

The IPL Model: Sports Marketing and Product Placement Sponsorship

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ABSTRACT: *Product Placement is a new innovative and modern form of advertising and promotional mechanism in which the marketers brand their goods by placing it in sports & entertainment programs. Brand Placement when collaborated with a well respected athlete or is strategically placed on the field at a game has helped many brands draw much needed exposure to their product offerings. The modes of product placement have transformed over the years, from the traditional practice of inserting ten or thirty seconds commercials to direct placement of the brand during live game or match intervals. The infiltration of corporate sponsorship and advertising into organized sport like cricket has now opened up new gates for sports administration in India. In 2008, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) launched the Indian Premier League (IPL) – a high octane, sporting extravaganza filled with glitter, glamour and entertainment quotient. The IPL has turned out to be a very successful advertising and branding platform for various brands. IPL, a multi-million-dollar business in India has created a fusion of commercial interest and political power. The league has become a mass sports property for major multinational brands. The main objective of this study is to find out the effectiveness of brand placement as a promotional tool. Understanding the nature and extent of incorporation of brand placement in sports tournaments like the IPL and studying the viability from advertiser's point of view as a marketing tool.*

Keywords: *Product Placement, Indian Premier League, Sports Marketing, Sponsorship, Advertising, Cricket, Branding*

I. INTRODUCTION

Walk into a stadium during an IPL match or watch it on television or via online streaming feed, all you will see is ads everywhere. Every conceivable property from boundary line ropes, billboards, stumps to even the sight screen have been covered with brands and monetized. There is no sport Indians are more passionate about than cricket. The gentlemen's game has not only won the hearts of millions of cricket fans, but also managed to attract global brands to its league. In 2008, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) launched the Indian Premier League (IPL) – a high octane, sporting extravaganza filled with glitter, glamour and entertainment quotient. The IPL has turned out to be a very successful advertising and branding platform for various brands. IPL, a multi-million-dollar business in India has created a fusion of commercial interest and political power. The league has become a mass sports property for major multinational brands. The gentlemen's game has been transformed into a corporatized entertainment form. The commercial driven tournament has changed the dynamics of cricket in a massive way. The international appeal of IPL has made the tournament attract various global brands. More than 100+ brands advertise aggressively during the two-month long tournament. Indian Premier League (IPL), a business driven tournament featuring a set of city teams playing t-20 cricket has redefined sports by showcasing the best talent from across the globe. The well know players, are now a set of assets which contribute to the brand value of the local city franchise based teams.

Globalization of the Indian economy post 1991, has opened doors for various financial opportunities. Cricket in India has knocked on the right door and entered into a phase of growth and transition post Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization (LPG) initiative. Despite the Indian sports industry being disorganized, the size of Indian sports market isn't negligible and can't be ignored. India is now a favored destination for various sports events such as world's leading T-20 league in form of the Indian Premier League(IPL), Hockey India League(HIL), Pro-Kabaddi League, Badminton Premier League and many more diversified sports premierships. Sport offers corporations and other businesses a means of breaking through cluttered marketplaces, delivering advertising messages effectively, and segmenting by specific demographics. Indian Premier League has contributed majorly towards the growth of sports culture in India. The media has played a significant role in creating it as a business model of success. Sports has captured widespread mass and media attention; this has reflected the dominant mode of economic transaction in the country.

Television has played a crucial role in enabling a global fan-base approach to the world of sports. The marketers have grabbed the opportunity of growing visibility by using the techniques of marketing appeals. The visual media, television has transformed sport beyond recognition. Top sport personalities have now become major global celebrities with high earning power. The corporate backed tournament has found several innovative ways of embedding a product or service in a context devoid of ads. From Citi moment of success, Karbonn Kamal catch to DLF maximum. Product placement has become a part and parcel of IPL tournament.

Marketers integrate products and brands into sporting events in order to increase their brand exposure and drive sales for the brand. The more relevant the product is to the event; the more powerful influence it would have on the viewer. Indians who are cricket fanatics are glued to their TV sets and the brand is able to virtually captivate the audience. Apart from increasing television viewership, the fact that seasons after seasons, companies and brands still want to associate with IPL is testament its commercial and branding success. From launches to building brand awareness, the IPL has been a major driving force for the advertisers over the last decade to promote their brands and products.

The Indian Premier League has turned out to be the best property for advertisers, considering its short three-month schedule, consumer involvement and high television ratings. Over the past decade, IPL has managed to attract clients such as PepsiCo, Vivo, Oppo, Vodafone, DLF, Karbonn, Godrej, Panasonic, Havells, Cadbury-Kraft, Samsung mobiles, Cargill Foods, Kent RO and more leading multinational companies. The estimated Rs 20000 crore brand value of IPL has created a platform for these brands to reach millions of audience without having to fight too much. Be it the little known mobile phone manufacturers such as Vivo or Micromax to global telecommunications giant, Vodafone all these brands have been successful in creating brand awareness through successful campaigns during the IPL seasons. The tournament scores on two major counts – Firstly, the three-hour format makes it attractive not just to the male and young audience, but it also attracts high viewership numbers of women and other elderly family members. Secondly, the prime time slotting of games between 8pm-11pm during weekdays and double headers on weekends make it a cost effective form of entertainment means for urbanized families across India. Young fans are emotionally invested into the tournament that they form an attachment with the IPL. The deeper the association with the sport, the stronger the emotion a fan feels for the brand. The infiltration of corporate sponsorship and advertising into organized sport like Cricket has now opened up new gates for sports administration in India. The boom of commercial sponsorships has not only provided economic support to many professional and semi-professional cricketers, but it has also provided the necessary financial infrastructure for a number of lesser known cricket associations across India. Indian Premier League has reshaped sports marketing concepts, in order to meet the needs of television and the promotional industry. Major events have been transformed into the central theme of intense money making commercial activity, in which the commodified spectacle generates huge profits for the advertisers. The global sports industry is now displaying multifaceted characteristics, by transforming itself into a branch of the advertising and promotion appeals. IPL allows for extensive ground sponsorship, for brands that helps in creating brand recognition and recall. "Over the last few editions of the IPL tournament, the likes of Vodafone and Pepsi have gained single-handedly brand recall scores, which can never be achieved through orthodox advertising on general entertainment channels. Also there is a lack of options that offer a combination of high TVR and product placement opportunities.

