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PR-e-FACE: From the desk of Chief Editor **“Corporates and Regional media to build Nation jointly“**

A recent survey conducted exclusively for this ezine, revealed a large gap between Corporates and Regional language media. Corporates and Regional language media perceive that 'corporate information' is irrelevant to each other's audience.



In the past decade, there has been tremendous growth in the language media in terms of circulation and readership. It is estimated that Indian regional language media is larger by five times in circulation and ten times in readership than English media. Due to technological growth, even the rural and semi urban people are able to show interest in latest economic developments.

Unfortunately, majority of the Indian language media has not understood their strength and reorient themselves to the changing needs and expectations of the public. They are yet to come out of their 'traditional' thinking. However, it is quite heartening that some of the leading

Media houses have already taken some proactive steps.

On the other side, Corporate Houses, including MNCs have not realised that they are in 'public domain' and their accountability to the entire society. Their information is more relevant to the language speaking public also. The Corporates and MNCs, who have ignored the language media in the normal time, face difficulties, at the time of crisis, when the language media takes up the lead.

If the Corporates think that "suit clad Manager" alone can build the company, they are mistaken. They should keep in mind that an 'uneducated dhoti clad villager' can demolish the company overnight.

A time has come that Corporates and Regional language media should understand each other's strength and role in the development of the Nation.

K. Srinivasan

prpoint@gmail.com

PR-e-CISE – Inside this ezine

- An exclusive interview with Mr B Srinivasan, Mg. Director of Vikatan group of publications.
- Exclusive interview with Mr V Balasubramanian, Asst. Resident Editor of Economic Times.
- Expert views from Mr T P Sridharan and Mr Venkatnarayana, eminent language journalists
- Survey on Regional Media - report
- PR events

PR-eXCLUSIVE

'Reader connect' is the biggest advantage of Regional media"



Listen to the full interview through *podcast* at

<http://www.primepointfoundation.org/presense1106.htm>

Mr B Srinivasan, Managing Director of Vikatan group of publications, in an exclusive interview with K. Srinivasan



of PR-e-Sense, explains the present growing trends of Regional language media and the need for Corporates and language media to understand each other.

Vikatan group is the largest publisher of Tamil magazines, Tamil books and Tamil TV serials. They have a circulation of more than one million with readership exceeding 10 million. The full interview may be listened through podcast (link given above). Excerpts form his interview:

- Regional media is bigger than the English media in terms of circulation by 5 times in circulation and 10 times in readership. While English media is growing in single digit, Regional language media grows in double digit.
- The readers of language media see it as an 'extension of knowledge base'. Regional media reaches them in an effective manner, in a way, they can understand. Also there is an effective communication between the readers and the language media.
- Corporates view the language media as low priced, not reaching effectively the audience, and poor quality in printing and paper when compared to English media. In the last one decade, Regional media has matured effectively and match with English media in quality of printing, paper and layout. Corporates are yet to warm up to this idea. They are having the feeling that Regional media is still in 'stone ages'.
- Regional media is set to grow at a faster rate. They are insulated

against any competition. It is difficult for the foreign media to set up language media.

- Regional language media is weak in presenting its case to Advertising Agencies and to the Corporates.
- Presently, Regional media is capable of carrying the corporate messages more effectively with quality reporting, than English media, when compared to its position 15 years back.
- While English media is important, Corporates cannot ignore language media, because of its growth.
- 'Reader connect' is the biggest single advantage for the language media.
- Regional language media has not understood the power of 'branding' with Corporates. This is the biggest weakness.
- It is not true that Regional media is more skewed to politics and cinema. Now they have understood the need of the readers.
- Journalists, per-se, are skilled in language. They need to be 're-skilled' in niche areas like share market, economy, etc. Regional media has started re-skilling their manpower.
- Corporates should understand the power of Regional media. It is more closer to 'hearts and minds' of the people, than English media.
- In the Corporate set up, the top Managers understanding only English should not be a handicap for them to understand the power of language media. They should quip themselves with better management techniques, to understand the pulse of the people.

Mr B Srinivasan can be reached at editor@vikatan.com

PR-eXCLUSIVE

‘Develop continuous relationship with regional media’



Listen to the full interview through *podcast* at

<http://www.primepointfoundation.org/presense11106.htm>

Mr V Balasubramanian, (Balu) Asst. Resident Editor, The Economic Times at Chennai has more than 26 years of experience in financial journalism. He has served Commerce Publication and Financial Express. For the past 16 years, he has been with ET.



