



## Public Service Advertising in India: A Multimodal Discourse Analysis of Health-based Adverts

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### Abstract:

**Background:** The media plays an influential role in disseminating information to the masses. There are different kinds of media, like Radio, Television, Print, Advertising, etc and each has its own set of audiences and importance. To get acquainted with varied fields like Sports, Entertainment, Wildlife or even Health, media is the best way out as reliable, cheapest source. During the pandemic phase, the importance of media surged a bit more. Every individual relied solely on the media for Corona updates.

**Aim:** This study is to explore the role of government's video advertising in disseminating awareness related to health safety measures and to examine how the government uses advertising mode of communication to influence the public for major social change. It also tries to look at the propaganda strategies and commercial appeals used in PSAs to educate viewers.

**Method:** The study is based on a Multimodal Discourse Analysis of public service video ads, i.e., those broadcast on the YouTube channel of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare within the span of six months. The study will be focusing on how semiotic tools such as colour, framing, and positioning elements in PSA advertisements contribute to the making of impactful meaning and how these strategies are employed to make the masses aware. The advertising concept, propaganda technique, and advertising appeal employed will also be investigated.

**Keywords:** Multimodal Discourse Analysis, Health Communication, Public Service Advertisement, COVID-19, YouTube Ads

### Introduction

Advertising is the easiest form of communication and profoundly works on the reach and retention power of the consumer. It links an identified sponsor with consumers (a target audience), conveys information about products (goods, services, and ideas), and interprets the features of the items in terms of the customer's requirements and desire. It highly relies on mass and interactive media to reach broad audiences.

According to the Advertising Association UK, advertisements are messages that are paid for those who send them and are meant to inform or persuade people who receive them. Thus, advertising has been defined as any paid form of communication that intends to inform or influence one or a larger group (Association, 1975). Apart from generating profit, a type of advertising is also profit less. This advertising

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works on a social cause and builds better a society called PSAs, Public service Advertising. This form of advertising spreads messages in support of a noble cause, such as preventing child abuse, ending drunk driving, anti-smoking, promoting vaccination drives, and other social causes. These public service announcements are intended to inform and increase awareness of significant social issues in order to alter attitudes and behaviors and promote constructive social change (Wallack, 1981).

PSAs have been used as a tool for Government and non-profit organizations to fulfil their social obligation and have become an integral part of social marketing (Doh & Guay, 2006). When a nation like India is dealing with numerous environmental, health, social, and other problems. The government now has a potent tool at its disposal to effectively address these issues through public service advertising. As it can readily reach the target audience and have the power to positively affect their attitudes and behaviours (Singh & Singh, 2017).

Since the 2000s the Indian Government has launched various PSA campaigns based on different spectra comprising education, and family planning, and most are specially specified to the health-based genre. This includes "Kuposhan Bhagao" for the eradication of malnutrition, the DOTS campaign for tuberculosis, and "Polio Free India". The Polio Ravivar campaign was brought to the public's attention by the Polio Awareness advertising campaign. The slogan, "Any child under 5 years old, every child, every time, for polio drops," was pounded home in the advertisement's main phrases in all regional tongues. This resulted in the complete eradication of polio from India and made India a Polio free country (Chatterjee, 2016).

After the sudden outbreak of coronavirus in 2019, health-related news has taken center stage in every media outlet. This has laid more significance to health communication as becoming everyone's demand. So, advertisers also shifted advertising to more health prone. Advertisers have combined coronavirus prevention with their primary product-based marketing. For its potential customers, FMCG products also include a coronavirus safety message to inform and enlighten the public about the pandemic. The government ministry of Health and Family Welfare also released educational social advertisements.

Health Communication is being increasingly understood as a crucial component of enhancing both individual and societal health. Health promotion and disease prevention can both benefit from effective health communication (Thomas, 2006). The other type of Advertising, Brand, or any FMCG product employed varied forms of tactics to make it successful. To increase its reach and retention, the advertiser plays with a variety of Syntagm colors, slogans, catchy slogans, and headlines. Public service advertising is regarded as a tool for advancing ideologies significant to society or groups and influencing desirable attitudes and behavior. PSA-related issues are frequently misconstrued, and the gravity of the idea is diminished in comparison to other commercial advertisements (Singh & Singh, 2017). Thus, the Health sector is a crucial genre. The researcher will analyze how the PSA's advertisements are portrayed to the audience. Did these also employ tactics in their advertisement? What advertising appeal and propaganda technique is used in government official advertisements?

