

“A Critical Study & Review of Marathi News Papers in Pune Region”

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Abstract

Pune is known as a education hub in the country. In present scenario if we say Pune is now Job hub, knowledge hub it will be accepted by every one of us. The newspaper market in Pune region has a little reason to rejoice. The Maharashtra city, now an education hub. Many people are coming to Pune every year to settle in their career, as this is a growing city in all terms. There is a big IT hub in Pune, number of small scale and large scale manufacturing units are in MIDC area. The public coming from various regions of the country like to read news from their city as well as everyone wish to understand the local news also to know the city properly, hence, newspapers help these readers to get all required information. In Pune nearly 10 Marathi newspapers are available for readers. In the current study detail review of three Marathi Newspapers in Pune region is done. Descriptive research method will be used to study the newspaper moves.

KEYWORDS: Marathi newspapers & competition.

I) Introduction

Today's world is known as Digital world, where everyone is using technology to fulfill their even a small need. Markets have become technological oriented as now households can buy their grocery sitting at home by ordering online, they can shop furniture, electronic items, daily need items, property, gold, etc online. Due to improved internet services and use of mobile phones people find everything on their figure tip. Just like all other needs, people now can read newspapers also on their PC and mobile too.

Digitalisation, use of internet and increased number of mobile users have created lot of competition in the media industry. Now newspaper publishers try hard to understand their readers and their expectations from newspaper.

The newspaper market in Pune region has a little reason to rejoice. The Maharashtra city, now an education hub. Many people are coming to Pune every year to settle in their career, as this is a growing city in all terms. There is a big IT hub in Pune, number of small scale and large scale manufacturing units are in MIDC area. The public coming from various regions of the country like to read news from their city as well as everyone wish to understand the local news also to know the city properly, hence, newspapers help these readers to get all required information.

In Pune nearly 10 Marathi newspapers are available for readers namely, Lokmat, Sakal, Pudhari, Maharashtra times, Diya Marathi, Aikya, Samana, & Loksatta etc. These

newspapers cover almost all Marathi reader segment in the market. Everyone has different segment to focus. There has been a marginal growth in its readership numbers. Pune now has Average Issue readership of 42,11,000. In quarter one of IRS 2010 Pune had AIR of 41,66,000. But in the year 2014 the major dailies like Daily SakalMarathi has got readership of 38,49,000, Pudhari has readership of 3,27,000 and Lokmat has readership of 58,87,000 across Maharashtra. (source <http://www.bestmediainfo.com>)

Number of readers is increased and In the present study researcher is discussing about various aspects of three major Marathi dailies in Pune city namely Sakal Papers, Lokmat Papers and Pudhari Papers. The review is done about no. of pages allotted to various types of news coverage, type of paper used to print the newspaper, no. of supplements offered for readers etc. It is observed that there is a good amount of competition among these three newspapers. It is found that when Sakal Papers is introducing a special feature on Property and Furniture remaining two are starting a dedicated column for the same, when one starts with a Health booklet another follows the same. It is nothing but to retain the audience and not lose position in the minds of readers. There is always a competition among these three with their sales figures too. Whenever ABC (Audit Bureau of Circulation) figures are declared these newspapers make a publicity of their sales figures and prove their position in the market.

Product differentiation in Newspaper market is very interesting activity, as every newspaper tries to give something different for particular segment of the market and they create competition in the market. Hence, in the current study detail review of three Marathi Newspapers in Pune region is done. Descriptive research method will be used to study the newspaper moves.

There are good no. of newspapers in Pune region, but for this study following newspapers are taken into consideration:

- 1) Sakaal Papers, Marathi language
- 2) Lokmat Papers, Marathi language &
- 3) Pudhari Papers, Marathi language

II) Objective of the study:

- 1) To study product offerings of newspapers in Pune region.
- 2) To study the product features of newspapers in Pune region
- 3) To study the USP of each Newspaper in Pune region.

III) Limitation of the study:

- 1) To compare Product features of newspapers selected features like No. of minimum and maximum pages, no. of color pages, paper quality, size of the paper, contents etc. are taken for this study.
- 2) The study is done on current trend of these newspapers where in current features, booklets, supplements are taken into account.

IV) RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1. Research Approach

Qualitative approach has been used for this research Paper.

2. Research Design

Exploratory type of research design has been used for the study.

Exploratory: for collecting the secondary as well as primary data and this will be useful for literature review

3. Data collection:

a) **Primary Data: (Qualitative research)** a structured open ended questionnaire is prepared to discuss with Sub Editors and Circulation managers of Newspapers.

b) **Secondary Data:** Sources of secondary data are Websites of Newspapers, Audit Bureau of Circulation figures, etc.

