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RESEARCH ARTICLE

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF MARKETING STRATEGIES DEPLOYED BY POPULAR ENERGY DRINK CONGLOMERATIONS

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Abstract

Background: The energy drink market has been growing ever since the introduction of Red Bull in 1987 and clearly Red Bull still leads the market that it created for itself and its competitors like Monster Energy, Gatorade and many more. The huge success of these energy drink conglomerates can be owed to their out of the box marketing strategies and techniques that have left the whole world in admiration. The way these conglomerates represent themselves in the market is quite unique and distinctive and this is what makes this whole study engrossing and fascinating. These energy drink companies do not advertise the product but the idea behind and experiences attached with the drink. There is a major differentiating factor between Red Bull-Monster Energy and Gatorade. Red Bull and Monster Energy have 30 mg of caffeine in each 100 grams of the drink (Monster Zero Ultra Flavours | Zero-Sugar Energy Drinks, n.d.) (Facts & Figures - Red Bull Red Edition, n.d.) whereas Gatorade contains electrolytes, that helps in replenishing the energy lost during extensive activity.

Objective: To critically compare and analyse the marketing strategies of popular energy drink conglomerates like Red bull, Monster Energy, Gatorade. Through the detailed analysis using the survey, we shall observe how popular and successful these strategies have proven to be in India.

Methodology: This research paper lays due emphasis on the positive as well as the negative outcomes of the marketing techniques and their establishment in India. The methodology used for this paper is both qualitative, quantitative and critical discourse analysis. The data pertaining to marketing strategies has been collected from secondary sources such as reports, journals, magazines, newspaper articles and the official websites of the above mentioned energy drinks.

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Introduction:-

As a component of an organisation's performance, marketing plays an integral role in determining their success. As a whole, marketing involves interaction between society members in satisfying their needs and wants by fabricating value for them. (Business Studies Class-12 Poonam Gandhi (Session 2021-22) Examination, 2021) A marketing strategy includes persistent plans for achieving the organisation's objectives and goals, while comprehending the requirements of their audience. It focuses on generating discrete continuous competitive advantage. Several

marketing strategies are deployed by organisations all over the world, which we intend to study in the case of popular energy drink conglomerations- Red Bull, Monster Energy and Gatorade.

As recent graduates, we attended various college fests. During these, we saw energy drinks being promoted on campus- by handing out free samples to all the students. The main proceeds of these companies come from their respective energy drinks. It struck us how Red Bull, Monster Energy, and Gatorade were only sustaining by selling energy drinks. This got us curious and motivated us to research about these conglomerates and their marketing strategies.

We have noticed that the marketing techniques of various brands change from time to time. There has been a shift of focus from commercial advertising to unconventional marketing in the past few years. Marketing environment is influenced by many factors, success in a dynamic environment always comes as a challenge. Hence, it is imperative for these organisations to study the ongoing trends and come up with promising marketing strategies. Through our research, we will get an insight into the most effective marketing strategies undertaken by the three energy drink conglomerates.

Moreover, these companies have been coming up with extremely unique and creative campaigns which differentiates it from its competitors. The aim is to evaluate and problematize the marketing strategies of Red Bull, Monster Energy and Gatorade.

In this research following research questions have been studied:

1. Which energy drink brand is widely preferred among the three in India?
2. Which is the best marketing strategy deployed by each of the conglomerations (absolute comparison)?
3. Which marketing strategy has proven to be the most successful/effective in grabbing the public eye and why. (relative comparison amongst them) ?

This research is unique because there has been no existing research done, where comparisons are made between the three conglomerates. Collecting and selecting the strategies to examine was strenuous. In this paper, we intend to work on the gaps that have not previously been explored– opinion of people and their preferences.

Literature Survey:-

Marketers create marketing strategies to inform and engage potential customers and convert them into loyal customers and purchase their products or services. Marketing strategies consist of a company's value proposition, key messages, and targeted customer specifications. In this study, we will be focusing on the exceptional strategies that lead to Red Bull's, Monster Energy's & Gatorade's success.

Energy drink market size is estimated to reach 1,49,756 million dollars by 2030 which will be driven by consumer oriented marketing. (Energy Drinks Market Size Is Expected to Reach at USD, 2022) There has been a growing interest of consumers in energy drinks. In the energy drink industry, additional ingredients that enhance athletic performance and recovery are becoming increasingly popular. People were isolated from each other because of the Coronavirus pandemic. In addition to changing lifestyle patterns, quarantine also changed dietary habits. Young people who had more stress during computer-based exams and isolation were found to consume more caffeine and energy drinks. During the lockdown, online stores observed increased sales of energy drinks, which drove up demand for energy drinks in the market. (India Energy Drink Market | 2022 - 27 | Industry Share, Size, Growth, n.d.) This industry's major competitors are smaller than the major soft drink carriers, so they are more able to adapt to trends. It is difficult for new entrants to compete in the energy drink industry due to its saturation and few major players. It is essentially a market dominated by Monster, Redbull, and Rockstar.

The methodology used for this article is empirical and critical discourse analysis. The secondary data pertaining to the popularity of these marketing strategies have been collected from various books, journals, magazines, and each company's official website. We have also conducted a survey with a sample size of 175 respondents from India, to get a better understanding of people's opinion on the marketing strategies of these energy drink conglomerates.

History

Red Bull is an energy drink. The Austrian company Red Bull GmbH was founded in 1984 and entered the Indian market in 2003. It is one of the world's leading energy drink brands. The global Red Bull sales were 7.9 billion cans

in 2020. 9.804 billion cans of Red Bull were sold worldwide in 2021, representing an increase of 24.3% since 2020. Almost 97% of the revenue comes from their energy drink. (Red Bull Energy Drink - Official Website, n.d.) Moreover, Red Bull has been coming up with extremely unique and creative campaigns which differentiates it from its competitors.

Monster Beverage Corporation

was founded in 1990, formerly known as Hansen Natural Corporation. It is speculated that Monster Energy Drinks was introduced in 2002 in the US market after Red Bull entered the US in 1997 (Forbes & Dolan, 2005, 1) and its success in the European markets as while introducing the new product, the specifications of the product clearly matched Red Bull's energy Drinks. In 2015, A \$2.15 billion deal between Monster Beverage Corporation and Coca-Cola Company saw Coca-Cola transfer its energy drinks to Monster and purchase an equity stake of 16.7% in the company. (Coca-Cola and Monster Close on Strategic Partnership | Press Release, 2015) Monster Beverage Corporation is also in talks with Constellation Brands for a merger which could shake up the beverage landscape.

Gatorade.

