



INNOVATIONS IN MARKETING STRATEGIES OF PRINT MEDIA IN KARNATAKA: A CASE STUDY OF VIJAY KARNATAKA NEWSPAPER

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ABSTRACT

Newspapers have become products now. Like any other consumer, industrial or service products, they have unique features which other products do not have. The newspaper industry in Karnataka is witnessing intense competition from within and outside media industry. Print media readership is declining day by day and this has resulted in decrease in circulation also. Therefore, many Kannada newspapers adopted various strategies to improve their circulation. Vijaya Karnataka, a major Kannada daily which experimented with many approaches to improve its circulation since its inception and they are successful in this. This has tremendous impact on circulation and advertisement revenues. Hence, the present study tries to find the marketing strategies adopted by Vijay Karnataka newspaper to increase its circulation and to study how they came up with these plans. The present study adopted qualitative research method under that case study is used to analyze the data. The collected information is analyzed in a descriptive manner. This study would help other upcoming newspaper organizations to be innovative in their marketing strategies to improve the circulation.

KEYWORDS : Print media, Newspaper, circulation, marketing, strategies

INTRODUCTION:

Newspapers play a critical role in informing general public about news and events. Their views on these would mold the opinions and attitudes of the people. The print media, in particular the newspapers have not only exposed the evils of the society but also have highlighted the positive developments, achievements and experiments. Of late, they are emerging more as product rather than instruments of journalism. They have emerged like any other consumer, industrial or service products.

Newspaper as a product enjoys unique features, which no other product has. It is purchased and read every day by the readers who are the consumers of the product. Only literate sections of the society can consume this product. As it constitutes the habit of the reader's it exercises immense influence on them. It even molds their attitudes, thinking and actions. Because of huge advertisement revenue, the cost of the papers is kept considerably low, even though it cost many folds. They need to be highly dynamic, as they have to cater to the changing needs and expectations of their readers.

Newspaper industry in Karnataka has witnessed various trends over the years. It has become capital intensive requiring crores of rupees of investment on materials and machines. The advertisement revenue has increased to more than 60% of the total revenue. Feature articles, fortnightly features, continuation stories have become a common feature. Layout is playing an important role in appearance and presentation. Modular layout is now being adopted which is based on building block concept. Technological upgradation has become the order of the day. Satellite transmission is used for sending texts and photographs. Satellite editions are becoming popular. The industry is becoming more and more reader's oriented which is in tune with the modern marketing concept. These trends have brought about paradigm shift in the philosophy and practice of the contemporary newspaper industry in Karnataka.

Review Of The Literature

Dr M. K. Sridhar and A. R. Sainath (2003), in their article titled "Innovations in marketing strategies of newspaper industry in India - a case study of times of India group", mentioned that, marketing strategies that the readers of Indian newspapers benefited them by increasing their circulation and innovations in marketing strategies, this augurs profitability. These strategies have also become well for marketing in general

and newspaper very convenient to handle competitors.

Al Bara et al. (2019), in the article 'The effectiveness of advertising marketing in print media during the Covid 19 Pandemic in the Mandailing Natal region', opined that, the impact of Covid-19 had an impact on advertising promotion as a support for the company's economy. Many activities and promotions from agencies and companies have been canceled, which have the effect of disseminating information to the media in the form of advertisements in the print media at Mandailing Natal, such as Waspada and Mohganews. The Covid-19 pandemic since a year ago has had an impact on the alert column of advertisements in the daily print media. When the pandemic started there was an appeal to the public and institutions for social distancing. The decline in revenue from advertising is also due to the development of a digital media. Many advertisers today prefer to sort influencers on social media rather than conventional mainstream media institutions. The industry is willing to pay these influencers even more than the advertising rates in the mainstream media.

Shailaja, K & Nidhi, S. (2015), in the article 'Impact of marketing strategy on newspaper firms in India: Route to survival in the era of digitization' observed that, the Indian story of newspaper industry is different with 25 percent penetration of newspapers, considering a billion plus population. Moreover, the stiff competition among the newspaper firms infuses innovation, research and development. The Indian newspaper industry, unlike its counterparts in most part of the world, has not reached saturation yet and is expected to grow and reach its pinnacle in next fifty years. Though the threat of internet and the fear of losing market to online consumption of news are real, the news in print is still undisputed ruler of the market, primarily due to accessibility and familiarity.

Dr. Aanchal Sehgal, (2018), in the research paper 'Communication and Marketing Strategies of the Leading Indian Newspapers' mentioned that, newspaper in a very short span of time has become a business where it has transformed the noble profession to a lowest paid news In the race for circulation primacy the newspapers leave no stone unturned. The newspaper today is trying its hand at everything. By the increase in number of newspapers the competition is on the top. Through their need gratifying columns of all kinds, they try to belong to the people. Starting

from organizing events to please the audience, encouraging public participation in the content of the newspaper, providing gifts and getting new schemes to increase circulation and in the process, trying to make to running campaigns they try greater profits than only increasing circulation which continues to be their primary aim. The main focus is to be the part of everyday life of the readers and increase the circulation by giving the news of interest according to the target audience.

According to SFN Home Published Reports (2003) the newspaper industry is highly competitive, and threats are changing all the time. They are uniquely dependent on interrelated revenue streams provided by sales and advertising.

In a study report submitted by Abu Nasim M. (2014), argued that, in case of a newspaper, a good marketing strategy is required. In the competitive world of the Journalism, a daily that can only adjust with the changing demand of the newspaper readers and can attain comparative advantage will be able to thrive. For successful marketing strategy is not alone sufficient. It would be in effective unless market plan can be properly implemented. Market research can create benchmarks and helps to ascertain increase of circulation of the daily.