Economic Times, the largest business daily of India has partnered with Daily Thanthi, one of the leading Tamil dailies for content sharing. In an exclusive podcast interview with K. Srinivasan, of *PR-e-Sense*, Mr Balu explains the strength of Regional language media. The full interview may be listened in the podcast link given above. Excerpts from his interview:

- The experience of partnership between two giants Daily Thanthi and Economic Times has been fascinating and enriching. For the first time, a business paper has lent its Masthead to another paper. Many readers have access to business information.
- Regional media is very powerful. English readership is growing fast, but need to penetrate a lot. The Regional media's penetration level is high. They dominate in all languages the readership and advertisement revenue. They play a major role.
- Corporates and Regional media have not understood each other. Indian Corporates have rediscovered their strength. Indian companies are acquiring foreign companies. India will become economic super power by 2020.
- Corporates should understand the strength of language media and

disseminate the information through regional media in the local language.

- At the same time, Regional media also should give up their negative perception about the Corporates. As Dr Kalam says, Indian media should give up its negativism. They should write success stories on business and economic front. . This will encourage Corporates and give importance to Regional media.

- I see a great change in advertisement profile of Regional media. MNCs also should understand the role of Regional media.

- At the time of crisis, regional media plays a major role. Environment concerns, investor issues, when they are blown out of proportion, Corporates suddenly find a big gap between them and the regional media. They should develop a continuous relationship with the local media.

- Regional media has a bright future. Big English newspaper chains will ride on the strength and network of the regional media. There is going to be a convergence between English and regional language media in the coming years.

- Regional media should give equal importance to the happenings in business and economic front, as they give for politics and crime. The reporters can be reoriented for writing business stories. A good political journalist can become a good economic journalist. It is India's time. Indian economy is booming in all sectors. We are competing with giants like China. Regional media should bring out more of success stories. Good economics has come to drive good politics.

Mr Balu may be reached at

viswanathan.balasubramanian@timesgroup.com

PR –e- STIGE – Expert views

Mr T P Sridharan, Business Editor, Daily Thanthi (ET Pags) namadhu2001@yahoo.co.in
“Corporates have lot of information that can interest language media readers”



During 1989-90, when there was stock market boom in India, language papers started writing about the stock market to help the small investors.

Between 1990 -03, Capital Market brought out editions in five languages and Dalal Street in two languages. Even after the stock market scam, the interest amongst the investors got sustained till 1996.

Between 1996 and 2002, when the NBFCs were growing, the financial

journalists took up the ‘watch dog role’ to alert the people. After 2002, market picked up well. There is a stability. National economy is growing. There is a lot of awareness amongst the language readers about the stock market and economy. This is a great opportunity for the language media to provide economic information.

We get a lot of responses from the remote places for the ET page. The Corporates have lot of information that is needed for language readers. The journalists should do some homework and pick up such stories that can interest the readers.

Mr Venkatnarayana, Editor, Usha Kirana, (Kannada) Bangalore vn@ushakirana.com
“Awareness level has gone up amongst rural and semi urban people”

There was a time when the Corporates were neglecting the middle and lower class. After the globalization, there is a lot of change in the life style of the public. Socio economic changes have taken place. Even a sweeper has started carrying a mobile. Small remote villages have telephone, computer and internet facilities. Even the educated people have started moving towards villages. Many consumer products have started targeting rural places.

Regional media commands a high credibility amongst the semi urban and rural people. They have started observing the economic growth. Awareness level on economic and stock market issues have gone up considerably.

Some time back, when we published the stock market position of the corresponding day of the earlier

month, by mistake, we received many calls from the remote places pointing out the mistake.

One Mr T M Guruprasad wrote series of articles on ‘share market’ in Kannada.



When he compiled and published these articles in a book and CD form, there was a great demand from the remote places. Thousands of copies were sold in a short time.

Shortly Times of India will be coming out with a Kannada Edition. This edition will have the ‘feel good positive’ stories of all Times of India Editions to cater to the ‘upper mobile Kannadigas’ segment. Regional language media will play a greater role in developing the economy.