Product placement, is a psychological influence at its finest, continues to be a wildly successful form of marketing that benefits multiple parties at once. As time goes on, product placement stands to become increasingly successful as it expands into different media. Product placement is a form of advertising in which name brand goods are placed in sports & entertainment programs. Brand Placement when collaborated with a well respected athlete or is strategically placed on the field, at a game has helped many brands draw much needed exposure to their product offerings. Collaborations with sports figures have long been a method of effectively influencing viewers as they watch their favorite sport. Sports collaborations between an athlete or a sports team with a brand or company, like other channels, have adapted and incorporated the aspects of the ever changing marketing landscape to remain effective. Technological development and growth has helped in adopting a very different approach as compared to the traditional advertising. In the current scenario, product placement helps the brand to reach out to the viewers on a large scale through various forms of media - from magazine features to TV sitcoms. Brand placement is bringing revolutionary changes in commercial economics. This trend, has encouraged consumerism through consumption in a growing market economy.

Product placement is a promotional tactic used by the company where the brand or the product is highlighted in different forms of media. They can be in the form of verbal mentions, actual use of the product by a character, visual display of a logo. The core motive of such product communication is to create awareness and higher recall about the brand to the audience. The integration of product placement contributes towards the brand success and publicity. The main motive of such integrated communications is to expose the audience to a brand whereby the effect can be maximized in terms of increased awareness and higher recall, which might motivate the consumer to buy the product.

Product placement has several distinctive characteristics, slots into the broader realm of corporate communication tools such as advertising, sponsorship, sales promotion, direct marketing, merchandising, licensing, propaganda and public relations. These corporate communication tools are linked by the objectives that they share to convey an idea to selected target audience, in order to spread and make known a specific brand identity, which can help to develop and maintain the brand equity. By integrating the communication into the goals and targets of the message, the message conveyed by the product placement acquires the objective values

from both the product or brand represented.

The common practice of broadcasting has been that advertisements are inserted within breaks, in between programs. But today's audience have enough choice and the new technological advances allow them to ignore advertised messages by switching to other channels or skipping them altogether. This has led to the proliferation of brand placement during sports matches, television serials and movies, as exposure of commercial products are engrained into the entertainment component of the programme maintaining the audience attention.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The book 'Confessions of an Advertising Man' (Ogilvy, 1964) aims to find the objective the understanding of ideas and concepts behind adverts. David expresses his works in the field of advertising, he also talks about the reliability, aptitude and professional understanding that he provided the agency through his works. It highlights the importance of good advertising for a successful brand campaigning. The book is targeting not just the advertising enthusiasts, but also people who are keen to learn and gain more in-depth understanding about the adverts that mainly target specific audience based on the company's objective.

The book 'Branded Entertainment Product placement and brand strategy in the entertainment business' (Marc, 2007) highlights the evolution of product placement from the medium of movies to various other forms of media. The book highlights the role of product placement, a successful advertising phenomenon in films for businesses, the current trend has gone beyond this to grip all forms of media. Commercial free media such as online videos, advertisements during live streaming of music has made brand placement a varied option for the viewers. Most importantly, Branded Entertainment discusses the future possibilities for using this form of promotion to recreate an emotional connection with customers and to spread the message across multimedia channels. Detailed insights into the brand strategies that is adopted by the entertainment industry to promote brands through strategic placement opportunities.

The book 'Foundations of Advertising – Theory and Practice' (Chunawalla & Sethia, 2001) helps us to understand the reasons behind advertisement and the influence it has on the viewers. It focuses on the scope of marketing, psychological, communicational, creative and production aspects of advertising and media management. It also highlights the shift that has taken place over the last few decades in the field of advertising, marketing and communication strategies.

The paper 'Research on Advertising Effectiveness' (Charles, 1956) talks about how various groups of consumers see or perceive a product, brand, make or model. It states that there is a psychological effect of how consumers are motivated and behave in terms of their perceptions of the product and the manufacturer. New understanding of perception has enormous implications for advertising, promotion and sales effort. The perception aspects of this research provide an advertiser with the knowledge of the features of the product that are seen as important, the good features they do not see in the product, the features they see as poor and unsatisfactory.

The paper 'Product Placement Effectiveness' (Liu & Li Liao, 2012) the authors aim to find out the impact of audience response after the use of product placement through internet web marketing.. Although the medium of product placement on the web has turned out to be a progressively trendy way of attaining potential customers who are able to get influenced via advert commercials, but there is limited practical experimental evidence to prove the effectiveness of the study. The research tries to gain answers to two crucial questions firstly, in order to attain good results should advertisers select the medium that's attribute is a match with the product/service and secondly, does the brand awareness medium have an impact on the effectiveness of the product through means of product placement on the internet marketing.

The paper 'Branding of Sport Teams Re-conceptualizing the fan based Brand Equity Model' (Yousaf Naik & Gupta, 2013) outlines how previous frameworks on brand-equity in team sports had heavily relied on Aaker (1991) or Keller (1993) models and had also restricted themselves not taking a holistic view of responsibility of teams' management towards fans and society in order to attract and retain loyal fans. Although, Keller (2001) argued via his brand-equity pyramid the importance of holistic view of brand salience, brand performance, brand imagery, judgments, and customer feelings, coupled with brand resonance, for leveraging long-term loyalty of the customers. In the light of the above mentioned strengths, this study aims at applying Keller's (2001) customer based brand-equity pyramid framework in context of sports marketing for building/enhancing brand-equity of sport teams.

