

“Brand building through corporate social responsibility”- A case study of SBI Life Insurance

Rajesh K. Yadav^{1,*}, Richa Jain^{2,**}

¹Department of Management, RKDF College of Engineering, Bhopal (M.P.), India

²Barkatullah University, Bhopal (M.P.), India

***E-mail address: drrajeshkyadav@yahoo.com , richa.jain2106@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

CSR activities refer to the initiatives an individual corporate entity undertakes as an extra effort for the welfare of the society, environment as a whole. This initiative is a kind of gratitude shown by the corporates towards the society from whom they earn wholesome profits. This study aims in finding out how significant CSR activities are in building a brand name and making one a good employer and an employee. This study also intends to seek how Indian companies can face the competition by widening the CSR actions of their firms. Interview of Human Resource senior official of SBI Life Insurance was undertaken to complete this study. The findings of the study suggest that there is a significant rise in the business performances of SBI Life Insurance through the conduction of CSR activities. With the boom of international trade and outsourcing business, their CSR conduct is the sine quo non for building a more powerful brand name.

Keywords: Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR); Brand Building; Indian companies; Business performances etc.

1. INTRODUCTION

1. 1. CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility)

It is stated that India has one of the richest traditions of CSR. In the recent years, a lot of efforts have been undertaken to make Indian Entrepreneurs aware of social responsibility as an important segment of their business activity. Though CSR in India is still lacking its widespread recognition but nevertheless if this goal has to be realised then the CSR approach of corporates has to be with their mainstream business. The companies have to set clear objectives, undertake potential investments and measure reporting performances publicly.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) refers to the initiatives an individual corporate entity undertakes as an extra effort for the welfare of the society, environment as a whole. This initiative is a kind of gratitude shown by the corporates towards the society from whom they earn wholesome profits. These CSR activities not only help in building a brand name but also makes one a good employer and an employee. Many kinds of CSR activities are

undertaken by the corporates nowadays, which consists of bringing up a school, houses, old age home, orphanage, building up a hospital at a needy place, free medical camps, vocational courses for the generation of employment, distribution of free computers and other necessities to the underprivileged ones, heavy donations and charity to child care centres etc. Thus it could be regarded that there is no limit for CSR, an individual corporate has to choose a way to give back to society and being thankful to it. Under the Companies Act, 2013, any company having a net worth of rupees 500 crore or more or a turnover of rupees 1,000 crore or more or a net profit of rupees 5 crore or more should mandatorily spend 2 % of their net profits per fiscal on CSR activities.

Today Indian companies are facing competition from multinationals who are offering identical services in their own backyard. One of the way through which Indian companies can face this competition is just by widening the CSR activities of their firms. Thus there is a significant rise in the need of CSR performances in India. The range of culture, language and environment can only be crossed with being proficient and ahead with Corporate Social Responsibilities.

Professionals nowadays need to be proactive and have an open communication among the colleagues in the organisation about CSR. With the boom of international trade and outsourcing business, many professionals have to regularly highlight with the clients within and outside the border about their initiatives towards the welfare of the society.

1. 2. Brand Building

Brand is not a logo, a tagline, or an advertising campaign. It's a multidimensional platform that can be your greatest differentiator and competitive edge, if built correctly. It represents both a rational and emotional connection to your various stakeholders and the consumer that ultimately decides to purchase and engage with you. It's important to understand and deploy the power of a fully developed brand. Think of your brand platform as the foundation that directs and informs every aspect of your business. What most businesses skip is a set of operating principles or values that guide behaviors and decisions. With these foundational elements in place, you should clearly outline the personality traits of the brand to inform the development of your products, identity, and communications. Take each of these elements, and ladder everything back to the purpose and you'll keep everything about your brand cohesive and connected.

Developing and sharing a compelling brand narrative is like crafting and telling a really good story. You want other people to hear it and want to share it. To start, prepare an outline that's informed by your purpose and your business strategy. The characters in your story and how you tell it should be guided by your principles and personality traits.

When it comes to crafting the stories, find a consistent voice for your brand and test it out to make sure it resonates. When it comes to sharing your story, think like an editor of a magazine, and program out the chapters or the various aspects of the story with an editorial calendar to ensure you manage the delivery and the timing in a coordinated manner. They say people don't read today, which I don't agree with, so make sure you've got something interesting, relevant, and memorable to say.