A quick survey was conducted by Prime Point Foundation, as part of November 06 issue of Corporate e-zine PR-e-Sense. The survey was to get the perspective of PR/CorpComm professionals and the journalists on the 'Indian Regional Media'. A set of questionnaire was prepared and were uploaded in www.surveymonkey.com site. The information was circulated in the various PR/Media groups, inviting the responses anonymously. 54 respondents across the country participated in this survey.

Conclusions

- Presently, the Regional Media has a larger reach to the grass root level. They also command a credibility amongst the readers. But because of their traditional approach, they are unable to understand importance of Corporates.
- Corporates have not understood the ground reality and do not provide the importance to Regional Media, what it deserves. Corporates are under an 'illusion' that the Regional Media does not reach their relevant audience.
- There is large gap between Corporates and the Regional Media. Both have not understood that jointly they are denying valuable information to the large number of people.

Recommendations

- There is an urgent need for Corporates and Regional Media to understand each others importance in the growing Indian Economy. Due to technological growth, even the semi urban and rural people are having access to new media and try to utilise the new opportunities. Corporates and Regional Media cannot be 'mute spectators' for this ground reality. They donot have any right to deny the information to the large population of our country.
- Corporates, including MNCs operating in India, should first understand that they are in public domain. Lack of local language knowledge amongst the top management, should not drive them to treat the Regional Media as undeserved. Many such companies, who have ignored language media at the normal time, have understood their folly at the time of crisis. Corporates should start treating the Regional Media at par with English Media.
- In spite of enormous strength, Regional media has not understood its role fully. They are still living in the illusions of 'pre liberalisation days'. They need to realise their new role in the liberalised economy and facilitate the economic growth in the Semi urban and rural segments, which constitute around 75 percent of India. Only Regional media can take up this task. Hence, they need to reorient themselves to the 'need of the hour' and start taking up the new roles, like few other successful regional media.

Download the full report from the following link
<http://www.primepointfoundation.org/survey1106.pdf>

PR –eViews – Opinions from the groups

Mr R Gopikrishnan, Chief of Bureau, Mangalam Daily (Malayalam)

rgopikrishnan2002@yahoo.co.in

“Corporates and Regional media cannot ignore each other”

The Corporates ignore regional media because they are seldom aware of the influence of it. Many view Regional



media as backward or even barbaric. That perception must change. They should take into consideration the limitations of the Regional media.

want only the salient features affecting their day to day lives.

Since the traditional division is clear we have to think of novel ways to overcome it. Earlier, the Regional Media was not that strong or wider. But now they run millions of copies and spread through many states and even in Gulf countries. They are no more local or regional, except in their perception, which they have to shed.

The space - page- constraint is there. So is the reader profile. No Corporate house can expect a better coverage of an event unless it caters to the Regional needs. No reader expects a full fledged coverage of a corporate event or even the national Budget from their Regional newspaper. They

Lack of interaction between these two groups is also a major hazard. There should be proper discussion and understanding of the problem. One thing is clear. If both the Corporates and Regional media tend to ignore each other, both will have to pay a lot.

Mr S Gopikrishna Warriar, Media Officer, ICRISAT, Patancheru w.gopikrishna@cgiar.org

“Re-craft your communication to different media”

We design a communication in English, and then get it translated to the local language (since the organization where I work, the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) is headquartered in Patancheru near Hyderabad, the local language is Telugu). However, to be successful the entire communication has to be re-crafted. I know it because the same communication I offer to international journalists, national journalists working in Delhi, regional and national journalists working in Hyderabad, and local journalists working out of 'mofussil' locations. The entire priorities are different. The way the journalists want to understand the news is different.

Since we are working on agri-biotechnology products such as genetically-modified crops, we have been organizing a series of workshops

for journalists on agri-biotechnology. The first and the fifth workshops were held at our headquarters at Patancheru. The clientele was different. The first

one was aimed at journalists who write in English for national, regional and international media. The fifth one was aimed at journalists who write for Telugu and English media. The entire approach was different. While the first group was interested more in the policy and regulatory issues, the second groups consisted of reporters who have covered the GM debate from the ground - from the districts - and their concerns were more on the quality, safety and cost of the technology. Their worldview was different.