The paper 'Television and Transformation of Sport' (Whannel, 2009) mentions that sports has played a significant part in the growth of television, especially during its emergence as a dominant global medium between 1960 and 1980. Sport has a long history, and spectator sport has been in existence at least since ancient Greece, modern professionalized sport first emerged in the late nineteenth century, during the same period that saw the emergence of mass media, brand-based advertising, and retail chain stores. Television has impacted upon social and cultural patterns; the impact on sport has been particularly dramatic. It has transformed sport

into a set of commodified global spectacles, producing huge audiences and massive new sources of income. Past few decades has seen massive deregulation and digitalization mechanism that has helped in expanding the number of channels and viewership numbers. The fragmentation of growing internet interface with viewership number increase of channels has provided sports an opportunity that helps in increasing the audience base to millions of viewers across the globe.

The paper 'Reconfiguring Media Sport for the Online World An Inquiry into Sports News and Digital Media' (Hutchins & Rowe, 2010) with key themes of sports news, media in sports, online marketing and digital media, examines a pioneering intervention by government in the control and ownership of media sport under prevailing networked digital media conditions. The paper focuses on the causes of the disagreements that prompted the inquiry of media rights issue in Australia. It has demonstrated that emerging media sport markets are characterized by complex interaction, tense competition, and awkward overlaps between broadcast media and networked digital communications.

The paper 'Economics of Sports Marketing' (Chakravarti, 2013) focuses on the key themes like branding, advertising, sponsorship, sports marketing, goodwill and product placement. The paper explains the different types of marketing initiatives that are undertaken by various kinds of businesses, to explore the market of sports. The paper 'Globalization of Sports Beyond the Boundaries?' (Maguire, 2011) it probes the interdependencies that embed sport in global processes, and capture, to varying degrees of success, why the study of sport reveals patterns of significance for those seeking to understand globalization. The development of the t20 version of the game and the franchise model adopted by the IPL, but also by the concurrent 'telemediatization' of cricket. The strengths of the text thus lie in its advocacy of a long-term perspective, the use of the concept of globalization.

The paper 'Cricket, Excesses and Market Mania' (Ramani, 2008) highlights the rise of a bonanza in cricketing world in the form of IPL, the glitz, glamour, entertainment, business associated with it. No theoretical framework has been adopted, it's a weekly article which talks about the past, present and future of cricket in India. The author points that players have now been turned into a mere commodity based on their popularity instead of their true cricketing records.

III. OBJECTIVES

The growing sports industry in India provides a major platform for strategically planned form of product placements, but there is little evidence in terms of academic research regarding the role of brand placement in creating premier sports tournaments like the Indian Premier League (IPL) as a successful business driven, corporate backed advertising platforms for brands.

- Does the IPL provide a recognizable and profitable advertising and promotional platform for brands?
- Understanding the rational and motive behind brand placement.
- Analyze the nature and extent of how brand placement has incorporated within premier sports tournaments like the Indian Premier League.
- To determine the effectiveness of brand placement as a promotional advertising tool.
- To find out if brand placement has led to a desired change in the consumer's attitude towards the brand.
- To find out the consumer's behavior towards product placement.

IV. METHODOLOGY

The researcher will adopt qualitative and quantitative methods of research. The researcher will prepare a coding sheet for the content analysis with various pre determined parameters in relation to brand placement and positioning of various brands throughout product positioning and advertising during the Indian Premier League games, content analysis study would help the researcher gain perspective on the issue and at the same time help to quantify the data. The researcher has chosen content analysis as a method, as this helped in understanding the concept better, revealed more about the subject and simultaneously helped in preparing the interview schedule. It shall help the researcher in knowing more about the impact that brand placement and product positioning during the IPL games. The researcher assesses the effectiveness of product placement during the Indian Premier League tournament based on the concepts of brand positioning, recall, attitudes and recognition factors. The process of study involves collecting and analyzing of information, images and other forms of data to increase our understanding for the area of the study. The purpose of study is to analyze the nature and extent of how brand placement has incorporated within premier sports tournaments like the Indian Premier League.

For the purpose of this research the method that the researcher adopted was interviews with experts from the field of Advertising, Sports Marketing and a cricket expert. This was done in order to find out their opinions regarding how these experts view IPL as a platform to towards global advertising and to analyze the extent and nature of how brand IPL as an international status which is presently incorporated within sports industry as a premier tournament.

Topic: IPL as a brand in the sports market. A series of interview talks with the likes of sports marketing gurus, advertising professionals for understanding the economics which is associated with the sports. By conducting these interviews, the idea and perception of these experts from the field of sports and marketing shall be obtained.

V. ANALYSIS

Keller's Brand Equity Model

The Keller's Brand Equity Model also known as the Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) Model. Kevin Keller, developed the model. His concept behind the model is simple, according to him, in order to build a strong brand name, it's important to shape how customers think and feel about your product or service.

A right type of atmosphere as to created around your brand, so that the audience have a positive attitude, feelings, beliefs, opinions and perception about the brand. A stronger brand equity will help to increase the sales; the customers will recommend the same to other potential customers.

The customer based Keller's brand-equity pyramid can be applied in context of sport teams. Structuring brand-equity of sport teams involves a sequence of essential steps forming a pyramid like structure where the very initial step is exploring the reasons for the teams' existence which is called as brand salience and it can be termed as 'team salience'. Other important steps such as defining the team meaning, team response and finally team relationships with the fans. Every step is quite multifaceted in itself and is interlinked on the success of the preceding step.

The management of the sport team cannot override to the next step without defining the previous step. The Keller's brand equity model can be applied in the sports context as a building block which forms a pyramid like structure. The sport teams and their administrative management need to reach the top of the pyramid for forming strong brand-equity for the teams in the given sports tournament

Team Identity: The concept of brand salience revolves around creating an identity or awareness for your brand in order to make sure that your brand stands out from the competitors and the customer's recognize and are aware of its presence in the market. According to Keller (2001), brand salience helps in defining the identity of the teams rather than that of team fans. According to him, brand identity creates brand awareness which gives rise to brand salience with customers having more in-depth information about the brand like the product category in which the brand competes and which need of the customer the brand is going to satisfy.

The team management executives need to have a clear understanding of the reason for their existence, by defining the teams 'hierarchy of intent' as well as the fans also need to be interested in the team's product category, the team logo, anthem. The company's brand name and the team owned by the company forms a principal name in the fans mind which is set even if they are not involved with the sports. In a sponsorship driven sports tournament the team salience can be understood on the basis of two key terms depth and breadth. Depth signifies the meaning of brand awareness and breadth defines a more multifaceted scenario of fans mind including fans mind share, purchase, and consumption related behavior.