V) Company Profile:

1) Sakal Papers Ltd.:

Marathi-language daily newspaper ranks among the top 10 language dailies of India. Sakal Media Group has its headquarters in Pune, Maharashtra, India. Dr. NanasahebParulekar was the founder of Sakal.

The group's has other operations includes regional newspapers, magazines and Internet publishing, it is employing over 3000 people. Sakal holds one of the largest Marathi websites, eSakal, which reaches to 300,000 Internet users.

History: Sakal a classic newspaper of the pre-independence nationalist period. Founder, Dr. N.P. alias NanasahebParulekar was influenced by American newspapers during his stay at Columbia University. He introduce Sakal (morning) to spread Mahatma Gandhi's movement for independence, & show the path to sincere daily journalism in Marathi. Though it was started as a part of the nationalist cause, after Indian independence, Sakal newspaper now has established itself as a successful business by reporting on every day concerns, not only for Pune but also for the rural neighborhoods. Under NanasahebParulekar, the paper maintained strict political neutrality which is still continued by present board of directors and trustees.

When Dr. Parulekar died in 1973, he left the paper with many good practices and rich traditions. After almost ten years to death of Dr.Parulekar, political leader SharadPawar took over Sakal in 1985 using unethical business practices. Then Pawar family revolved the paper into a public limited company in 1989, and Mr. Pratap G. Pawar (younger brother of SharadPawar) became Managing Director.

Current status of the group is Mr. [Abhijit Pawar](#) is the Managing Director of the group. Under his leadership, group has launched the first and only agriculture daily, **Agrowon Sakal** is "first media company to organize events & exhibitions as well as the first media group to implement 6-sigma processes across the company.

Tagline - Present tagline of Daily Sakal is 'UdayBhavishyapatracha' (उदयभविष्यपत्राचा).

Features – Sakal has number of weekly supplements for the targeted sectors.

- 1) Saptrang (सप्तर्ग) for family (Sunday),
- 2) Jobz for employment (Tuesday),
- 3) Pratibimb for hyper-local content (Thursday),
- 4) Family Doctor for holistic and [ayurvedic](#) approach to health (Friday) and
- 5) Balmitra (बालमित्र) for children (Saturday).
- 6) Today: Sakal also has separate supplement called "Today" for different regions like for Pune City, Pune District and Pimpri-Chinchwad area. Which covers all local news for the people staying in that area.

It reaches its target reader by providing relevant and full of knowledge contents. Hence, sakal is one of the reliable and most liked newspaper in Pune region.

Events: Events targeting Education, Agriculture, Travel-Tourism, and Business etc. are arranged by Sakal group to target audience. Events like:

1. 'EDUCON' its international event for Vice Chancellors from across the India, to present their vision about Indian higher education.
2. Property Mahayatra,
3. Education Mahayatra,
4. Maharashtra Premier League: Cricket tournaments for media across Maharashtra.
5. Pune Shopping Festivals, Family Health, Sakal Shopping Festivals, SakalEdugain, SakalInvestneet, SakalVastu, SakalShagun etc. are other some of the other events. The Group started clubs for the targeted audience events, Madhurangan (मधुरांगण) for women, Young Buzz and Sakal NIE (Newspaper In Education), Family Doctor Club are a few to mention.

Sakal is using **multimedia platform to reach upto its readers** :

- Mobile app - Sakal news was made available on smart mobiles through native apps.
- eSakal.com—Website, www.eSakal.com designed to create interactivity. It has, e-paper facility for various News-updates, interactive features, citizen journalism, dialogue with the users etc.
- SMS - Sakal initiated Push SMS service; Sakal Live; for its registered users.54321 SMS short-code to serve News alerts and engagement activities with its readers.

- Sakal group has its English daily named “ Sakal Times”, it is targeted to all English reading customers.
- Saam TV - Sakal entered into Television business in year 2008, With a Marathi GEC (General Entertainment Channel), Saam TV.

Unique selling proposition as per Sakal media group is its “Credibility”, Its readers believe in its journalism and it is considered as one of the reputed source of news in Maharashtra.

2) Lokmat Papers Pvt. Ltd

Is a [Marathi language](#) newspaper published from Mumbai, and several other cities in Maharashtra state. Founded in 1971 by Jawaharlal Darda. Its registered and corporate offices are located in Mumbai, Maharashtra (India) and its main administrative center is located at Lokmat Building, Lokmat Square, Nagpur (India). Lokmat has 11 Marathi editions in Maharashtra.