## **Review of Literature:**

### **A paradigm of Textuality in FMCG advertisements**

A Critical Discourse analysis of Beauty Product Adverts concludes that to appeal to women, advertising frequently employs language strategies including direct address, uplifting words, headlines, and catchy phrases. Additionally, the vocabulary utilised in the marketing for beauty products in this study is ideologically contentious. Such words convey a particular worldview about what is considered beautiful, such as having less wrinkles or "free wrinkles," "plumped" lips or eyes, or eyelashes that are twice as long or thicker. In the advertising, a beautiful woman is portrayed as having specific characteristics, such as long eyelashes, smooth lips, and an absence of creases around the eyes. Direct

address and the pronoun "you" provide the idea that the client is of paramount importance. As a result, customers might be directly persuaded to buy the product. When advertisers utilise words from other discourses to draw readers, such as words from science, this is referred to as intertextuality. Consequently, using technical language is another strategy for attracting clients. Advertising that uses technical language persuades the reader that the product is worthwhile. The technical vocabulary is a reflection of knowledge, which is where power comes from. The inclusion of scientific data also conveys authority in the marketing for beauty products. The use of scientific data or language can be a powerful approach to demonstrate knowledge (Kaur et al., 2013).

Advertising companies use intertextuality to deliberately reflect culture, norms, religion, and allusion in their advertisements. The use of scientific data or language can be used to project authority through conveying knowledge. In this type of media, intertextuality is employed to challenge the legitimacy and authority of advertising (Ali & Aslam, 2016).

### **Semiotic mode of color and composition**

Colors undoubtedly have an emotional impact on us (for instance, we might feel better in one colour setting compared to another), and this visceral quality of colour contributes to the fact that it is such a significant motivator for many consumer actions. It's crucial to understand, though, that often an informational portion of color's impact exists alongside or even in place of its emotive component (Won & Westland, 2017).

The key skill of a photographer is perspective switching. We view the world from eye level, and that level is about the same for all adults whether we are riding through a hamlet, walking through a metropolis, or seated in a car as we go down a country road. However, because the human eye cannot physically reach the location, the photographer can give us a viewpoint that is literally exclusive to the camera, such as that of a child or bird in a scene. Make photographs from original perspectives and take advantage of this freedom for aesthetic purposes (Vorenkamp, 2016).

The government has employed a combination of explicit and implicit fear-evoking semiotic interactions inside its COVID-19 information campaigns to "nudge" compliance even while the rules themselves have been made explicit, such as mandates for stay-at-home parents. That is, fear was created by employing less typical images (such as a weapon) and by focusing on realistic images, such as the NHS being under pressure. Diverse social groupings were incorporated into the public sphere with regard to pandemic management and homogenized to make individuals more complicit and manageable in order to present infection control as a question of risk by making an individual's actions liable for it (Gill & Lennon, 2022).

### **Research Gap**

Researchers have conducted a wide range of studies to examine public service advertising based on the health genre. It was discovered through a review of the literature that Indian scholars paid little attention to the field of PSA. Also, the creative part of advertising, i.e., the concept, techniques and appeals which influence the potential audience remains untouched. As a result, this study has attempted to compile the techniques employed in public service advertising, which tends to aware and influence audiences. The findings are based on a multimodal discourse analysis of the YouTube channel of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

### **Objective:**

This study attempts to look into the public service advertising and government approach to combat Coronavirus in the state, thereby making sense of the pandemic. It aims to analyse government approaches

through PSA to make the masses aware and bring social change. It also aims to examine the propaganda techniques and advertising appeals employed in PSA to make audiences aware.

## Methodology and Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework used in this is Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis. With the high number of involvement of language and Social process, advertising is as Media Discourse (Kaur et al., 2013). A qualitative study design is opted for this study. It aims to examine how discourse in advertisements affects people's meaning-construction processes, a qualitative approach seemed applicable (Kaur et al., 2013) Purposive sample was used because the study solely focused on adverts solely based on Health.