Team Meaning: It can be distinguished into two sub-categories team performance and team imagery. These two categories represent the ways in which a fan is associated with the sports team, for example the team performance includes the functional and act related fans associations and team imagery represents the abstract and imaginations related relations with the sports team. Team image and brand associations are an important contributor of brand loyalty, sale of tickets, enhanced brand-equity, merchandise sales.

Under the Keller brand equity model brand association and team performance are included under brand meaning. Good team performance during the matches matters for fans who connect a particular meaning to the team meeting their useful needs. The consistency of the team during the tournament, team interaction with the fans, jersey color, team logo, price of the tickets for a game at the stadium are some of the attributes that fans compare with other rival teams to rate and compare the team's performance and fan association. Fan demographic factors (gender, ethnicity, race, income, marital status), fans psychographic factors (attitude towards sports, social issues, careers or political interest), mode of consumption of sports (stadiums, television, online), fan image and their team oriented values, and the past performance of the team under consideration play an important role while forming team association for the loyal fans.

Fans Responses: It tries to explore the perception of the fans about the team based on various marketing and advertising activities undertaken by the team management to understand the fans opinion, feelings, judgments about the team. Whether they are emotional attached to the team or they support it because of the presence of their favorite player in the team. The fan responses can be distinguished into two categories namely, fans judgments and fan feelings. The judgment aspect explores the personal and rational opinions of the fans towards the team created based on team performance or other functional aspects of the team. The judgment can be on the players, performance of the team, credibility, entertaining worth of the team, sportsmanship, their superiority or dominance over other teams in the tournament or league. On the other hand, fan feelings refer to the reaction which is emotionally driven for the team. These feelings can be a sort of sentimental or affectionate attachment

with the team, closely following the team and its activities during the tournament, excited or worried about the team's performance, sense of pride or respect by supporting the team. The fans feelings and judgment plays an integral role in the fans perception towards the companies that are sponsoring the team. This enhances the loyalty and revenue for the team sponsors directly linked to the team performance.

Team-Fans Relationship: Team resonance is the major foundation for building a strong relationship between the fans and the team according to the fan based brand equity pyramid. Resonance creates an impression towards the fans by developing a strong psychological bonding. This bonding helps the team management to create loyalty in form of constant match viewership, selling team merchandise, tickets to the fans. Ultimately all this has an impact on the team's revenue. Fans would be die hard supporters and highly loyal to the team and their activities only if they find the investments made by the team management is worthy and reliable. Active fans would hold loyal team membership, communicate and spread positive news and information about the team through word of mouth and social networking sites by enacting the role of brand ambassador for the team and strengthening the bond with other fans. Corporate Social Responsibility through sports marketing helps in creating a positive impact for the brand image, its value and credibility. It provides strength and competitive positioning to the brand against its competitors in the market through the means of sports tournaments. The teams are also able to achieve larger fan base by emotionally connecting through social awareness and cause. In IPL, Royal Challengers Bangalore – Go Green Initiative, Mumbai Indians – Education for All, Rajasthan Royals – Operation Smile, Delhi Daredevils – Dare to Care, education and protection of girl child are examples of teams being associated with socially accepted causes. Such initiatives help in creating a perception among the fans that their team is reliable and are contributing significantly towards the society. Thus enhancing a psychological bonding which strengthens fan loyalty and fan based brand equity for the teams.

Advertising Models

The advertising model based on the conventional 30-second ad is concentrated on the broadcasters that includes TV networks, cable and satellite service providers. The broadcaster buys the rights to air an advert for different TV series, sports tournament or regular news break programs from the concerned channel's production studio, and then it airs the shows for consumers. To make a profit, the broadcaster sells ad spots to advertisers or ad agencies. The cost for the ad spot varies according to the popularity of the TV show, sport tournament, the audience reach and the airing time, such as prime time slots. In this model, the broadcaster sells all the ad spots, and gets all of the advertising revenue. The only revenue source for the content creators, or the production studios, is the licensing fees broadcasters pay for the rights to air their shows. Sony Pictures Networks (SPN) had sold all its inventory for IPL season 9 and earned advertising revenues close to Rs 1200 crores. The company had an ad revenue growth of 15-20 per cent from IPL in 2016 season, as it had hiked its advertisement rate by 15 per cent. The average price for a 10-second spot in IPL 1 was Rs 2.5 lakh, it rose to Rs 3.5 lakh in the next season. For IPL 3 and IPL 4, the price remained more or less constant at Rs 4.5 lakh per 10 seconds, while the rates charged this season were between Rs 4.5 – 5 lakhs. The current season rate was priced at Rs 7 – 7.5 lakhs for a 10 seconds slot. It's three times more the ad rate charged by the broadcaster as compared to the inaugural season of IPL.

Under the product placement advertising model, before a show is even completed, the production studio can sell placement spots either through an ad agency/ product placement agency or by reaching advertisers directly. In exchange, the studio may get a placement fee, bartered goods (i.e. the producer gets a free car), or the right to use the product in the show, saving some production costs. In this model, broadcasters do not receive any revenue from product placement. Advertising revenue goes only to production studios. Similarly, for a sports tournament like the Indian Premier League, the advertising model for product placement is followed for player outfits, helmets, caps and other team equipment's. The playing field is covered by 6 to 8 giant logos, one or two on the straights and the remaining on the square. The boundary board, triangles, sightscreen and the stumps also carry company branding. The fiberglass of the dugout is also tattooed with various company logos. The giant screen constantly displays various product advertisements. All these strategic placements provide an opportunity for the broadcaster to earn millions of dollars by creating a vivid viewing experience for the spectator. This advertising model in sports creates an idea of aesthetically pleasing the audience. IPL, with each season, has become the advertiser's favorite property, this is helping the broadcasters, SET Max to grow rapidly. IPL cuts across age demographics and geography, being a great bet for advertisers. Also, the channel's decision to go non-exclusive with the sponsor category has helped more brands to come on board.