Heat-related diseases claimed the lives of as many as 25 football players every year in the 1960s. It was common for players to get stomach cramps when they drank too much water, and leg cramps when they consumed too much salt. It was clear to the doctors that athletes would benefit greatly from replacing their fluids during games. Sports drinks were intended to replace fluids lost through perspiration. In order to maintain a healthy electric and chemical balance inside the body, water and salts (also known as electrolytes) are essential. Robert Cade formulated Gatorade in a lab, University of Florida. Doctors had to concoct a liquid that would quickly travel through the body- boosting energy and recharging the body of the lost salts. (Rovell, 2006) In 1983, the Quaker Oats Co. purchased Stokely-Van Camp and launched Gatorade into superstardom.

Case Presentation of Marketing Strategies

A traditional advertising campaign for **Red Bull** was prohibitively expensive when it first appeared, as energy drinks did not exist at the time. They had to create a market for themselves.

Red Bull's Ownership of Sports Teams

Apart from Red Bull's tagline they have an extremely eye-catching form of strategy whereby Red Bull buys sports teams. Red Bull's investment in sporting teams and events are not merely marketing strategies, but for the attempt to diversify and create additional business opportunities. Red Bull owns two F1 Racing teams, one of them is 'Red Bull Racing Honda' and the second one is 'Alpha Tauri'. Alpha Tauri as a team is used to give the younger drivers experience in F. Red Bull's F1 racing team is one of the most well known and the team is not just a mere marketing strategy for Red Bull. Apart from this, Red Bull also owns 5 professional football clubs and one ice hockey team. (Oracle RedBull Racing)

Red Bull's Extreme Marketing Strategy

Red Bull constitutes energy with the word "extreme". The cornerstone to that strategy was the association to the extreme sports that you now see Red Bull representing all over the world. They searched the most extreme and niche sports out there and decided to align themselves with every single one of those sports. We can see the Red Bull logo now on the side of race cars, aerobatic planes, skydivers, etc. The common denominator here is the adrenaline rush. The rush that resonates while viewing these sports is what Red Bull have linked themselves to and even hosted events, championships. They provide athletes with a platform to come out and explore. Red Bull sponsors local area network parties such as Weekend Wars and international competitions such as the League of Legends European Championship; has built the largest eSports studio, the Red Bull Gaming Sphere, in London, U.K.; has started its video gaming competitions such as the Red Bull Conquest Tournaments(Frias, n.d.)

Red Bull's Invisible Marketing Strategy

Red Bull is known for its very unique marketing strategies. Red Bull decided to go a notch higher and blow the minds of their audience. They decided to throw a man from the stratosphere to break the record of the highest free fall done. Felix Baumgartner, an Austrian skydiver, was sent to attempt the supersonic free fall. His helium balloon flight into the stratosphere (39 kms) was followed by a free fall in a pressure suit and a parachute landing. They spent approximately 65 million dollars on preparations and social media campaigns. The surprising part was that in the whole video there's no visibility of the energy drink. The only thing that was visible was its logo on the skydiver's pressure suit, the parachute and on the container in which he went up.(Stanton, 2019) This stratos marketing strategy

blurred the lines between ‘advertising’ and ‘content’. They told the story of the sky diver as well. This type of marketing is used by Red bull even in the extreme sports area when they sponsor these events.

Red Bull’s Positioning Strategy

Red Bull owns a liberating idea. Red Bull’s a brand that has been developed from a ground up with strategy, and even taking into consideration their tagline “Red Bull gives you wiiings”- it doesn’t just speak to the idea that you get energy from the drink, it speaks to the idea that you’re free to go out and achieve whatever you want to.

Red Bull’s Unique Content & Storytelling Strategy

Red Bull’s brand resonates with its target audience, they have the talent to market their brand without highlighting their product. It is clear that the articles of Red Bull are all written to entertain the reader, not to sell Red Bull. On their website, they focus exclusively on articles and in-depth discussions about exercise, sport, and motivation. Energy drinks are not mentioned, and no aggressive advertising encourages people to buy them. Storytelling is paramount, as is establishing credibility. They align themselves with niche sports athletes. Each athlete has their unique story which Red Bull elaborates. This resonates with the brand’s extreme sports idea. They also have an application called Red Bull TV.

In an interview with IEG SR (marketing industry magazine), Vipe Desai, former Director of Marketing for **Monster Energy**, mentioned that Monster’s DNA consists of going big, not letting anyone get the best of you, and charging ahead all out The slogan, “Unleash the Beast” promotes the same feature and the Corporation focuses mainly on motorsports and motocross.

Monster Energy’s Positioning Strategy

This strategy is the foundation for its marketing activities. Monster also provides best value, as its energy drinks measure 16 ounces that have about the same price point as Red Bull’s 8.4- ounce cans. One can choose from a variety of Monster drinks, including Monster Energy drink, to coffee-flavoured drinks, protein enhanced drinks, etc. Monster emphasises on sticking to their value proposition, i.e. more for less- their cans are priced around the same price of their competitors but they provide more quantity, hence giving huge competition to its competitors.

Monster Energy’s Partnership

Monster Energy Yamaha MotoGP is the official Italian Japanese factory team of Yamaha in MotoGP. As the team's official sponsor since 2013, Monster Energy has become the team's title sponsor in 2019. (Monster Energy & Yamaha Sign Multi-Year Sponsorship Renewal, 2022). A Monster Energy-Yamaha global alliance encompassing many racing disciplines, including AMA Motocross, was formed during this period, including the MotoGPTM Triple Crown in 2015, the Team Championship in 2016, and the MotoGPTM World Championship in 2021. (Georgii, 2022), Monster Energy Supercross, & FIM Motocross World Championships, emphasising that Yamaha and Monster Energy are partners and catalysts in the motorcycle racing world. (Monster Energy & Yamaha Sign Multi-Year Sponsorship Renewal, 2022) Monster Energy is also a long-term sponsor of the Mercedes-AMG Petronas Motorsport, and also sponsors F1 World Champion, Lewis Hamilton and George Russell. Monster’s sponsorship strategy is unique as it focuses on orienting all its sponsorships rigorously with Monster Energy’s DNA. In april 2021, Monster Energy’s campaign- ‘Come With Us’ in which it covered the journeys, lives, stories of 6 athletes from 6 different fields of sports.

Monster Energy’s Monster Girls

One area that differentiates Monster is the Monster Girls promotion team. Monster employs Monsters Girls, attractive models from around the world, to help secure consumer attention in what are often hectic event atmospheres. Monster girls travel the world, and their primary role is to look charming, and persuade the target audience to consume Monster Energy drinks. (Regan et al., 2016) This is generally distinctive in the energy drink industry. The Monster Energy Girls also have an official page on instagram- the models can be seen posing with the range of products Monster Energy has. The Monster Energy Girls are always present at sports events sponsored by the brand. They shoot for various advertisement campaigns as well.