The Video advert is gathered from the official YouTube channel of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. Among which a total five advert is taken for the study purposely, uploaded in the span of four months from April 2022 to July 2022. These PSA were based on International Yoga Day, COVID-19 Precaution Dose, TB awareness drive # TBharegadeshjitega. The data will be analysed on the basis of Multimodal discourse analysis.

It is used to examine several forms of communication, including text, colour, and visuals. It is a technique for discursive analysis that considers how different communication modes interact with one another to produce semiotic meaning as well as how they each communicate independently (Magazine, 2015). The three modes—writing, image, and color—in one sign provides tangible advantages. Each medium accomplishes a particular task: an image illustrates what would take too long to read, and text names what would be challenging to illustrate. To draw attention to particular parts of the broader message, colour is used (Yang, 2012).

S.No.	Title	Date	Like	Comment	Duration	Views	Issue
1.	समय पर प्रिकॉशन डोज लगवा कर पाएं कोरोना महामारी के खतरों से सुरक्षा	Jul 10, 2022	30	3	0:53	650	Covid-19
2.	आप सभी योग दिवस का हिस्सा बनें और योग को अपनी दिनचर्या में शामिल करें	Jun 13, 2022	9	0	0:59	232	Yoga Day
3.	India's Vaccination Drive steers the country ahead on the path of normalcy	Mar 31, 2022	13	1	1:04	718	Covid-19
4.	An effort of National TB Elimination Programme towards End TB by 2025	Mar 24, 2022	7	0	3:31	590	TB
5.	Committing and re-committing to galvanise efforts towards TB elimination in India by 2025	Mar 24, 2022	66	5	1:59	1369	TB

Fig: (a) Data used for the study

## Analysis and Discussion

**Video: 1 समय पर प्रीकोशन डोज लगावा कर पाएं कोरोना महामारी के खतरों से सुरक्षा**  
**#HameinNaazHaiHindPar**



**Fig 1. (a) Fig 1. (b)**



**Fig 1. (c) Fig 1.(d)**

### Composition:

The above social service ads of 0:53 seconds are based on a precautionary dose of coronavirus. The semiotic elements comprise syntax like Vegetable vendor, scooter, less crowded society, and peaceful locality depicts visuals of the daily life of people. Health workers dressed in a white uniform and a lab coat along with masks, and a register in hand asked the old man holding an umbrella and newspaper in hand for the precaution dose. The man proudly responds “ I am among those who had already taken both doses of vaccine,” and now the Coronavirus is almost gone, what’s the use of such a vaccine. The health worker again asked why are you taking an umbrella in this calm weather. The man said as a precaution against rainy weather. At last, the health worker explained to him, Precaution dose is also like your umbrella to be safe from the sudden advent of Corona. The video comprises linkage shots but at the end Fig 1.(c) corona safety measure was displayed.

### Colour

The lighting is low and soft, signifying the morning. The whole theme of the video is monochromatic black and white. When attempting to call attention to a particular object or create a visual "pop," using the visual balance of black and white with an accent colour results in powerful messaging. Color in black and white accomplishes that. They nudge the reader in the direction they want them to go by using a different colour to draw attention to specific areas of the page (Creative, 2015).

### Represented Participants

In the above advert, the represented participant shows the daily routine life, with no hazards and threats. This highlights the relaxed life after the passage of CoronaVirus. Even the dialogic conversation of the old man shows how lightly he is taking Coronavirus, this shows the state of mind of the majority of Indians. Nevertheless, the Health worker explained to the old man that a precautionary dose is to be prepared against the sudden advent of Corona. Fig 1(c) clearly reflects that the old man got convinced by the Health worker to get his Precautionary dose taken. They both are wearing masks, showing the danger of coronavirus is still around, so better to be cautious.

## Textual Components

The video comprises no textual elements. It has only dialogic conversation. The last video ends with an information note on taking care from CoronaVirus with all the safety measures being systematically displayed.