Marketing Mix of IPL

Marketer E. Jerome McCarthy proposed the concept of 4 P's, ever since then it has been widely used in the marketing and advertising industry. The business tool of marketing mix consists of Product, Price, Place and Promotion which is used in marketing by the marketers. The 4 P's help in defining the marketing options and

strategies in order to meet customer need and demand. The combination of cricket and television has turned out to be the main revenue model for sports these days. The role of media has been significant while highlighting large broadcast deals for sports like cricket, football, badminton. The sports tournament generates substantial revenues from the broadcasting channel and the franchises through sponsorship and team merchandising. The major revenue stream for the IPL is sale of broadcast rights, sponsorship and gate receipts. The tournament has followed a series of branding and marketing strategies which have turned out to be successful over the course of past years. The tournament's official strategies and advertisements are planned and executed by Ogilvy and Mather. The tournament provides an opportunity for the advertisers to promote their product or brands on the biggest Indian television platform. BCCI and the other stakeholders have packaged the tournament as means of sports cum entertainment arena for the target audience. The short twenty overs format attracts the youth and family audience, which is an added bonus to the advertisers. The broadcasters and marketing organizers of IPL have packaged the entire product in such a convenient form that even controversies and news helps the advertisers to attract audience towards their products as a part of branding exercise. The official broadcasting partner, Set Max has always come up with catchy advertisement campaigns for IPL in order to create hype and attract viewership. From "Manoranjan ka Baap", "Cricket ka Karmayudh" to "Ek India Happy Wala" all these promotional campaigns have been successful in order to invoke the excitement and drive passion among the cricketing fans for the tournament. All these marketing strategies and strong branding initiatives have helped the tournament to attain a mass global appeal and strong brand value. The progress and prosperity of India also provides tournaments like the IPL to grow and be fuelled by audience and brand sponsorships.

Product – Indian Premier League, the brainchild of Lalit Modi is currently one of the hottest sports property in the world. Started in 2008, post India's successful t20 world cup winning campaign in South Africa, has a perfect blend of cricket and entertainment. The service market establishes the different ways on the basis of business marketing concepts. As far as IPL as a product is concerned, the interest of the advertisers, brands and audience will depend upon the level of competition in the league. That is based upon the interest of BCCI, to make sure the level of competition which sustains the demand and determines the long term liability of the league. The level of competition depends upon the number of teams in the league, the structure of the league - system versus a single tier system - number of matches in a season, end of season, play offs and tournaments, salary caps and the free agency. The evolution of IPL as a brand is an example of successful product innovation, which effectively combines entertainment and sports. Brand IPL has become a lot more consistent. The first few years saw tremendous growth in excess of 40-50% across all revenue segments, but now brand IPL has become stable and provides sustainable returns of 10-20% growth per season.

Price – Price is a key marketing tool for several crucial purposes, it is difficult to evaluate a service before purchase their price may act as an indicator of quality and creative pricing can help for smooth demand. The pricing structure of IPL is a major source of income generator for Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI). According to reports and surveys, the two-month long tournament shall help BCCI to earn a revenue of about 2 billion US dollars, over a period of five to ten years. The revenue gets directed to a central pool, out of which 40% goes to IPL tournament, 54% is shared among the team franchisees and rest 6% is distributed as prize money in equal proportion. Post 2017, the revenue sharing model will be changed to 45% franchisees, 50% to the IPL fund and rest 5% as prize money. IPL signs various global brands as their main sponsors and co-sponsors. Through IPL season 9, the official broadcasters, Sony were able to earn revenues worth Rs 1,100 crores. The eight franchises earned Rs 200 – 230 crores, while the BCCI generated Rs 220 – 250 crores from on-ground sponsorship and HotStar, the digital broadcasting rights holder got around Rs 40 crores.

Place – Although the tournament is hosted within India, IPL is a major factor contributing towards globalization of cricket from India. The tournament is a market comprising of spectators and global television audience. It creates a diverse appeal covering major parts of Europe, Africa, USA, Caribbean nations and other parts of Asia. The principle reason for the success of IPL is credited to the geography and innovation mechanism. The Asian sub-continent which comprises of the top cricket playing nations like India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, provides the largest target audience for the tournament. The 9th season of IPL attracted around 350 million viewers within India alone, which is on par with a global audience of 500 million of the last FIFA world cup. The vast geographical stretch in form of city based franchise model helps to attract potential mass audience and generate solid fan base and large TV revenues. IPL is the most reached and viewed property in India. Beyond the realms of TV and digital mediums, 34 fan parks in small cities and towns across India made the tournament bigger for fans who got to experience the action in a very unique way compared to other competitors from various other t20 leagues in the world.

Promotion – The intangible element of any product or service is difficult to communicate. Promotion is the most essential part of the organization which helped to communicate to the world about the product. The means of advertising, marketing, public relations, online social media can be adopted to promote the product to the target audience. The two-month long tournament uses extensive promotional strategies by hiring specialized branding firms to help them organize the event. The organizers aim to target various segments of the audience

especially the youth and the children. The franchise team's management sits down with its team sponsors and co-sponsors to draw a promotional plan for the tournament. Top Bollywood celebrities like Shah Rukh Khan, Preity Zinta, Shilpa Shetty and industrialists such as Mukesh Ambani, Vijay Mallya help in attracting crowds to the tournament. These celebrities turn out to be their team ambassadors who up the glam quotient of the tournament. Rajasthan Royals had hired UK-based Photolink Creative Group, which has helped with the branding of Manchester United and Everton football clubs. Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) works with a Mumbai-based MarketGate Consulting. OPN Advertising Pvt. Ltd had planned sports-related corporate social responsibility initiatives for Chennai Super Kings like holding painting competitions for schoolchildren a monthly comic series featuring its cricketers. Promotional strategies through social media advertising and television commercials are a huge draw during the tournament. In 2008, through the inaugural season of IPL, BCCI earned 723.9 million US dollars by auctioning 8 city based franchise teams to various stakeholders. Even though IPL has been surrounded with a series of controversies on and off the field, yet it still manages to grab high recognition and fetch huge sum of money for the BCCI. In 2010, brand image and brand popularity helped BCCI raise 703 million US dollars for 2 new teams in the IPL.