Lokmat covers news on Local, Maharashtra, National, International, Agriculture, Sports in every day issue in all editions across Maharashtra. Besides the above, Lokmat also publishes various supplements and articles for readers on every day they are like:

1. Lokmat Appointments (every Wednesday and Saturday for Mumbai)
2. Health and Fitness
3. Travel and Tourism News
4. Sakhi- focused on wmen
5. Manthan- literature for all age group of readers
6. Almanac and Horoscope
7. Culture and Society
8. Business and Finance
9. Lokmat Shopping
10. Lokmat Birthday Wishes are few to name.

Lokmat also has its edition for readers outside Maharashtra. It has editions in Indore (Madhya Pradesh) and Belgaum (Karnataka) & Goa edition (Marathi) primarily for the Marathi-speaking population of north and north-east Goa.

Lokmat in Magazine Sector: Lokmat has its magazine division “Cymbal Media” in Mumbai. It published the first magazine G2- The Global Gujarati (in English) in a large international size. It is circulated in several national and international markets like Delhi, Chennai, Kolkata, Singapore, Sydney, New York and London. The magazine is focused on several niche segments of readers.

Lokmat into Broadcast Sector: Lokmat extended its business to by entering into television through a 50-50 joint venture with IBN18 Broadcast Limited (“ibn18”). The joint venture company, IBN-Lokmat Private Limited (“IBNL”), operates IBN-Lokmat, a 24 x 7 Marathi news.

Lokmat has also developed its **mobile app and provides e-paper** to its readers to cover the segment of a reader who is using internet for getting information. Lokmat papers has its Toll free numbers which is used to get feedback from

customers and also reader can speak about sharing information or getting information from the paper. Hence, it is changing its overall nature of business as per the need of readers. Hence, it is one of the large regional newspaper reaching millions of readers across Maharashtra.

Tagline of Lokmat Papers is “My India My Way” for its newspaper and for its TV channel is it “MaharashtrachaMahachannel”

Unique Selling Proposition of Lokmat it mentions about Largest selling Marathi daily with 1.6 million copies per day.

3) Pudhari Papers Pvt.Ltd.

Pudhari is a Marathi daily published from Maharashtra, Goa and North Karnataka. It is most liked newspaper in Western Maharashtra . It has different 12 editions for major districts of Maharashtra namely Mumbai, Pune, Kolhapur, Sangli, Satara,Nasik, Solapur, Ahmadnagar, Ratnagiri, Sindhudurg, Belgaum & an edition for Goa state.

Dr. GanpatraoGovindraoJadhav is the founder editor of the daily Pudhari. He was journalist by profession started his career in Mumbai by joining weekly TEJ. He also worked for some dailies and some other journals also. He was active participant in the social and religious movements encouraged by SatyashodhakSamaj and activities by Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. BabasahebAmbedkar.

History: Shri. G. G. Jadhav started publishing a weekly in 1937, in Kolhapur. The first issue of the weekly was published on 13 May 1937 and then it was converted into a daily on 1 January 1939 with the name "Pudhari". Since then, the newspaper has continuously supported and canvassed for programs of National interest.

The name was changed to “ Pudhari Publications Pvt. Ltd.” and Shri. P.G. Jadhav became a Managing Partner and Editor of the firm. He has made lot many changes in the business and is initiator for the technological modernization of machines and processes that helped the publication grow rapidly.

Editions:Pudhari has 12 editions viz. Pune, Mumbai, Nasik, Kolhapur, Sangli, Satara, Ahmednagar, Solapur, Ratnagiri,Sindhudurga, Goa and Belagaum.

It has weekly features like:

1. Bahar,
2. Soneri,
3. Vishwasanchar,
4. Ankur,
5. Career,
6. Arogya and
7. Bhoomiputra.
8. It has given a platform to empower women through its women club "Kasturi" and

9. Kids club called "Ankur".

These features are covering various segment of the readers. Pudhari papers is basically from the western Maharashtra so it always provides news contents, articles or features which are best suited to readers from that region.

The Pudhari web edition was launched at www.pudhari.com.

Radio station: Pudhari has launched radio station called “ TOMATO 94.3 FM” and it is most popular radio station in the region broadcasting from 2 centers- Kolhapur and Sangli it covers the entire districts of Kolhapur, Sangli, Satara and prominent parts of Balgaum, Ratnagiri and Sindhudurga.