Monster Energy’s Modern Advertising Strategies - Gaming & Music

Monster Beverage Corporation focused less on commercial advertisements and more on building a message through unique experiences. Monster Energy sponsors a variety of sport competitions, events, athletes teams, as well as famous personalities to be present everywhere. It focuses on gaming and music as well. It also released a game

called Monster Energy Supercross- The Official Video Game in 2018 based on the Monster Energy AMA SuperCross Championship and has been releasing subsequent game series every year. Apart from this Monster Energy also represents a few gaming teams and gamers like Fnatic, team Liquid, Renée, Scout (from India).

It has been very long since **Gatorade's** target audience was the male demographic, however they have been searching for ways to expand their audience and market reach.

Gatorade's Competitive Advantage in the Market:

In addition to the Gatorade brand umbrella, Gatorade has many sub-brands, each of which has large stock keeping units (SKUs), which makes them more appealing. Moreover Gatorade having a strong backing from a giant conglomerate (Pepsico) is only working in its favour as Pepsico is able to exploit the market resources and is helping in growing the business. Additionally, Gatorade refers to their drinks as fuels and provide a variety including hydration, energy, protein drinks as well as supplements and kits. They also have a line of custom Gatorade bottles, shakers jugs, sweat patches and a Gatorade app for iOS users!

Gatorade's Direct association with Athletes:

One of their main marketing strategies includes gatorade partnering with athletes. They encourage athletes to tell their personal story and ensure that the athlete also knows about gatorade and how it came to be. They want to draw a connection between the athletes, gatorade and their consumers. (Sports Science to Fuel Athletes | Gatorade Official Site, n.d.) The company has covered inspirational stories of famous athletes like Serena Williams, Hansel Emmanuel and Suni Lee. Gatorade (partnered with brands like Athlete Ally, Honest Game Foundation, Women's Sports Foundation,etc) is also helping millions of young athletes by sponsoring them. They also provide youth athletes a chance to be mentored by Serena Williams, Karl-Anthony Towns, Elena Delle Donne.

Gatorade's "Be like Mike" ad campaign:

Michael Jordan was portrayed as a hero by kids who wanted to be like him in the ad. This was one of the most important moments in the 26-year history of Gatorade. In addition to the song being made available to the public, the profits from its sale will be donated to the Michael Jordan Foundation. As a result, Gatorade got unlimited free commercials. (Rovell, 2006)

Gatorade's Influencer/Social Media Marketing:

Marketers are turning to this type of marketing more and more. A lot of influencers on the internet take a product and recommend the product to their many followers. 'Influencers' for Gatorade, would mean- Nutritionists, gym trainers, athletes (whose main target audience are people who are engaged in high level/intense workouts or routines) Their recent Gx limited-edition Fuel Tomorrow Collection was created in collaboration with Trevor Lawrence, Paige Bueckers, Sydney McLaughin and Fernando Tatis Jr. Gatorade holds championships like shopping experience with a Gatorade pro Athlete or their sports kits and energy drinks.

Gender Specific Beverage Marketing- Targeting Male Insecurities

Male-centred marketing is used by all energy drink brands. Whereas the connection between impractical beauty standards, low self-esteem, and disordered eating among females has been commonly debated, this is one of the studies that also sets a relationship between male insecurity to marketing. 467 men between the ages of 18 and 62 were asked to complete two questionnaires about traditional masculinity ("A man should prefer watching action movies to reading romantic novels") and the advantages of energy drinks by a team of researchers led by psychology professor Ronald F. Levant at the University of Akron ("If I consume energy drinks, I will perform better"). Besides their sleep quality, they were also asked how much energy drinks they drank. Among college-aged men, their sense of masculinity was regulated by the drinks, and if that sense was threatened, they would drink more. Levant said that diet food marketing exploits young women's anxieties about their attractiveness, much like energy drink marketing exploits young men's anxieties about their fitness. According to him, young men "haven't yet accrued enough 'masculine capital' and are eager to demonstrate their masculinity." The messaging didn't affect older men as much, perhaps because they are more confident. Despite inconclusive results about why this was the case, men of color stayed uninfluenced. Their absence from energy drink advertisements could be the reason for this.(Giese, 2015)

Hypothesis

Red Bull's Ownership of Sports Teams

Simply by providing financial support to football and Formula 1 racing teams and events, the firm has contributed to history. Initially everyone just thought that Red Bull is spending huge amounts of money just for a marketing strategy, however having 2 different F1 teams (one for juniors to practice and one after they have experience) shows that they are not just backmakers who just use it as a marketing platform. They invest huge amounts and constantly compete to win. They remain on top because winning in F1 gives them that return and even media visibility. Owning F1 teams have really been very beneficial for them (earlier they were just sponsoring F1 teams).

Red Bull's Extreme Marketing Strategy

The brand goes above and beyond with everything it does in terms of marketing strategy. The audience is consistently prioritised in their marketing strategies. Selling their product actually comes in second. Red Bull conveys a thrilling image to customers through relating to extreme sports. It is well known that they participate in and fund extreme sporting events. Cable TV or the internet are used to broadcast their events. Its publicity stunts are so insane that it is famous worldwide. Everyone relates Red Bull with all the extreme sports since it sponsors most of them and this strategy is also a part of their invisible marketing, which has proven to be really effective and successful.

Red Bull's Invisible Marketing Strategy

A lot of people thought that Red Bull was crazy to spend 65 million dollars on this project just to market an energy drink. However, this strategy taken up by Red Bull received a lot of attention from the audience. In terms of visibility they got 8 million views from Youtube live stream viewers, which made it the most watched youtube live in history. They got 52 million views on webcast, it was aired on about 70 TV stations, 3.2 million tweets, 72000 mentions with #redbull, 22000 Instagram photos and more than 130000 Facebook shares. Apart from attention from social media, even the news channels started reporting this event. Eventually they got a ton of PR. One of the more surprising facts is that the publicity that they got out of it was worth more than a billion dollars. Not only this, there was a direct impact on sales as well. Sales rose by 7% in the following 6 months that generated around 1.6 billion dollars in revenue. Stratos was a huge success. As promised, the event accorded greatly to science, which significantly improved Red Bull's reputation. The broadcast of the fall received close to 8 million views, making it the most watched livestream in history at the time. Additionally, the stunt was covered by 40 TV stations and 130 digital sites, and Red Bull Stratos was mentioned in half of the global trending tweets. (Chun, 2012)

Red Bull's Positioning Strategy

Red Bull gained huge traction due to its "Red Bull gives you wings campaign" which initially took off in the 90's. When Red Bull says it gives you wings, it basically means that it reduces drowsiness, stimulates your nervous system, makes you feel cool and active, thus one feels light and energetic. However in 2013, the same tagline cost them 13 million dollars when Benjamin Careathers, filed a lawsuit against the company stating that their advertisement is false & misleading as the drink didn't contain the same amount of caffeine as shown and also didn't give him wings! (Evans, 2014)

Red Bull's Unique Content & Storytelling Strategy

Red Bull has aligned themselves with these niche sports and subsequently niche sport athletes as well. Each of these individual athletes is a story in and of themselves. They all have their hopes and dreams and things they want to achieve. They also come across challenges and struggles. So what Red Bull does is that they do not focus on the product story they focus on the story of an individual athlete. Now, because these individuals are ordinary people like you and I, these stories are what resonated with their audience. This inspires other people to tell their stories as well. RedBull.com has been available also in Hindi since November 2021 so that everyone across the country can access and understand the information provided on their website.