Revenue Model of IPL

The major source of revenue generation for IPL comes in form of selling the broadcasting media rights, title sponsorship, corporate sponsorship and auctioning franchisee rights.

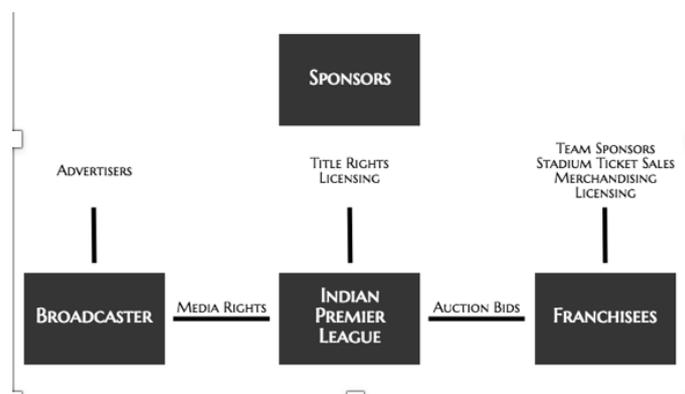


Figure 1: Revenue Distribution Model of IPL

The media rights for broadcasting the league across the globe had been sold to World Sports Group and Sony Entertainment Ltd for 1.026 billion US dollars for a period of 10 years in 2008. World Sport Group got the international media rights for Internet, mobile and radio, while Sony Max bagged the South Asia audio-visual rights. As part of the deal, the Sony group will pay the BCCI US\$908 million for the telecast rights and US\$108 million for the promotion of the tournament. From the sale of media rights, IPL will keep 20% for itself, give out 8% as prize money for the tournament and distribute the remaining 72% evenly between the franchisees. These proportions were legal until 2012, after which IPL's share went up in two stages by 2018, with the shares of both prize money and franchisees declining. The revenue gets directed to a central pool, out of which 40% goes to IPL tournament, 54% is shared among the team franchisees and rest 6% is distributed as prize money in equal proportion. Post 2017, the revenue sharing model will be changed to 45% franchisees, 50% to the IPL fund and rest 5% as prize money.

The principal source of revenue centrally comes from selling title sponsorship rights for the tournament followed by backing of several corporate companies as co-sponsors and brand advertisers. Title Sponsorship fee, licensed merchandise, corporate sponsors all of these form the central revenue source for the IPL. During the inaugural 2008 season, Indian real estate conglomerate DLF paid a sponsorship fee of Rs 250 crores for a period of 5 years to be the title sponsors for Indian Premier League. The title sponsorship fee was evenly shared by the franchising teams. BCCI retains around 40 percent of the title sponsorship revenue and while the remaining 60 percent is evenly distributed among the franchisees. The other corporate sponsors were the likes of Hero Honda, Pepsi Co and Kingfisher. All these 3 corporate honchos in total helped BCCI raise 61.5 million US dollars additionally as part of central revenue source. In November 2012, global beverage giant PepsiCo had bagged the IPL title sponsorship rights for a period of next five years (2013- 17) for Rs 396.8 crore (\$71.77 million approx.), which was almost double the original title sponsorship deal done in 2008 with DLF. Along with PepsiCo, the only other contender for the title sponsorships rights was Airtel, an Indian telecommunications company, who had bid Rs 316 crore (\$57.27 million approx.). But the spot fixing scandal and the Lodha committee's verdict on corruption within the IPL made Pepsi terminate and withdraw its title sponsorship deal with IPL. Lack of transparency and legitimacy attached to the property was the main reason for

termination cited by PepsiCo. This provided an opportunity for the Chinese mobile company Vivo to replace PepsiCo as the title sponsor of the Indian Premier League, a change necessitated by the beverage giant's impulsive withdrawal from a five-year deal that was to end in 2017. The other important stream of revenue flows is generated by the franchisee bids and rights, of which 20% is shared with the IPL and BCCI. Franchisee rights includes ticket sales collection, team sponsorship and co-sponsorship agreement fees, in stadia advertising profits, hospitality and communication sponsors fee, etc. The franchises have been auctioned to various business conglomerates and high profile personalities based on the city based model. The governing body of IPL (BCCI) gets a yearly fee from each franchise. It is 10% of the total bidding price that they pay every year, the money is kept with BCCI which they use for meeting the organizing expenses of the tournament. All the franchise teams sign their own individual corporate level sponsorship deals which includes their jersey, kit, beverages, transportation, telecommunications sponsors. The franchises control the home games hospitality and ticketing revenue by 80 20 ratio percentage. Only 20% is allocated to the IPL governing council.

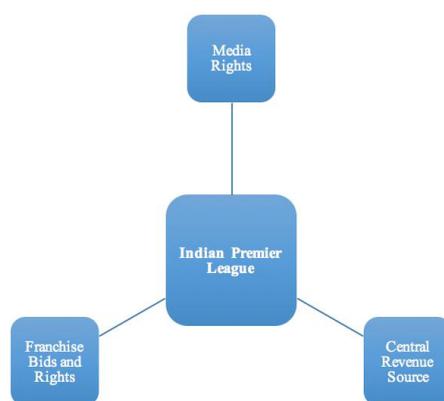


Figure 2: Revenue Generation Model

Prize Distribution in IPL

Player Agreement: IPL has two different forms of player agreement mechanisms in order to attract well reputed cricket personalities. The first form is known as the “firm agreement”. In this form of agreement, the IPL commits a certain fee to the player for participating in the tournament. If the franchise team bids more for that player in the auction between the franchisees for different players, then the IPL gets to keep the excess. Under the “basic agreement” form the player receives whatever is the bid amount for him. Majority of the players who sign for the IPL tournament opt for the “basic agreement”. Apart from the annual fee contracted with the franchisee, they get a daily allowance of \$100 through the IPL season, which lasts about a month-and-a-half. The total amount spent on player fees for an IPL team cannot be less than \$3.3 million each year and is actually expected to be significantly higher. In other words, players will earn about Rs 80 lakh or more per season on average, though the amount would vary from one member of the team to another. Players could also get bonuses from the team owners and perhaps even the prize money that the team wins by virtue of where it finishes in the tournament. But it is for each franchisee to decide whether these payments are made to the players or not based on their participation in the Indian Premier League.