## Multimodal Implications

The semiotic elements of the advert consist of signifier Old Man, Morning Scene, mask, white dress signifying that subtle and calm environment as COVID-19 is not on peak but as mask and health worker denote COVID-19 is not completely gone precaution is necessary. The video exhibits the current situation of the majority of Indians, who were in the same state of mind, that Coronavirus is almost gone. This video is to remind that Coronavirus is around, so whoever has completed their duration from both doses of vaccine can get their dose.

### Video: 2 “आप सभी योग दिवस का हिस्सा बनें और योग को अपनी दिनचर्या में शामिल करें”



Fig 2.(a) Fig 2.(b)



Fig 2.(c) Fig 2.(d)

## Composition

Video Advertising of Duration 0:59 Seconds consists of many different frames creating creative juxtaposition (Villarejo, 2021). The Yoga day awareness advertisement started with a shot of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and goes with a voice-over and gives a blend of musical appeal and ended with notable information on Yoga Day. The Government of India logo 'Ministry of Ayush and Yoga for Humanity logos together connotatively signify a biopolitical discourse (Gill & Lennon, 2022). The placement of both logos at the top of the image denotes ideological supremacy that they feel they possess over the other elements (i.e., the desired ideology is govern-health) (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2002). This advertisement also comprises Renowned faces like Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and eminent singers like Kailash Kher, Sonu Nigam, Shankar Mahadevan, K.S Chitra, Daler Mehndi, and Shantanu Mukherjee (Shaan). The exercises are demonstrated in the video by people of all ages, including children, in locations including Australia's Opera House to a tiny camp in India. PM Modi is also shown around young people who are devotedly and persistently doing yoga at the song's conclusion (Post, 2022).



## Colour

The video started with the Prime Minister on a blue background. Blue is rated as the best color for promoting calm (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2002). Early 20th-century color psychologists (Stefanescu-Goanga, 1912) claimed that the color blue was "calming, depressing, tranquil, quiet, somber, nostalgic". Further video contains natural scenery, thus all the natural color. The eminent singers Fig 2. (d) were only depicted in Black and White.

## Perspective and Angles

The Prime Minister's frontal angle brings the viewer "into" the scene, the frontal viewpoint denotes a sense of involvement (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2002). Different angles of photography like High- angle, Low- Angle, Close-Up, and Long shots.

## Textual Components

The video comprises very few textual components in the English Language. It is started with a voice-over, where Narendra Modi is defining the importance of Yoga. Thus further videos contain the Guardian Ring Live coverage from 75 countries. The video also contains the Yoga day theme of 2022: Yoga for Humanity. At last, it ended with a notice to Join Mass Yoga Demonstration led by Hon'ble PM at Mysore.

## Multimodal Implications

The video depicts how yoga could be useful in combating the disease the song urges. Also, the shots from different countries were beautifully depicted uniting the world through Yoga. The shot captures different yoga postures Fig 2.(b) and Fig 2.(c) giving the feel of flexibility and relaxation. The different scenic beauty of the nation adds calmness and smoothness in people's minds through the perspective of yoga. The morning scenes and sunshine add an energetic feel in the audience's mind.

## Video 3: India's Vaccination Drive steers the country ahead on the path of normalcy



Fig 3. (a) Fig 3. (b)



Fig 3.(c) Fig 3.(d)

## Composition

The above advertisement, duration 1:04 min is based on the successful drive of Covid-19 Vaccine. The video starts with musical tone and visuals of COVID-19 warriors who have successfully helped in

combating COVID-19. The video further shows how people are enjoying their travel journey after taking both the doses of COVID-19 vaccine and sharing this feeling with neighbours. During the dialogic conversation it also highlights that they were very proud of their nation for effectively and timely delivering the COVID-19 vaccine.

## Color

The video plays with no color effect. It begins with the edited tone sharp saturation highlighting the coronavirus warriors. The text in Fig 3.(b) 'Hume naaj hai hind Par' ' were colored in the Indian Flag tri color. This creates a feel of patriotism, to mould the audience on patriotic belief.

## Textual Components

The video contains only one textual element within the ad 'Hume naaj hai hind Par and further goes with the dialogic conversation between the citizens.

