **And can also be used as a surrogate...**

The campaign – roll out

The Marakkalle campaign was conducted in two phases. Phase 1 focused on introducing the concept and the programme, creating awareness, breaking barriers and establishing the linkage between the objective – condom promotion and the proposition – Marakkalle! The second part portrays the campaign in a different perspective unbiased of gender, reaffirming the linkage between the property and the project and to link different strata of the society to the campaign. Ultimately the word Marakkalle becomes a synonym for condoms.

Medium of communication



Various media of communication were utilized for the 'Marakkalle!' campaign. The media can be classified into Mass Media, Out-door media and BTL activities.

Mass media: Terrestrial and Non terrestrial television channels
Outdoor Media: Bus Panels, Auto Panels, Shop Boards, POP materials at retail shops

BTL activities: Exhibitions, street plays, carnivals etc., condom dispenser units, posters, stickers etc were used for window display drives for NTOs, Installation of 'Marakkalle!' branded Condom Vending Machines, display stands, dossier and demo kit for NGOs, conduct of innovative training programmes etc.

Activities

Talking Monkey Shows



A Ventriloquist had been hired to conduct talking monkey shows throughout Kerala. The show comprises of a puppet monkey named 'Kitty', whose voice is given by the artist. The monkey talks about condoms, the 'Marakkalle' theme and related matters. The Unique Selling Proposition of this show is that people perceive the monkey puppet to be talking and hence is a crowd puller. He conducts a minimum of 5 shows per day and has had conducted shows across the State covering even very remote areas.

Marakkalle in Toddy and Juice stalls



Toddy shops being a joint for male population especially from the middle and lower middle income strata of Kerala society, was the quintessential choice in selecting toddy shops as an avenue for promotion of the theme. 240 toddy shops were branded with the theme – fluteboards, complimentary glasses and jugs printed with the 'Marakkalle!' theme. Condoms were also placed with the support of KSACS. In addition to this, 60 juice stalls have been linked to the campaign by POPs (posters, flute boards and Marakkalle! glasses).

Branding 4500 Nos. of barbershops with Marakkalle! Campaign - KCPP and KSACS, in association with Kerala State Barbers Association developed and oriented 4500 barbershops as Marakkalle! Communication centres. The programme has been done

with the support of KSACS. The centres have been provided with reading materials, Marakkalle! aprons, sprayers and flute boards.

Promoting condoms among the clients of SW/MSMs

Clients of sex workers and MSMs are found to be one of the toughest groups to be reached directly. Despite Suraksha projects trying to influence the clientele through various communication interventions / peer educators / key population groups and other services, resistance from male clients of sex workers and MSMs in condom use still exists. KCPP in association with KSACS, PSU and Suraksha projects developed a group of volunteers among the regular clients and who are part of the local sex circuit (especially the auto drivers / porters / construction workers etc.) to promote condoms.

Marakkalle! – Responses and reactions

A rapid assessment had been conducted after the second phase of the campaign to determine the impact of the 'Marakkalle' campaign. The awareness regarding the advertisement, its feedback, determining the relation between the person's background viz. age, education, employment, location (urban/rural) etc. with their understanding / perception on condoms, the reach and recall effect of the advertisement has been incorporated in the survey. Reach of the messages through various channels would also be assessed and documented. Some of the key results of the survey are:

- Of the surveyed population, 82 % has seen the 'Marakkalle!' campaign.
- 97.5 % of the population who have seen the campaign have been able to associate the advertisement with condoms / HIV prevention
- More than 92.6 % of the population has seen the TVC, indicating the popularity of mass media (TV) among the population. The second most prominent media are bus panels and shop boards.
- 78 % of the respondents have rated the advertisement as very good / good.
- 99 % of the respondents who have seen the advertisement endorse that it has made them think or reflect.

Press Reports and News

As a general strategy to sensitize the public about sexual health issues and to change the attitude of people towards matters related to condoms and HIV/AIDS, KCPP took initiatives to network with the media, both print and electronic. As a result, the programme got very positive coverage. Several press releases have come up in different newspapers and most of the events conducted by KCPP were highlighted in the print and visual media during the first year. More than 275 write-ups and reports in the media, and around 50 visual media telecast happened during the project period

The success of the Marakkalle! Theme has seen it being used for the undergoing NACO Condom Social Marketing Project in the State, functional since April 2008 in 5 districts of Kerala, namely, Ernakulam, Calicut (High Prevalent districts) and, Kannur, Malappuram and Kasargode (High Fertility districts). Popular media like FM radio, Cinema Theatres, Local Cable Channels are the new channels of promotion, in addition to the earlier activities. A Street drama also had been conceived and developed, which was organized during the festive season of Onam.