Monster Energy's Positioning Strategy

has been proven to be really successful as it was the most consumed energy drink after Red Bull in 2021. (Ridder, 2022) Since its origination in the states, people preferred it more because of their large quantity cans. But in 2017, a BMX champion, Mormon Colton Satterfield announced that he was dropping Monster Energy, since he felt that Monster Energy's advertising is unchristian, he did not endorse them- after joining the Latter-day Saints & the Church of Jesus Christ. (Wilkinson, 2017) He also criticised the logo of Monster Energy. The company's logo was recently hailed as a satanic symbol in a viral video posted on YouTube in 2014.

Monster Energy's Partnership

Monster Energy being the official sponsor of Yamaha MotoGP has led to growth in its popularity all over the world. We can see the Monster Energy logo printed on the jerseys, motor bikes, racing tracks, etc. Similar to Red Bull, Monster Energy spends enormous amounts for marketing rights acquisitions in such sponsorships and not only concentrates on the publicity but also strives to win. This offers them a huge audience worldwide- as the viewers and non-consumers of the energy drink are also exposed to the company's existence. According to Brown 2019, almost 4 million viewers watched the U.S. Motocross Championship series in 2019. On January 13, 2022, Monster Beverage Corporation announced that it had reached an agreement to acquire the craft beer and hard seltzer company CANarchy Craft Brewery Collective LLC for \$ 330 million in cash. (Monster Beverage Corporation to Acquire CANarchy Craft Brewery Collective | Monster Energy Company, 2022) This acquisition came as an excellent growth opportunity and acted as a springboard for entry into the alcoholic beverage sector.

Monster Energy's Monster Girls

By introspecting the advertisements of Monster Energy, we realize that the focus is primarily on male athletes. Monster Energy and other energy drink brands as well mostly align their marketing with characteristics that symbolise masculinity. Women are rarely featured in the advertisements but the brand has a bunch of models, called Monster Girls- which, to say, have been successful at their job- that is to attract males! The official Monster Energy Girls Instagram page has around 362,000 followers- which is an indicator how profitable they have proven to be!

Monster Energy's Modern Advertising Strategies - Gaming & Music

Monster Energy Motocross- The Official Video Game received mixed reviews when it was first launched. The subsequent games from the series have showcased better performance and the game runs on Xbox, PC, Playstation, Switch which gives it a wide scope. The latest game i.e. Monster Energy Motocross 5 was reported as a successful piece of entertainment that was worth checking out, but may not appeal to everyone. All the gaming teams and gamers are a part of the Monster Family- Monster Energy owns these esports teams. The team members are huge in number and from all over the world that contest in international gaming championships like Valorant, CS Go etc. This gives the brand a huge fanbase, as the supporters of the teams.

Gatorade's Competitive Advantage in the Market

This is a great advantage for the company as Gatorade has a wide variety of drinks with different flavours- which grabs a lot of attention towards the brand. The packaging is also designed in a manner in which the target audience/customer can see the colours/flavours which make it even more attractive for them. The variety of their products also gives customers more reasons to shop from them. And since the target audience is huge (children, women, men) they have this advantage over Red Bull and Monster Energy.

Gatorade's Direct association with Athletes

This is a great way to grab the attention of the general public- as the public see the athletes and other famous figures as someone they can look up to and treat them as their role models. The public as well as potential athletes take inspiration from their lives and what they did to be successful. Moreover, sponsoring and giving young athletes a chance to be mentored by famous athletes is an amazing strategy!

Gatorade's "Be like Mike" ad campaign

Although "Be like Mike" was one of the most successful campaigns for Gatorade, caught the eye of many- all across the nation and was also simultaneously working towards a social cause and was generating funds off the same, it had an unconscious implication that to be strong and powerful and be an athlete you need to emulate a male athlete. Which suggested that males have more strength and energy and the female counterpart and suggesting that the female traits are a drawback. (Gutkind, 2003)

Gatorade's Influencer/Social Media Marketing

Covid has played an increasingly important role in the way companies have now started marketing. Due to the same we have seen a boom in the influencer marketing area. It should be considered that even young children are on these social media platforms and kids are easily influenced by things they see and hear- hence they are reaching out to their target audience in every possible way. Organising championships for everyone is a unique way to gain traction and make people try their products- because it's true everyone loves winning free stuff!

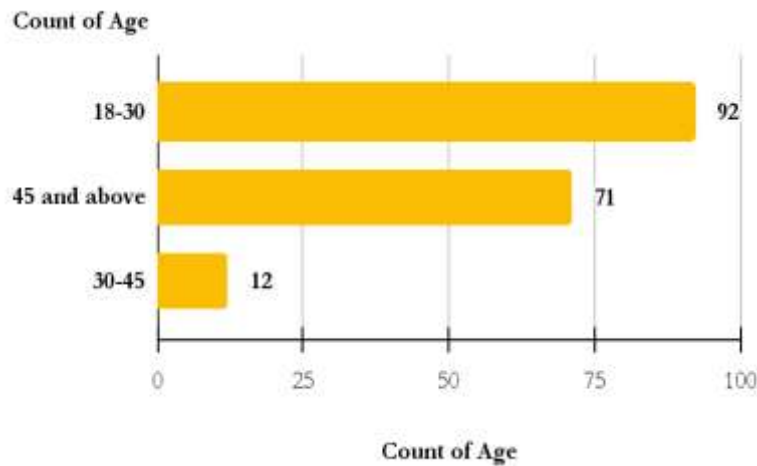
Gender Specific Beverage Marketing- Targeting Male Insecurities

Very surprisingly this strategy has worked in favour of these energy drinks. A New York Times report (Sanger, 2015) noted that energy drinks have thrived as soft drinks consumption has declined by 25% throughout the past two decades. Among children ages twelve to seventeen, 31 percent consume the beverages regularly, while 34 percent consume them between ages eighteen and twenty-four. Currently worth USD 68.1 billion, the global energy drinks market is expected to grow by 7.0% to USD 98.8 billion by 2032. (Energy arrDrinks Market Size, Sales Analysis & Opportunity | FMI, n.d.) These beverages are usually seen aligning their products with characteristics that symbolise masculinity for example: Monster Energy’s Monster Girls shows how the energy drinks are targeting males at large.