## Multimodal Implications

The video depicts how Indian citizens are proud of their country, with this trust they are able to roam or visit other parts of the country through governmental transport. This creates a feeling in the audience's mind that we are very proud in Fig 3. (c) residing in the nation which takes care of the its citizen

## Video 4: An efforts of National TB Elimination Programme towards End TB by 2025



Fig 4.(a) Fig 4.(b)

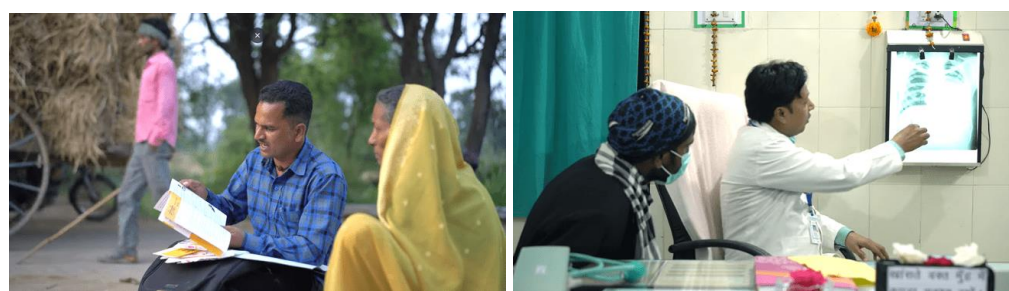


Fig 4.(c) Fig 4.(d)

## Composition

The advert consists of factual information with more graphical Fig 4.(a) oriented unlike other chosen adverts. It states fact and figure how the Indian government is working to combat the TB, now what upgrade has been added in the technology. The advert covers statistical figures along with the government practices that run align with those. Fig 4(c) clearly shows the TB awareness programme is being conducted at local level. Fig 4.(d) highlights how the technology advancement and doctors on a broad level has taken this.



## Color

The color of the above advert consists of natural color, despite the graphical portion being blue dominant. Blue has beneficial effects on both the body and the mind. It promotes slumber and can lead the body to release chemicals that are peaceful and emanate emotions of tranquility because it is the hue of the spirit. Blue is calming by nature, slows down human metabolism, and promotes self-expression and harmony. Additionally, blue suppresses appetite (JENNIFER BOURN, 2011).

## Textual Components

The advert does not contain any heavy text, only with the graphical representation. The voice over words and pictures work together: Words that can be illustrated by the images are spoken as pertinent images appear concurrently. The words provide "glosses" for the photos, some of which do not provide much information on their own, making the images more comprehensible. For instance, this image doesn't "speak for itself." Because words are used to explain the images, the words themselves become more vivid as a result of the coordination with the imagery.

## Multimodal Implications

The video is full of combinations of different modes, it is based on Voice-over, starts with graphical images, different shots of rural and urban areas, doctors visual using an upgraded technique machine, and also shots of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The focus of the video is to announce that the government has aimed to combat TB till 2025, for this continuous health drive is on go. The video doesn't discuss the precaution measures or any successful case study. It carries the awareness drive only.

## Video 5: Committing and re-committing to galvanise efforts towards TB elimination in India by 2025



Fig 5. (a) Fig 5. (b)



Fig 5.(c) Fig 5.(d)

## Composition

The above Video Advert of Duration 2:00 minute comprises many shots and video clips. The video started with a small girl in school uniform and bag playing mouth organ. She suddenly starts coughing. Then musical tone of #TBharedeshjitega was displayed with sunrise morning visual blending with waving

Indian flag. The scene elements sunrise, flag and parallel the tune depicts how the new India will defeat the TB and will make the nation free from TB by 2025. Further the majority of the visual runs around showing proper check-up of that infected girl. The starting of the video by showing a little with mouth organ is to create impact, this could be your daughter whose comfort is getting disturbed with the TB. This highlights that every citizen should not neglect or ignore TB and should go for proper check-up. The video further contains a message in a shot clipping from the different eminent and normal people. This includes actor, actress, Sarpanch, Award winning Athletes, Sub inspector, Pharmacy officer and Doctors. Taking C. S Pierce signified that TB could infect anyone, belonging to any class of society or strata (Fiske, 1990). The background goes with the visual of rural Indian, happy faces of Indian, crowded visuals, doctors doing treatment, nurses were shown.