2. OVERVIEW OF SBI LIFE INSURANCE

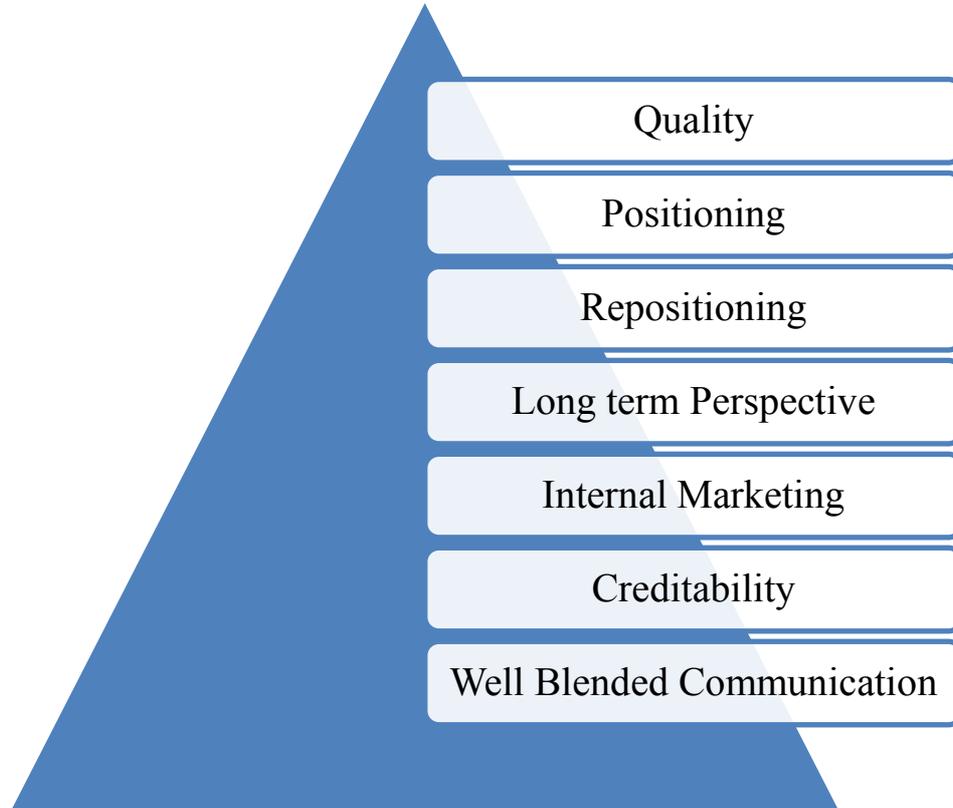
SBI Life Insurance is a joint venture between State Bank of India and BNP Paribas Cardif. SBI owns 74 % of the total capital and BNP Paribas Cardif the remaining 26%. SBI

life Insurance offers varied insurance plans offering from Individual, Group, Health and Online plans. Along with its 5 Associate Banks, State Bank Group has the unrivalled strength of over 18,000 branches across the country, arguably the largest in the world. BNP Paribas Cardif is the life and property & casualty insurance arm of BNP Paribas, one of the strongest banks in the world. BNP Paribas Group, having presence in more than 80 countries ranks highly in Retail Banking, Investment Solutions and Corporate & Investment Banking. BNP Paribas Cardif is one of the world leaders in creditor insurance and its life and non-life insurance units have received an AA rating from Standard & Poor's. SBI Life has a unique multi-distribution model encompassing vibrant Bancassurance, Retail Agency, Alternate Channel and Corporate Solutions distribution channels.

SBI Life extensively leverages the State Bank Group relationship as a platform for cross-selling insurance products along with its numerous banking product packages such as housing loans and personal loans. SBI's access to over 100 million accounts across the country provides a vibrant base for insurance penetration across every region and economic strata in the country, thus ensuring true financial inclusion. Agency Channel, comprising of the most productive force of over 80,000 Insurance Advisors, offers door to door insurance solutions to customers.

3. FACTORS AFFECTING BRAND BUILDING

Several factors affect in building successful brands, as illustrate in the diagram below:



4. IMPACT OF CSR ACTIVITIES OF SBI LIFE INSURANCE ON ITS BRAND BUILDING

SBI Life Insurance attained various CSR activities on a corporate level. These actions aimed to show gratitude towards the society as a whole. SBI Life supported a Leprosy Eradication Trust – Loknayak – A trust founded by Dr. Jagdish Samant, by donating ambulance on the World Leprosy Day i.e. 30th January.

SBI Life also supported mentally challenged children through its CSR partner – Swayamsiddh (CSR Partner for enabling mentally challenged children), by participating in Mumbai Marathon 2013. Writer Chetan Bhagat also became a part of this event.

SBI Life Insurance also launched a CSR initiative - "Gift Drishti" (Restoring vision) in partnership with HelpAge India, a registered national level voluntary body, working for the cause of disadvantaged aged persons on the occasion of World Elder's Day. In this restoring vision is done through Intra Ocular Surgery (IOS). Employees of SBI Life made monetary contributions to the cause. SBI Life donated twice the sum contributed by its employees. Eye sight for thousands of elderly citizens was restored across the rural parts of the country.

SBI Life also undertook the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative, by driving the cause to make children read and write. The campaign, "Read India Pledge" sensitized general public towards the cause and urged them to pledge & support the cause monetarily or by devoting time. The campaign was partnered by Pratham, one of the leading child-cause related NGOs and Radio Mirchi, a leading radio station.

The above mentioned CSR initiatives were undertaken at a corporate level. Though locally at every branch level, the CSR initiatives differ are undertaken specially wherever the need is sensitized. Senior Officials of SBI Life Insurance states that the CSR activities influence the Brand of the company highly at the local level and national level.

- 1) The company utilizes various media communications like radio, newspapers, and journals to create awareness about the CSR activities undertaken by the company on a local level.
- 2) It is true that CSR is a way to give back to the society and also with its promotion; the company gets a remembrance in the minds of the prospective customers.

5. CONCLUSION

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) undertaken dedicatedly will surely lead to Brand Building in a long run and positive manner. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is a sine quo non for today's enterprises to strengthen their rapport with the society at large. And it is the need of an hour. It is obvious that any firm who is excessively engaged in CSR activities gets the maximum popularity by getting its brand name strengthens in comparison to its competitors in the market.

The society paramount the situation of giving it back to them as showing their gratitude for the profits and benefits they have aimed from the society. This the basic rationale or logic conducting this study was to find out how CSR actions supports in building a brand name for the firm and increasing their profits as a whole. It is extremely important for a company to pave its wings towards CSR. As it not only gives a chance to show gratitude towards the society but also strengthens the bond of the company and its prospective customers. To summarize it would be logical to state that brand building gets a boost when it gets

amalgamated with Corporate Social Responsibility. The more the gratitude the more will be the Brand building.

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