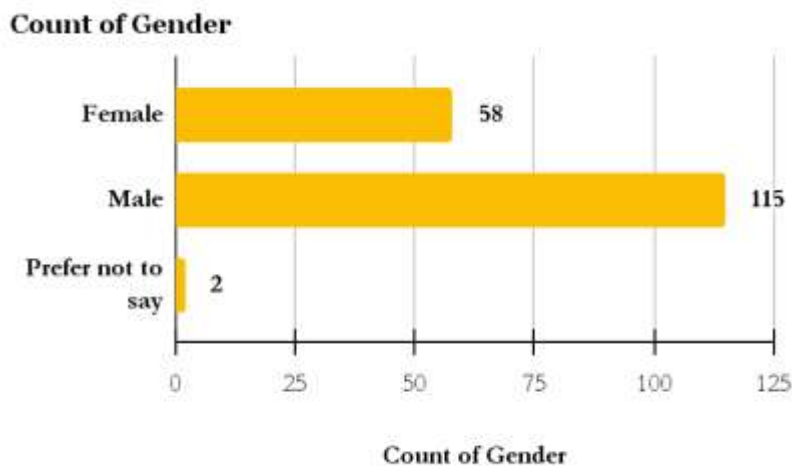
There has been invisibilization of women sports figures in the past when it comes to commercials of these energy drinks. However, in the contemporary world, few advertisements and campaigns do represent women in a nominal way which still doesn’t make up for the focus that is given to males which remains to be their target audience. The need to have instant energy has always been associated with male needs.

Research Findings from Primary Data Collection

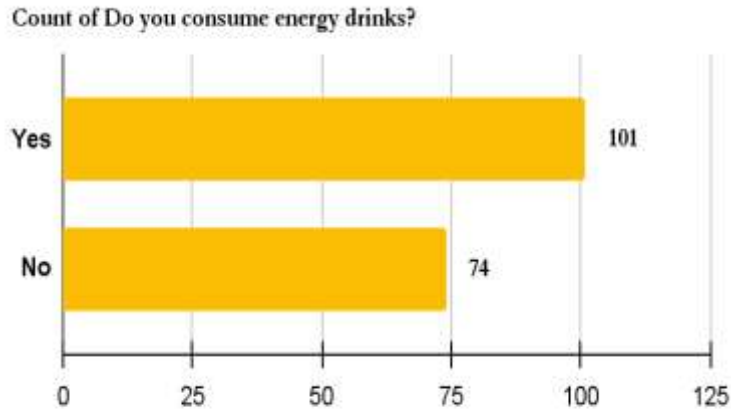
To have a better understanding of the dominance of these conglomerates, we conducted a survey to compare and determine the popularity of the marketing strategies of these companies. The aim is to determine the popularity of different marketing strategies of Red Bull, Monster Energy and Gatorade in India and preference with respect to each energy drink. We intend to examine the responses and draw comparisons on the same basis.



We know that the energy drink conglomerates try to reach young adults and we were able to do the same through our survey. 52.5% of the sample size consisted of people from the age group 18-30. While 40.5% belonged to the 45 & above age group. 6.85% of the sample size was from the age group 30-45.

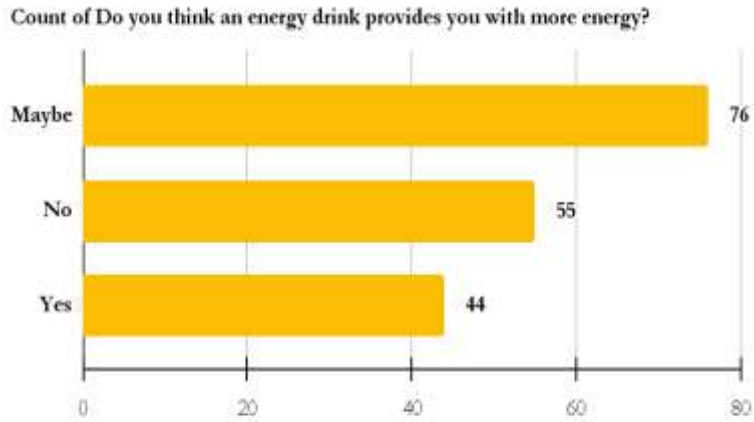


The sample audience consists majority of male at 65.72% ,female at 33.14%, Prefer not to say at 1.14%



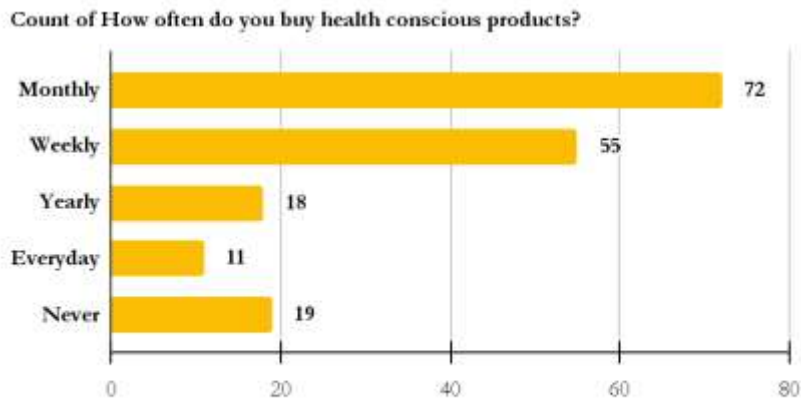
Count of Do you consume energy drinks?

Around 57.71% of the sample size consumes energy drink regularly and 42.28% don't.



Count of Do you think an energy drink provides you with more energy?

