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THE SUCCESS STORY OF AMUL: BENCHMARK FOR CRISES MANAGEMENT DURING THE COVID 19

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ABSTRACT

The Government of India announced a complete nationwide lockdown on the 25th March, 2020. This was something that the country was totally unprepared for. Several sectors got severely impacted due to this costing more than 10 lakh crores to the Indian economy. On one hand, millions of Indians lost their jobs struggling for their survival and on the other hand the economy was moving to a very bad shape. One such industry that was severely impacted due to this crisis was the Dairy industry. It costed the milk producers of India more than 112.3 crores every single day. The one legendary company that was able through very successfully navigate through the entire crises, that they not only minimized their loss but went a step ahead to increase their revenue by 698 crores- was Anand Milk Union Limited (AMUL). One of the biggest brands of India. This research paper examines the resourcefulness, the robust supply chain management, the unique marketing strategies along the use of technology by the company in not only creating a brand but also successfully navigating through the entire situation with higher profits. This research would be a classic case study and the business lessons to other companies in the industry, the students of management and to the investors.

KEYWORDS

AMUL, crises management, marketing strategies, dairy industry.

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INTRODUCTION

The dictionary meaning of the term Crisis 'a time of intense difficulty or danger'. Crisis refers to an unexpected unplanned situation or rather threat that suddenly dawns upon from a business out of nowhere. It means an event that threatens the very stability of a business. The process by which such events or threats are effectively managed and dealt with is known as Crisis Management. In other words, Crisis management is the application of strategies designed to help an organization deal with a sudden and significant negative event. The Covid – 19 pandemic has severely impacted almost every sector and industry. Many industries and businesses came to a standstill in the year 2020. This situation not only impacted India but also every country in the world. The economy is hit the worst. One such industry that was heavily impacted due to the crises was the dairy industry. Most of the dairy industries were severely impacted due to the closure of restaurants, resorts and parties. While many of these industries were preparing for a loss in demand during this time, AMUL was one such company that was preparing for surge in demand amidst this crisis. During the lockdown, dairy industry was allowed to operate with certain restrictions as milk came in the essential goods category. But as soon the announcement of the lockdown, several businesses were shut down as this resulted into loss in demand for the dairy industry. This was due to the shutdown of the restaurants, catering and the hotel businesses. These businesses accounted for 20% of the revenue. As a result, AMUL's sales also saw a decline of 10 to 12%. When the dairy companies saw a massive fall in demand, they quickly cut the milk procurement, decreased their logistics and production by a large extent. Many factory workers and truck drivers lost their jobs and farmers were also in a very sorrow state of affairs. While the entire dairy industry was preparing for a loss in demand, AMUL did the complete opposite and started for preparing for a surge in demand. The reason for this was a very important factor that most of the companies did not take into consideration i.e. the change in consumer behaviour

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

(Jyotsnarani Biswal, 2020) in their research paper titled 'Impact of COVID-19 and associated lockdown on livestock and poultry sectors in India has studied the impact of the industries in terms of the impact in its supply chain and associated value chains. The paper also gives valuable recommendations on the measures that needs to be taken to revive the said sector and the role of each and every stakeholder to combat the situation.

(Adams, May 2021) in the present research paper conducted its third annual dairy consumer survey of more than 1,000 respondents in 2020. The study revealed that the demand for dairy is stabilizing at a higher level than pre-pandemic, experimentation with new dairy products and brands accelerated during Covid 19 and is likely to persist, dairy alternatives will continue to gain popularity benefiting from the health and wellness trends, but not at the cost of the dairy industry.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To analyse the impact of the pandemic in the dairy industry.
2. To understand the key strategies adopted by AMUL to accelerate their business.
3. To provide valuable insights on crises management.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The data is mainly collected from secondary sources. Articles. Journals and e- resources are referred to collate information for the case study.

FINDINGS AND INFERENCES OF THE STUDY

One of the heavily impacted industry due to the pandemic was the dairy industry and it costed the milk producers of India more than 112.3 crores every day. Amidst this crisis, AMUL was one such company that very strategically navigated through the entire situation that they not only minimized their losses but went a step ahead to increase their revenue by 698 crores. AMUL has done exceptionally well during the Covid times that in 2020, while the other companies were struggling to keep their supply chain going, AMUL introduced 33 new products in the market and procured an additional 35 lakhs litres of milk every day and paid 800 crores extra to the rural milk producers of India.

1. SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT

Whenever there is a crisis, there is always a paradigm shift in the consumer behavior. Although there was no demand from the restaurants, the household consumption of milk sky rocketed as more and more people began to stay at home. This in turn, gave rise to the homemade food trend because of which the demand for both, groceries and milk products skyrocketed. Because of the pandemic, people became extremely health conscious and shifted their preferences from consuming loose milk pack to packaged milk. Other brands, underestimated this consumer demand and started decreasing their supplies, AMUL kept their supply chain functioning at full capacity. Despite the closure of the restaurant, during 2020, the peak of the lockdown times, the demand for milk-based products skyrocketed. The demand for products like cheese increased by 80 percent, condensed milk increased by 100 percent. AMUL plants were operating at 115 percent capacity. The demand for AMUL products was so high that they had to hire other plants from other companies that were lying vacant. Except for ice creams all

their plant was operating at full capacity throughout the lockdown. Moving trucks throughout the country was difficult because of which they started using railways to transport their products quickly throughout the country. Considering the vast supply chain of AMUL- 18,700 societies, 5000 milk tankers going to 200 chilling stations, 10,000 distributors, 1 million retailers and more than 3.6 million farmers. The coordination of such a huge supply chain and effective and efficient utilization of their idle resources was really commendable.

2. END TO END DIGITALIZATION

Strategic partnership was established between AMUL and IBM in 2009 where AMUL invested 80 crores into transforming the information technology landscape of the company. IBM developed a full-fledged system to track every small detail of operation that is being carried out in the supply chain of AMUL. Through this system, the management team of AMUL could get the exact details and state of affairs of their logistics. This system turned out to be a gamechanger for AMUL, especially during the lockdown. The management team were efficiently able to divert their idle resources. This end to end digitization made their process so simple and brought in a lot of clarity in their operations. Due to this efficiency, AMUL procured 3.5 million litres of extra milk every day. AMUL used third party e-commerce sites like bigbasket, Dunzo, flipkart and exclusive deals with Swiggy and Zomato to sell dairy products. In the month of May 2020 AMUL got more than 60,000 orders through Zomato and they sold three crores worth of AMUL products.

3. AMUL'S INVESTMENT IN ADVERTISING AND MARKETING CAMPAIGNS

AMUL's unique marketing strategies during the month of COVID was again a feather on top of the cap for its success. where other brands were cutting down on their advertising Amul spent a heavy amount in their advertising and marketing strategies. In fact, Amul increased its add volumes by 316% as compared to 2019 and they were so aggressive with their campaign that AMUL cool advertisement was viewed 10 times more than the Indian Premier League and when Doordarshan started rebroadcasting the epic shows like Ramayan and Mahabharat during the lockdown, AMUL started running their old ads to resonate with the nostalgic mood of the audience creating even better impact. Although AMUL was very keen on tapping on to the marketing opportunities and even made immunity boosting products they never went overboard with any kind of ridiculous COVID claims.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1. The study is purely based on secondary data. Articles and research reports are considered for the study
2. The period of the study is limited to the initial lockdown period i.e. May to July, 2020.

CONCLUSION

Thus, by using an extraordinary foresight of consumer behavior, through agile supply chain management system using digital transformation, third party collaborations, incentivizing of Labor and through strategic marketing initiatives, AMUL established a benchmark for crisis management for dairy companies from all across the world to follow. Some very important lessons that companies and management students need to focus on from the above case study is that Uncertainty is very certain. Where an ordinary company tries to face risk, an extraordinary business is always prepared to embrace risk with open arms while most companies prepared to prevent their losses, AMUL operated at full capacity even during the pandemic. However big is an organization, resourcefulness is one attribute that will always save a company during crisis. The key is how is the company going to build such an agile system. In the current case, it was AMUL's move of futuristic investment of 80 crores into IBM system that helped them operate such a huge supply change system in such an optimized manner. Most importantly, every time there is a crisis of any kind it could be a pandemic or something specific to an industry, during such a time it can either be an obstacle or an opportunity to your company to get ahead of your competitors. In this case for AMUL COVID-19 was the perfect time to capitalize on the market in every single front. Thus, AMUL was able to also establish itself as a savior to farmers, while the industry was ruthless in cutting down in frontline workers AMUL provided the same workers with added incentives and therefore building a very strong relationship with its frontline workers. Thus, AMUL became an opportunist during the times of crisis and established a benchmark for all the firms across the world.

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