

Zee Unveils "Hybrid Channels" to Reshape Regional Entertainment Landscape



Zee Entertainment Enterprises Ltd (ZEEL) is embarking on a new strategic phase, launching what it terms "hybrid General Entertainment Channels (GECs)" to redefine television consumption, particularly in India's robust regional markets. This innovative approach, officially unveiled on Saturday, July 19, 2025, signals Zee's intent to blend traditional linear broadcasting with digitally informed, audience-specific content, aiming to capture new viewers and solidify its market position.

The pivot involves the introduction of two new hybrid channels: Zee Power for the Kannada-speaking audience in Karnataka, and Zee BanglaSonar for Bengali viewers in West Bengal. These channels, set to go on air in August 2025, are designed not merely as additional offerings but as complements to Zee's existing flagship channels in these regions, Zee Kannada and Zee Bangla, respectively. The strategy acknowledges the evolving and increasingly fragmented viewing habits of audiences, especially in semi-urban and rural areas.

According to Siju Prabhakaran, Chief Cluster Officer, South and West at ZEEL, extensive research revealed a clear "white space" for "progressive, high-intensity narratives" among Kannada viewers. Zee Power will specifically target a younger, semi-urban demographic aged 18 to 35, promising fast-paced, finite fiction stories and non-fiction content, alongside films. This is a departure from the family-centric programming of Zee Kannada, aiming to cater to a more "aspirational" and "impatient" audience.

Similarly, Zee BanglaSonar will focus on a male-inclusive, mass-market demographic in West Bengal, incorporating a mix of action fiction, regional sports, folklore, gamified non-fiction, and daily films. Samrat Ghosh, Chief Cluster Officer, East, North & Premium Cluster, ZEEL, highlighted that this new channel is strategically designed to complement Zee Bangla's stronghold in urban, female-driven viewership.

This "hybrid" model extends beyond content creation. It encompasses a broader shift for Zee, positioning itself as a "content and technology powerhouse." The company's recent rebrand, with the tagline "Yours Truly, Z," and initiatives like the 'R.I.S.E' platform, underscore a commitment to leveraging data and digital insights to deliver more targeted content and advertising solutions across its 41 TV channels, its Over-The-Top (OTT) platform ZEE5, YouTube, and other digital formats.

By tailoring content for specific regional and demographic segments while maintaining a strong presence across multiple viewing platforms, Zee aims to drive both viewership and advertising revenue. The success of these hybrid channels will be a significant indicator of the media industry's ability to adapt to changing consumer preferences and effectively monetize content in an increasingly competitive and multi-platform entertainment landscape.