Financial performance of the IPL teams: Indian Premier League has transformed the star power status of the likes of Shah Rukh Khan, owner of Kolkata Knight Riders into viable financial performance on consistent basis. KKR is one of the few teams that has witnessed profitable revenues on successive edition basis of the tournament. While the other IPL teams are yet to hit pay dirt, KKR have catapulted the functioning of the tournament with their marketing strategies to enter into the profit zone. During the 2014-15 IPL season, KKR had posted the highest revenues among all IPL teams. They had recorded 30% growth in revenues and 54% jump in profits despite the tournament being shifted to United Arab Emirates due to Lok Sabha elections. Although the likes of Chennai Super Kings and Mumbai Indians have won the tournament more than once, but they have still failed to record consistent profits. These teams still are yet to capitalize on the modern means of revenue source such as merchandising and digital activities. Knight Riders Sports Pvt Ltd, which runs KKR, had revenues of Rs 168.71 crore in 2014-15, the year it won the tournament for a second time, up from Rs 128.81 crore in the previous year. The only other team that was in the green in 2014-15 was Kings XI Punjab, which finished second behind KKR in 2014, with profits of Rs 12.76 crore, up from a loss of Rs 4.36 crore in the previous year. Kings XI also reported a 26% year-on year increase in its revenues at Rs 130.06 crore in 2014-15, up from Rs 103.22 crore. The Indian Premier League has seen a lot of turmoil in the past couple of years. While popular teams have managed to increase their sponsorship revenues over the years, most of them have yet to

make profits. Mukesh Ambani-owned Mumbai Indians, for instance, has seen impressive revenues on the back of consistent performance since 2011, but it could not turn in a profit. Indiawin Sports Private Ltd, which runs MI, had reported revenues of Rs 220.87 crore in 2013-14, the year it won its first IPL, but it turned in a loss of Rs 5.04 crore. In the following year, its revenues slipped to Rs 167.75 crore, but the firm managed to reduce its loss to Rs 3.87 crore. The star-studded Royal Challengers Bangalore, with players such as Virat Kohli, Chris Gayle and AB de Villiers, has been in the red between 2011 and 2014. It showed losses of Rs 30.06 crore in 2014-15, Rs 99.04 crore in 2013-14, and Rs 7.86 crore in 2012-13. Its revenues have stagnated around the Rs 90 crore mark as it failed to perform consistently. Besides the central pool, revenues sources for teams include ticket sales, sponsorship on team jersey, licensing and merchandising. On an average, team sponsorship revenues are between Rs 25-40 crore and ticket sales account for around Rs 20-35 crore. Central pool revenues are in the Rs 70-80 crore range for franchises. "While sponsorship revenues have strengthened, merchandising is still a very nascent avenue for revenues, thanks to high cost of merchandise, replica t-shirts and rampant piracy. Sun Risers Hyderabad (SRH), which came into IPL in 2013 after replacing Deccan Chargers, reported loss of Rs 58.33 crore in FY2014-15.

Content Analysis - Apparel Sponsorship

Indian Premier League Sponsorship History (2008 - 2016)									
Team/Season	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
RCB	Reebok	Reebok	Reebok	Reebok	Reebok	Reebok	Reebok	Adidas	Zevo
CSK	Reebok	Reebok	Reebok	Reebok	Reebok	Reebok	Reebok	Spartan	N/A
MI	Adidas	Adidas	Adidas	Adidas	Adidas	Adidas	Adidas	Reebok	Zevo
DD	Adidas	Adidas	Adidas	Adidas	Adidas	Adidas	None	Shiv-Naresh	Shiv-Naresh
KKR	Reebok	Reebok	Reebok	Reebok	Reebok	Reebok	None	None	None
RR	Reebok	Puma	Puma	Puma	Puma	Puma	None	None	N/A
DC	Nike	Puma	Puma	Puma	Puma	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
KXIP	Provogue	Reebok	Reebok	Reebok	Reebok	TK Sports	TK Sports	Tyka	Tyka
PWI	N/A	N/A	N/A	Adidas	Adidas	TK Sports	N/A	N/A	N/A
KTK	N/A	N/A	N/A	Lotto	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
SRH	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Puma	TK Sports	Tyka	Tyka
RPS	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Seven
GL	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Tyka

Figure 3: Apparel History in IPL

The IPL has been a huge success since its launch. It has never failed to cause delight on the faces of the stakeholders. The official apparel partners are one such imperative unit that has been endeavoring to create an identity and make the team look pronounced.

Ever since its inception in 2008, the Indian Premier League has been successful in attracting the giants of the sportswear industry to sponsor the various franchises. The inaugural season of the IPL witnessed three of the big world market players in the sportswear industry sponsor seven different IPL teams. The likes of Reebok had bagged the rights for four IPL teams – Royal Challengers Bangalore, Chennai Super Kings, Kolkata Knight Riders and Rajasthan Royals, while Adidas signed up to fabricate kits for Mumbai Indians and Delhi Daredevils. Adidas sponsored the two IPL teams which had Sachin Tendulkar and Virender Sehwag as their team captain, they also turned out to be the brand ambassadors for the sports manufacturer. On the other hand, Nike was the kit manufacturer for Deccan Chargers. This turned out to be Nike’s first and last relationship with any team in the IPL. Kings XI Punjab had found their kit sponsorship in a not so popular fashion brand named Provogue. Reebok and Adidas managed to maintain its sponsorship deals with Royal Challengers Bangalore, Chennai Super Kings, Mumbai Indians, Delhi Daredevils and Kolkata Knight Riders for the next few editions of the league. The other three teams let go of their respective sponsors the next season. In 2009, Puma made its entry into the IPL with its association with Rajasthan Royals and Deccan Chargers both, signing a five-year deal agreement. Reebok had terminated its Rajasthan Royals deal which had only lasted for one year and replaced it with a new four-year deal with Kings XI Punjab. The number of teams that Reebok sponsored still remained four in 2009 season which included Royal Challengers Bangalore, Chennai Super Kings, Kolkata Knight Riders and Kings XI Punjab.