VI) DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table 1. Details of Newspaper

| Name of Newspaper | Reader Segment | No.of Pages | | Size of Paper | Quality of paper | No.of color pages |
|--------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|------------------|---------------|--|----------------------|
| | | Min. no. of Pages | Max. no.of Pages | | | |
| Sakal Papers Ltd | IRS- SE A/B | 12+8 | 20+2 | 32” | News print imported | All (in Pune) |
| Lokmat Papers Pvt.Ltd | IRS- SE A/B/C/D | 12+8 | 20+2 | 32” | News print Imported on FP Inside Indian News Print | All (in Pune) |
| Pudhari Papers Pvt. Ltd. | IRS- SE B/C/D | 16 | 18 | 32” | Indian News Print, sometimes Imported | All (In Pune) |

If we go through the basic details of these three newspapers they have maintained every important factor similar to each other. Even their target audience is different to maintain the status of the newspaper they try and give similar quality and quantity of pages. Except the quality of news print these three papers have similarity in their product.

Table 2. Details of various features of the newspaper

| | Sakal Papers | | Lokmat Papers | | Pudhari Papers | |
|--------------------|------------------|----------------------|------------------|-----------------|--|--|
| Products | Title of Product | Target Audience | Title of Product | Target Audience | Title of Product | Target Audience |
| Supplements | Saptrang | All age groups | CNX | Youth | Bahar Soneri | All age groups |
| | Jobs | Employment aspirants | Manthan | All age groups | Vishwasanchar | Women Career aspirants All age groups Local news |
| | Pratibimb | All age groups | | | Ankur | |
| | Balmitra | Children | | | Kasturi | |
| | Today | All age groups | | | Career Arogya Bhoomiputra NRI corner | |
| Booklets | Family doctor | All age groups | Sakhi | Women | Not | Not |

All three newspapers have tried to cover every segment of their reader. Sakal has separate supplements for jobs, for kids, for health where as other two dailies Lokmat and Pudhari cover these subjects by offering separate page in their main issue. Hence, they are trying to provide almost everything their readers expect from them.

Table 3. Newspaper wise Important News Contents

| News Content | No. of Pages Allotted | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|----------|----------|
| | Sakal | Lokmat | Pudhari |
| Local News | 8 | 8 | 8 |
| National News | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| International News | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| Sports News | 2 | 2 | 1 |

All three newspapers give equal space for local news contents, where assakal is focussed more on providing space to national, international and sports news. Since its readers are from Category A& B they expect more information about happenings around the world. Lokmat and Pudhari are papers for Mass, hence, they try and provide every small news from the region their readers come from. Their readers are more interested in knowing about happening in their own region.

Table 4. Various offerings of the newspapers

| Offerings | Sakal | Lokmat | Pudhari |
|-------------------------------|------------------|--|----------------------|
| Subscription offerings | No schemes | Scheme for readers Rs.199+ 840 two years paper and gift of Rs.1000 | Not available |
| No. Free Booklets | 1 | 1 | No |
| Mobile App | Available | Available | No |
| Toll Free no. | Available | Available | No |

Sakal and Pudhari have no special discount schemes or offerings for their readers, where as Lokmat is providing scheme for readers. It is to keep that particular segment of reader attached to their product.

VII) CONCLUSION

- 1) There is phenomenal increase in the readership of newspapers due to different subscription schemes offered, various contents they provide which are expected by readers through news and articles by these three newspapers.
- 2) Developing customer loyalty & retaining readership is huge challenge for the managers of publishing business. Because, today readers have variety of choices hence, the problem becomes more serious to retain the readership of newspapers.
- 3) It could be easy to change the readership temporarily but to sustain that change in long run is very difficult task. Therefore professionals are busy in publishing industry always create something special & innovative to impress upon the readers.
- 4) Now the experts in publishing industry have understood that they have to come out with some creative product designed & positioned properly that may help them building brand loyalty & retaining the readers for longer time.
- 5) All the Newspaper brands are concentrating on developing their image by focusing on the changing needs of customers. They continuously address the needs of consumer to strengthen their loyalty & widen readership base.
- 6) Marathi language readership is very huge, hence, these three newspapers are keeping themselves updated by providing e-papers, toll free numbers and mobile apps for the readers who are techno savvy, and their number is rapidly increasing.
- 7) These Marathi dailies have come out of the traditional method of running newspaper industry and have adopted lot of technologically advanced methods to reach the readers like they have started doing all printing activities through computers which were done by individuals in early days, which has saved their printing time and paper reaches the market in time.

- 8) Even the reader segment of these newspapers vary they provide almost similar type of contents for readers, only thing differs is language quality and paper quality of the paper.

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