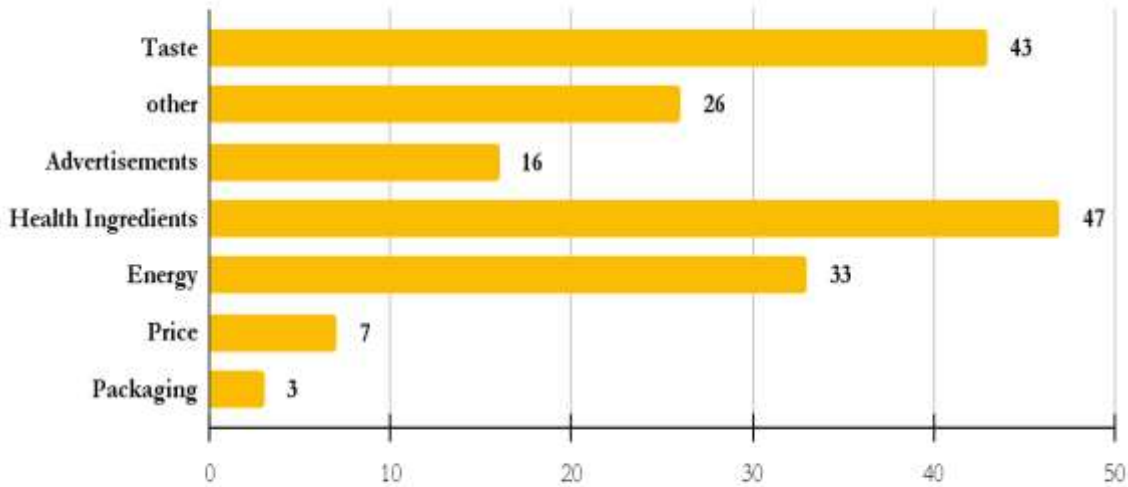
25.14% of the people believe that energy drinks provide them with energy while 31.42% don't. The majority, 43.42% of people are unsure.



Count of How often do you buy health conscious products?

Majority of the people buy health conscious products monthly, followed by weekly, yearly, never and daily.

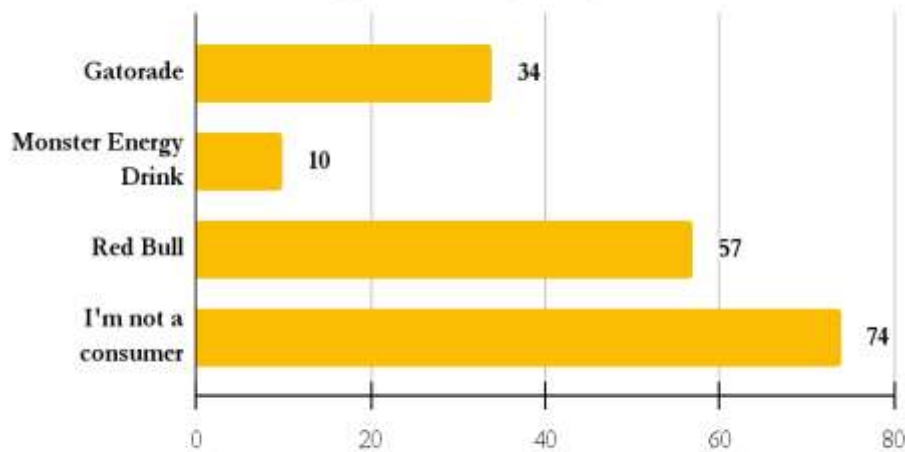
Count of What would encourage you to purchase Red Bull/Monster Energy/ Gatorade?



Count of What would encourage you to purchase Red Bull/Monster Energy/ Gatorade?

Majority of the people (26.8%) purchase energy drinks because of their health ingredients. 24.57% of the people buy energy drinks because of their taste. 18.8% of the people buy energy drinks because of the energy they provide. 14.85% of the people buy due to other reasons. 9.14% because of the advertisements. 4% and 1.71% because of Price & Packaging respectively.

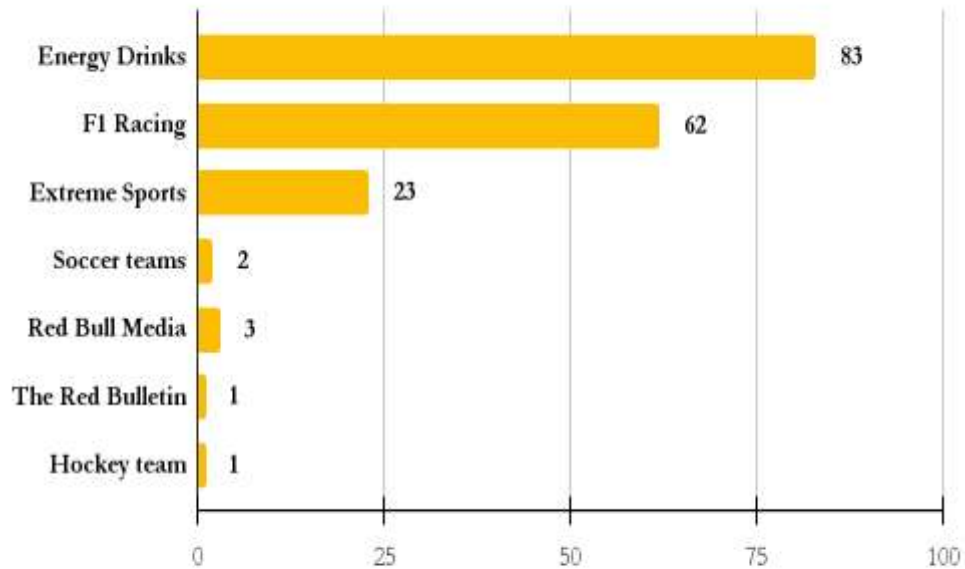
Count of Which one of the energy drinks would you buy?



Count of Which one of the energy drinks would you buy?

42.28% of the people are not consumers of energy drinks i.e. they do not consume energy drinks on a regular basis. Amongst the regular consumers, majority of the consumers (32.57%) prefer Red Bull, then Gatorade, (19.42%) and Monster Energy Drink the least (5.71%)

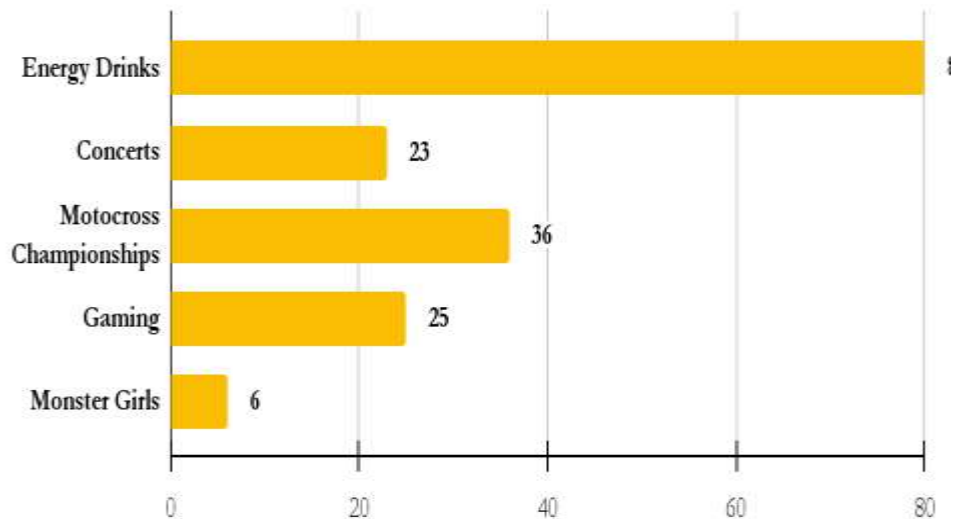
Count of What do you associate the brand- Red Bull, the most with?