PR –eViews – Opinions from the groups

Ms Meena Vaidyanathan, Director, Corp commn. Honeywell, Delhi
meena.vaidyanathan@gmail.com

“Regional media has more power to influence masses”

Use of the term "Vernacular" itself is very demeaning. "Verna" in Italian means "Slave". So by implying that "local languages" are vernacular and English or Hindi as official, one is actually doing disservice. This is nothing special to India. Similar situations are faced by several other countries as well.



Having said that, I have to say that I am a big champion of the English language. I think it's a wonderful way to bind the world and open our avenues of communication with people of various cultures. But local languages have their own place in society, and as we see more federalism creeping into the Indian state, when a Dinamalar or a Sandesh

has more power to influence local masses as opposed to a Hindustan Times or a Times of India, this will only become more and more apparent in the days to come.

Companies that have big stake in Tier 2 cities and Tier 3 towns as well as the rural countryside, proactively reach out today to agencies (Both advertising and PR) who have either upcountry contacts or at least a tie-up with a local outfit. Why else would you see creative agencies flourishing in cities like Aurangabad, Madurai and Indore?

As professionals who have a stake in this business, it's our responsibility to be aware of the changes that are sweeping around us and keep our business leadership and agencies abreast of the changing needs of our customers.



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http://finance.groups.yahoo.com/group/Image_Management/

PRpoint Group - The largest Indian group for PR/CorpComm /academic professionals with 600 plus members. Click here

<http://finance.groups.yahoo.com/group/prpoint/>

New Media Forum Group – A group for Indian journalists with around 350 members. Click here

http://groups.yahoo.com/group/New_Media_Forum/

PR eVENTS – Forthcoming events



PRCI organises a Global Summit on Corporate Communications—**METAMORPHOSIS' as India Emerges.**

A Three day meet at Bangalore at Hotel Chancery Pavilion from 15th to 17th February 2007. Delegate fee.Rs.3500/= for each delegate .PRCI Members... Rs 3000/= only. Contact cccm@karnatakapower.com



The 28th All India Public Relations Conference, is being held at Lucknow on 8-10 December 2006. PRSI/IPRA Members: Rs.3,000; Non-Members: Rs.3,500 Students : Rs.500 Spouse: Rs.1800; Former PR Professionals:

Rs.1500. After 20th November, the registration charges shall go up by Rs.500.

For further information you can contact: Mr. Ratan Mani Lal, Chairman, PRSI Lucknow Chapter. email: prsilucknow@rediffmail.com

PR eVENTS –Events completed

The final year Post Graduate Public Relations students of MOP Vaishnav



College for women, Chennai organised a Cancer Awareness Campaign for a week from 11th September 2006. This was part of their curriculum to give hands-on experience to the students. This year, students concentrated on cancers like cervical cancer, oral cancer, esophageal cancer, lung cancer and leukemia while targeting audiences ranging from corporation schools, private schools, women's colleges and men's colleges in the city.

The students produced documentaries and short films supporting the cause, which were screened to their target audience. The various other PR tools employed included posters, banners, brochures, pamphlets, dangles and badges. Radio City 105.8 FM and MOP FM 91.2 aired the messages on cancer for the whole week and helped the students reach a wider audience.

The students took part in a Cancer Awareness Walk as a fitting finale to their week-long citywide campaign on cancer awareness. Actor Jeeva flagged off the walk and joined the students till the finishing point.

- Reported by Rashmi, one of the students - rashmi.nbr@gmail.com



A group of alumni, highly established in their careers, got together to visit their old university professor. Conversation soon turned into complaints about stress in work and life. Offering his guests coffee, the professor went to the kitchen and returned with a large pot of coffee and an assortment of cups - porcelain, plastic, glass, crystal, some plain looking, some expensive, some exquisite - telling them to help themselves to hot coffee.

When all the students had a cup of coffee in hand, the professor said:

"If you noticed, all the nice looking expensive cups were taken up, leaving behind the plain and cheap ones. While it is but normal for you to want only the best for yourselves, that is the source of your problems and stress.

What all of you really wanted was coffee, not the cup, but you consciously went for the best cups and were eyeing each other's cups.

Moral:

Now if life is coffee, then the jobs, money and position in society are the cups. They are just tools to hold and contain Life, but the quality of Life doesn't change. Some times, by concentrating only on the cup, we fail to enjoy the coffee in it."

So, don't let the cups drive you... enjoy the coffee instead.

(Source : unknown)

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Feedback and contributions to:
ezinepresense@gmail.com

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