### **Color**

In the above advert no specific color has been chosen. The visual of daily is depicted thus this doesn't require any specific color. But the highlighting point is the clipping of eminent and normal personality delivering messages were put in grayscale tone. This is to make them distinct from the colorful daily life background. As the gray color lies in between of Black and White. Grey colour represents neutrality and balance in life (Nicole Martins Ferreira, 2019).

### **Textual Components**

The video comprises nearly no textual components. The major highlight was given to “Tb harega desh jeetega” concept. But the video goes with motivating lines where they break in small phrases delivered by speakers and motivating the audiences to together combat TB. The video ends with the logo of the TB awareness drive and then logo of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

### **Multimodal Implications**

This advert stands in total contrast with other government health based ads. This is a combination of a story along with personalities delivering the motivational lines to combat TB. The background comprises cut shots of visuals of the Indian large population, rural India, doctors and nurses. This highlights that Tb could affect any strata of society living, diseases never discriminate among people.

### **Limitations**

The study is limited to the media research in particular the multimodal discourse analysis of the Public service advertisements. No other field of media is taken under study. Advertisements are taken from the official youtube channel of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and their analysis is done according to the Indian social context.

### **Conclusion**

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare is explicitly disseminating all health-related issues to audiences. Every month an advert is uploaded and covers the issues lying in a particular month like Mother's Day, Yoga Day, and many others focusing on various government schemes and policies.

The above analysis shows that various techniques employed in health-based adverts were based on creative composition, and included a combination of both creative juxtaposition and linkage montage using Close-up and wide-angle camera settings, within a good range of time duration i.e., a maximum of three minutes and most were within one minute. It deliberately includes references to culture, customs, religion, and allusion to draw the attention of viewers by showing intertextuality. This also makes content easily understandable. The videos were mostly based on naturalistic color with Blue, Black, and white mostly dominant.

The video clearly hits individuals with a sense of isolation and triggers FOMO (fear of missing out) from the COVID-19 safety measures giving the bandwagon technique. Also, most of the videos use the technique that the same idea or problem is being faced by most people like yourself. The clipping in fig. 3. (c) shows a family enjoying the trip after the long corona time and the clipping fig 5. (a) the coughing schoolgirl gives the sense that it can be anyone's daughter. This all creates the plain folk's techniques. All videos are loaded with catchy words and strong slogans to leave an impact on the audience, #HameinNaazHaiHindPar, #TBharegadeshjitega and other ends with the musical tune. This is in with majorly used branding technique glittering generalities. The above-analyzed advert is based on the bandwagon, plain folks, and glittering generalities techniques of propaganda.

The analysis also shows that videos comprise musical, fear and rational appeal of advertising. It shows the government keeps reminding masses with the safety measures of COVID-19, the benefits of Yoga along the steps has been already taken for good social change. The advertisement also employed known faces like celebrities, actors, actresses as a trend setter.

In nutshell, it has been found that using semiotic tools in government advertising is creative but it lies on a scale of normal, for bringing social change. While every issue is covered by the Indian Health Ministry with a good number of frequency of advertising. But the color and textual components are in limited amounts. The advert is more aligned towards the government perspective, communicating its methodology, policy and aim to be achieved within a stipulated time frame. Videos were composed of Prime Minister Narendra Modi clips resulting in Biopolitical discourse and contentious content. The chosen advert works on the concept of reminding and recalling people about issues in society rather than disseminating about safety and precaution measures persuading people for social change. Table (a) reveals a poor number of likes, comments and views. To increase its awareness the advert should come with a distinct idea and unique style to stand out from others. To work on root level the advert should create its impact in audience mind and emotions, which the above mentioned advert lacks.

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#### **Youtube Link of Videos**

- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AAfGRxlA5J8&ab\\_channel=MinistryofHealth%26FamilyWelfare](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AAfGRxlA5J8&ab_channel=MinistryofHealth%26FamilyWelfare)
- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dR80DpwWE7s&ab\\_channel=MinistryofHealth%26FamilyWelfare](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dR80DpwWE7s&ab_channel=MinistryofHealth%26FamilyWelfare)
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- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iWFsf6sDvak&ab\\_channel=MinistryofHealth%26FamilyWelfare](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iWFsf6sDvak&ab_channel=MinistryofHealth%26FamilyWelfare)