Count of What do you associate the brand- Red Bull, the most with?

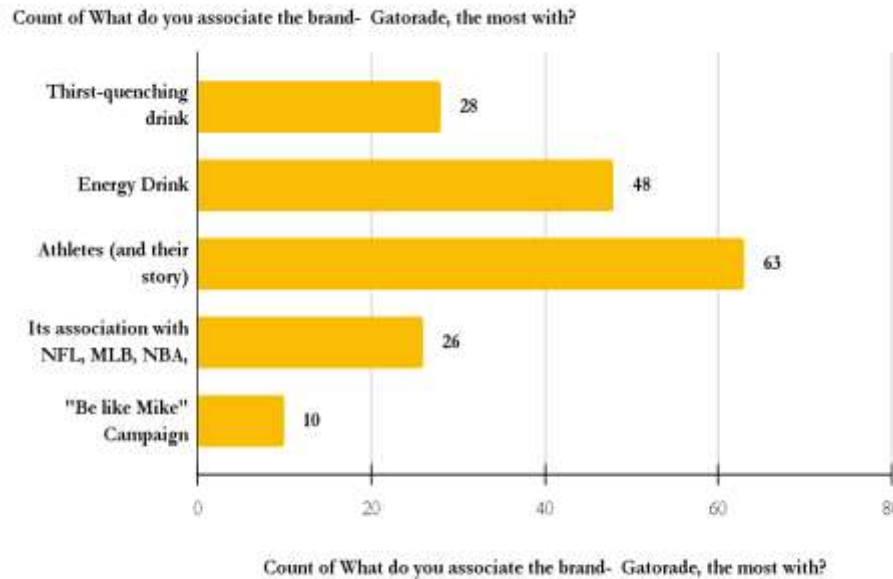
Majority of the sample audience at 47.42% associated the brand Red Bull with its energy drink which is also their primary product. Around 35.42% of the audience is aware about the team owned by Red Bull in F1. 13.14% of the audience associate it with extreme sports. Only 1.71% & 1.14% of the audience associate it with Red Bull Media and Soccer teams respectively. Red Bull can make more of an effort to popularise their (The Red Bulletin) Magazine and EC RedBull Salzburg (Ice Hockey Team)

Count of What do you associate the brand- Monster Energy- the most with?



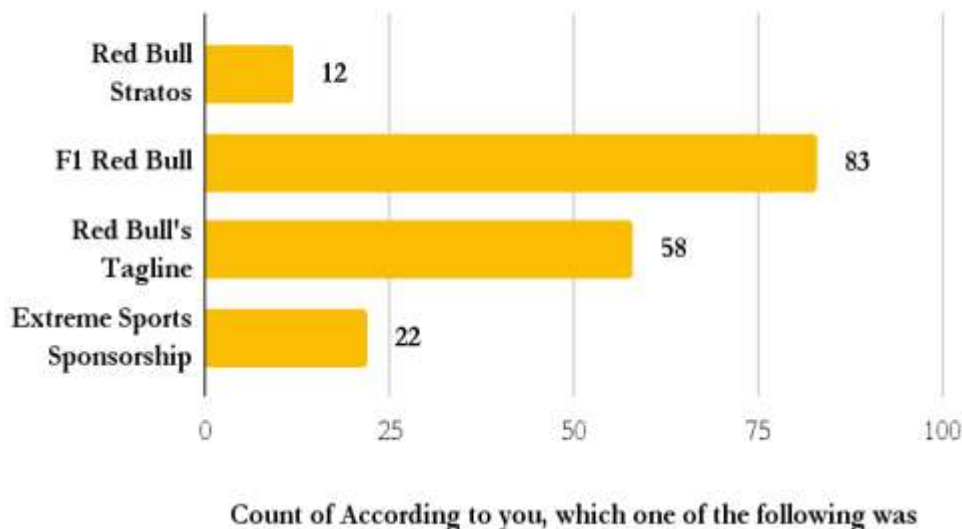
Count of What do you associate the brand- Monster Energy- the most with?

Majority of the sample audience at 45.71% relate the brand Monster Energy with their energy drinks which is a positive sign. For the rest of the parameters, we can see that people are well aware about the brand’s presence in distinct areas such as sponsorships in concerts(13.14%) gaming(14.28%), Motocross Championships(20.57%) and Monster Girls (3.42%).

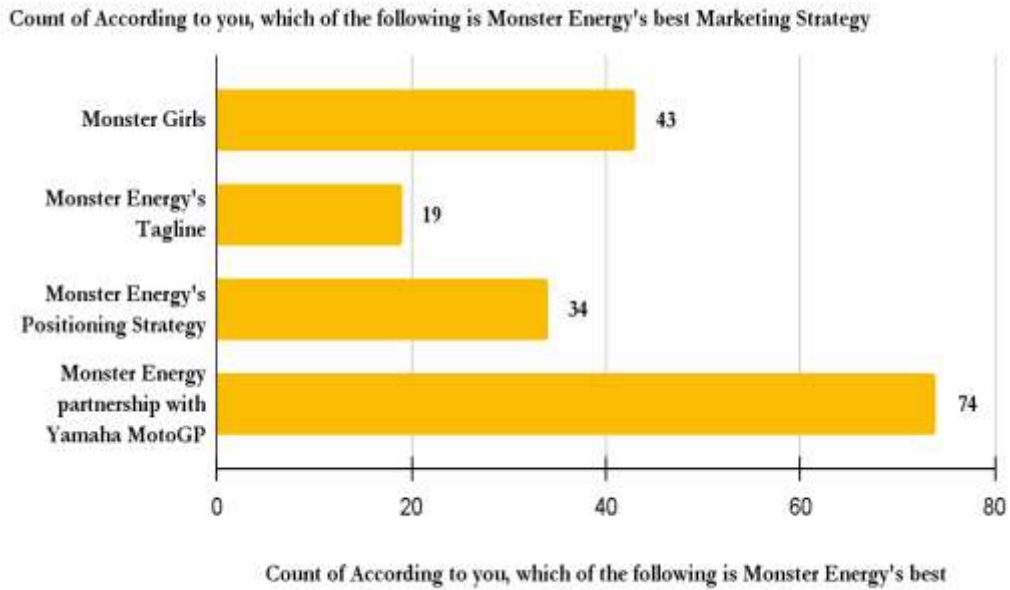


We can see that according to the survey, 36% of the audience can associate Gatorade the most with their athletes and their stories. Gatorade being related to being an energy drink (27%) - that it clearly is. Only 16% see Gatorade as a ‘thirst-quenching drink’, 15% link Gatorade with its association with NFL/NBA and the rest 6% associate Gatorade with the ‘Be Like Mike’ Campaign. The reason for the ‘Be like Mike’ Campaign to have such less connection with the audience may be because it is one of their oldest campaigns.