The changes in the news industry are strongly related to a profound and paradigmatic shift in the web seen in recent years: from a linear structure of one-to-many content production, distribution and consumption to a participatory structure based on open, inclusive, collaborative and customizable applications that allow users to collectively create, share, evaluate and use digital content.

Significance Of The Study

The present research titled the innovations in marketing strategies of print media in Karnataka: a case study of Vijay Karnataka newspaper, had selected due to Vijay Karnataka is number-1 Kannada daily. It has 25.88 lakhs readers (Indian Readership survey-2021). In achieving this much of readers the newspaper has brought many innovation strategies. The researcher will be analyzing them and this study will help other newspaper organizations to be innovative in their marketing strategies to improve the circulation.

Objectives

The present study tries to investigate the new marketing strategies of in Kannada daily Vijay Karnataka as a general objective.

The specific objectives are,

1. To find the marketing strategies adopted by Vijay Karnataka to increase circulation
2. To study how these marketing strategies are different from other newspapers
3. To know the result of these marketing strategies

Methodology

The present study used qualitative research approach. A case study was employed to analyze the primary and secondary data through interview and observation. In the first stage researcher observed the newspaper's marketing strategies and in the second stage visited the newspaper organization, interviewed CEO and editor to get the answers to the objectives. The collected information was analyzed in descriptive manner.

Research Findings

Innovations In Marketing Strategies Of Vijaya Karnataka Newspaper

Vijay Karnataka is a popular Kannada daily newspaper, started in Bangalore city in the year 1999 by Shri. Vijaya

Sankeshwar. He is a Chairman of Vijayand Road Lines and Anand Sankeshwar printers & publishers. In the beginning it has started with one edition and now it is having total 10 editions across Karnataka. It's second edition started in Hubli, later in Gulbarga, Mangalore, Shimoga, Mysore, Gangavati, Bagalkot, Chitradurga and Hassan. The readership grown exponentially which led to increase in its circulation. As per ABC (Audit Bureau Circulation) Certificate, Vijay Karnataka is the no.1 Kannada daily. More than 500 employees are working in different departments across the state. Vijay Karnataka has new and advanced printing and paper cutting machines in all its 10 editions.

With the intensification of competition within and outside the industry, the newspaper started designing and implementing various marketing strategies with regard to product, price, distribution, segments and positioning. As marketing itself was of recent origin with newspaper industry in Karnataka, most of its marketing strategies were either pioneers or innovations.

Marketing Strategies of Vijay Karnataka

Vijay Karnataka has adopted the many marketing strategies to promote its. It entered in to market with strong competition. Therefore, it was necessary for Vijay Karnataka to employ some attracting marketing tactics.

High Commission to Agents

Vijay Karnataka is paying more commission to their agents compared to other Kannada newspapers. The role of agents in the circulation of newspaper is very important. Vijay Karnataka is giving higher rate of commission and in result a greater number of agents are attracted toward Vijay Karnataka newspaper. People who started their agency with 10 to 15 copies are now running their agency with more than thousand copies.

Attractive Supplements

When Vijay Karnataka entered the market, it was publishing separate supplement along with main newspaper. This promotional tool helped in attracting large number of readers. By this reader are benefited as they were getting newspaper along with separate supplement for Rs.200 per year. But the actual production cost of the newspaper was around Rs.8 to 10 per copy along with separate booklet.

Low Price

The price of Vijay Karnataka newspaper is very low compared to other Kannada newspapers. In the beginning its cost was only Rs.2. Later the price reduced to 50 paise per copy, but due to the cost of production, they further raised its price to Rs. 1. Actually this is the newspaper which started price war in the state of Karnataka. The current price is Rs.5.00, only on Friday and Sunday it is Rs.6.

Transportation Facility to Reach Rural Karnataka

Vijay Karnataka is providing the transportation facility to agents. For easy circulation of newspaper to every nook and corner of the state the copies are sent to agent's offices which are there in rural areas. This strategy is attracting a greater number of agents. Whereas other newspapers are reaching only taluka or town centers and rural agent should come and collect from these places.

Space to Readers on Special Occasions

Newspaper is encouraging its readers to send selfie photographs of celebration during festivals such as Krishna janmashtami, Deepavali, Ganesh Chaturthi and other celebrations. Publishing these kinds of photograph make readers satisfied and to build commitment with the newspaper.

Readers Op-ed Page

Usually, newspapers carry the experts' articles and also national issues in op-ed pages. But Vijaya Karnataka allows its readers opinions, analytical articles on op-ed page. This is kind of marketing strategy to make readers feel happy and increase its circulation.

General Knowledge-Oriented Information

Every day in each page Vijay Karnataka is giving information which is helpful for the readers to increase their mental ability. A supplement titled LavlaVK (Joy) is very popular among youth and women. It covers different issues every day. Monday is dedicated to women's related issues like health, achievements, entrepreneurship, motivational stories of achievers, personality development, gender equity, cooking, home making etc.

Tuesday is for health improvement for all. Awareness about various diseases and how to be healthy are some of the common topics. Wednesday is dedicated to agriculture related stories and news. It helps the farmers with information about new methods and technologies in the agriculture. Thursday is for employment related news and information which helps educated unemployed. Friday LavlaVK covers film industry related news such as film promotion, celebrity interviews, life style. Saturday is dedicated to children which includes children's stories, games and drawing etc. Sunday supplement covers literature and culture such as book reviews, literary articles, poems, stories etc.

CONCLUSION

The marketing strategies followed by Vijaya Karnataka increased their circulation and profit. These strategies have also helped them to handle competitive situation among Kannada dailies. These strategies were more innovative and the result is Vijay Karnataka reached number one position in short time as readers positively responded to their strategies. Even though its circulation is down after the establishment of some other newspapers still it is having major share in Kannada dailies' circulation in Karnataka.

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