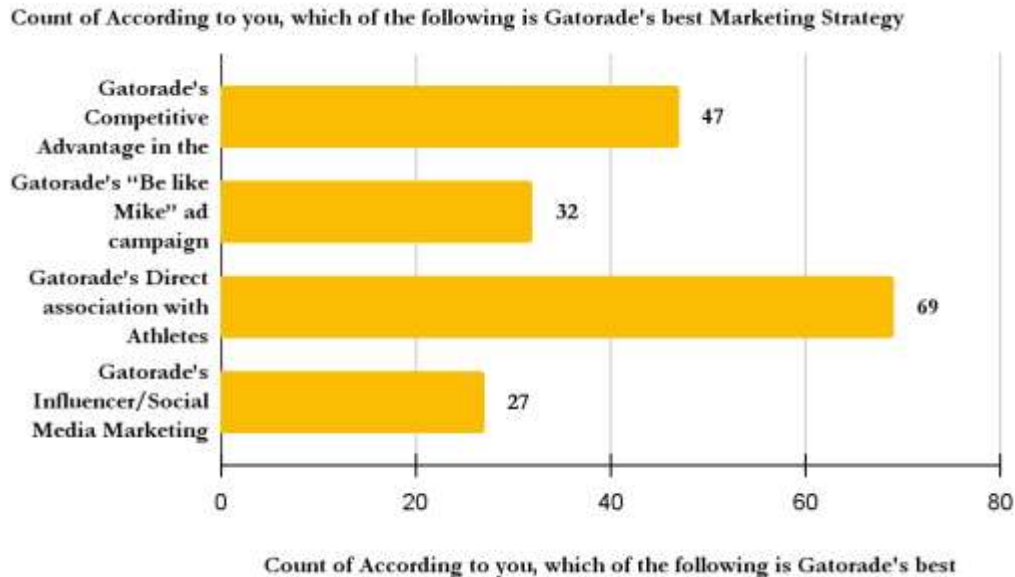
Count of According to you, which one of the following was Red Bull's best marketing strategy ?



We can observe that the majority believes that Red Bull’s association with F1 Racing and owning a F1 team has been the best Marketing Strategy deployed by them. Having an association with F1 racing is proving to be very beneficial for them even in terms of their viewership. Theoretically, Stratos was one of the most successful marketing campaigns of Red Bull worldwide but in India less people are aware about it. According to the statistics, Red Bull’s Tagline and Sponsorship have reached out to more people in India.



We can conclude that the best marketing strategy deployed by Monster Energy in India was its partnership with Yamaha MotoGP. Apart from that, their Monster Girls have also proven to do their job! Their tagline and positioning strategy has proven to be attractive, theoretically as well.



Majority of the people felt Gatorade having a direct association with the athletes is their best strategy. It has a clear upper hand if compared to the other strategies taken up by Gatorade. Having a wide range of products has benefitted them. Gatorade can definitely work on their social media presence.

Limitations and Shortcomings

RED BULL GMBH, Goldwin Healthcare, Power Horse Energy Drinks GMBH and Monster Beverage Corporation are a few vital players in the Indian energy drink market (India Energy Drink Market | 2022 - 27 | Industry Share, Size, Growth, n.d.) Apart from the observations and inferences made, we have raised some suggestions for the marketing strategies of the energy drink brands.

To analyse their performance in India- **Red Bull** could work on a few areas. Even though it sponsors and hosts events based on Indian sports like kabaddi and cricket- less people are aware about it. Incorporation in sponsorship of IPL could bring more traction to the brand. Moreover, the general public in India is not aware about the different flavours and varieties available in the market. In 2015, an instant ban on production, sale and dispersal of four energy drinks including **Monster Energy Drinks** was issued by FSSAI. But in 2019, Monster Energy launched its Monster Ultra range in India and ever since then the energy drinks have been widely available in India. The company is quite popular in India as it also represents the gamer, ScOut. Monster Energy can grow in India by investing more into indigenous sports sponsorship as people here largely associate the brand with energy drinks solely. Unlike Red Bull and Monster Energy Drink, **Gatorade** can be consumed by everyone. From middle school children to middle aged people. For Indians to relate with the energy drink more - the brand can invest in collaborating with Indian athletes. Gatorade can also consider sponsoring sports and hosting events so they gain traction. The energy drink brands can have a targeted campaign to remove the taboo around energy drinks and its ill effects for students or young consumers.

Conclusion:-

The research paper has been conducted over a period of two months. Information and data regarding the energy drink conglomerates were present but there has been absolute dearth of literature on the discourse surrounding the marketing strategies of energy drink brands and their comparative analysis (absolute and relative comparison to be drawn from the survey) in terms of popularity and success. The presented paper, information analysis and findings should be reviewed as an overview rather than extensive research.

A blueprint for start-ups looking to succeed with marketing has been set by **Red Bull** in marketing and branding milestones. It was a revolution in the marketing world of mass media when low-cost, innovative marketing was combined with branding and sponsorship. Red Bull has grown one step at a time, promising itself and taking its time to achieve long-term success. As Red Bull's marketing has always explained, it is more than just an energy drink. **Monster Energy Drink's** huge success can be mostly attributed to their marketing techniques and sponsorships. They have always expanded strategically- Their partnership with Coca Cola opened many distribution channels as well as markets. **Gatorade** has come a long way since the time it was created for boosting the energies of football players. Gatorade slowly and steadily grew substantially and was later acquired by Pepsico from Quacker for \$13 billion. This shows that simple and straightforward strategies worked for them. They have stuck to their original purpose and aim of replenishing athletes' energy between their games. However, there is scope to enhance their marketing strategies.

Analysing the data collected from the survey, we can conclude that most of the people in India prefer Red Bull Energy Drinks among the rest. Looking at the best marketing strategies, Red Bull wins, yet again with their association with F1 with 83 votes in total as compared to Monster energy's best strategy- partnership with Yamaha MotoGP with 74 votes and Gatorade's association with athletes with 69 votes.

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