Nothing much changed for next two editions of the league. In 2011, two new teams became part of the IPL extravaganza namely, Pune Warriors India and Kochi Tuskers Kerala. Adidas managed to extend its presence by securing a deal for the next two years with Pune Warriors India. Lotto inked a deal with Kochi

Tuskers Kerala on two-year agreement basis, but the deal ended post 2011 season because the Kochi Tuskers team failed to participate in future seasons. In 2012, the association of Reebok with Royal Challengers Bangalore, Chennai Super Kings and Kolkata Knight Riders and that of Adidas with Mumbai Indians and Delhi Daredevils came to an end. Adidas 2-year deal with Pune Warriors India also ended in 2012. The Reebok sponsorship got extended for a year for Kolkata Knight Riders and by two years for Royal Challengers Bangalore and Chennai Super Kings. Adidas also managed to renew their deal for two more years with Mumbai Indians and for a year with Delhi Daredevils. Puma's five-year deal was completed in 2013, but, because Deccan Chargers was defunct in 2013, the replacing team – Sun Risers Hyderabad was handed over the remaining one-year Puma deal. Beside all the swaps and changes, a new player named TK Sports, had made its way into IPL by sponsoring Kings XI Punjab and Pune Warriors India during the 2013 IPL season.

The controversial spot fixing scandal rocked the 2014 season of IPL, it resulted in three out of eight IPL teams to play without an official kit maker. Delhi Daredevils, Kolkata Knight Riders and Rajasthan Royals became sponsor-less for the entire season. Reebok's Royal Challengers Bangalore, Chennai Super Kings association and Adidas' Mumbai Indians association had officially ended. While TK sports continued their kit sponsorship deal with Kings XI Punjab, it also bagged deal with Sun Risers Hyderabad in 2013 in place of the defunct Pune Warriors India. 2015 IPL season saw as much as three new sponsors for the franchises. Adidas once again returned to IPL tournament by sponsoring Royal Challengers Bangalore. Spartan made an entry into IPL by sponsoring Chennai Super Kings. Both, Spartan and Adidas, sponsored the teams which had their ambassadors – Virat Kohli and MS Dhoni as the team captains. The home brand of Reliance, Performax started sponsoring Mumbai Indians from 2015. Well known and reputed sports goods manufacturer, Shiv-Naresh signed a deal with Delhi Daredevils. TK Sports launched a subsidiary 'Tyka' brand and continued to sponsor Kings XI Punjab and Sun Risers Hyderabad.



Figure 4: Reebok Logo

Content Analysis of IPL Team Jerseys

Based on parameters of brand placing on the team apparel and kits of several IPL teams a detailed analysis has been conducted by the researcher.

Royal Challengers Bangalore: The 2016 IPL season witnessed the maximum alterations on the Royal Challengers Bangalore jersey compared to the former editions of the tournament. Zeven replaced Adidas as the official kit supplier for the team. Zeven is a sports goods manufacturer with the greats like of Mahesh Bhupathi and Ravi Shastri in its corporate unit.

The 2016 jersey had a new and refreshing look with red and black covering the majority of the team jersey area. The gold color has been used only for edging the jersey sides and blue has been completely eliminated compared to the previous editions jerseys. The new look of the Royal Challengers Bangalore team jersey was designed by Michael Foley, well-known among the sportswear designers.

The home and away jerseys swap primary and secondary colors except the collar texture which remains same for both. The sides beneath the arms and the extended patching on the trousers with the black design on home apparel turn grey on the away strips, not red.

The names and numbers for the players are printed in gold, which is the only gold-dominant area, unlike previous designs. Talking about the brand placement on the team jersey, Huawei which rested on the belly spot had terminated its contract and has now been replaced by Hero Cycles. The logo contains white background, placed on the front center of the jersey. The chest area is held by Lloyd Air Conditioners, another new entrant as a sponsor into the Royal Challengers Bangalore team. Britannia and Tata Motors, now promoting their car Zest continue to place themselves on the sleeves while LYF Smartphones is another new addition on the sleeve.

Kingfisher, dons the back but has nothing below it unlike previous seasons entitled lines like 'Packaged Drinking Water' in 2014 and 'Premium' in 2015. The jersey maker Zeven and 7UP are seen on trousers while Acer and Himalaya Mens' (initially 'Pimple?') are placed on the headgear. The 'Game for Green' jersey wasn't very different except for the primary colour being green. The only change was the usage of black colour for name and numbers instead of the usual gold. As always, twitter handles of the players were used in the place of names at the back. The team used did not use the green caps for unknown reasons and played with usual red caps. The batting and keeping gear was red as opposed to previous seasons' gold variants.



Figure 5: Royal Challengers Bangalore

Kings XI Punjab: The Wadia and Dabur Group owned team has witnessed the several high and lows of the IPL tournament. The main USP of the team has been its vibrant team culture and aggressive playing strategies. Having a strong brand name for itself in the IPL, and increasing its marketing and branding presence by efficient utilizing of Preity Zinta by associating herself as the principle team owner of the team. Over the years, Reebok and US Polo Association have been the official team kits supplier to the team, but in past three editions of the tournament TYKA Sports has been the official manufacturer for Kings XI Punjab.

The 2016 IPL auction was clear strategy mishap by the team management. Although, KXIP team consists of several reputed players like Shaun Marsh, Glenn Maxwell, David Miller, Murali Vijay, Wriddhiman Saha and many talented young Indian players. The team had a horrible run in the 2016 season, due to the lack of experience in their batting line up and over-dependence on their foreign players. During the start of the tournament, David Miller was appointed as the captain of the team, but due to several reasons like dip in his personal batting form and lack of wins under the teams belt, KXIP handed over the team's captaincy to Murali Vijay for the remainder of the IPL tournament.

The KXIP jersey dons a rich red color that occupies foremost the entire space. The red color has been combined with shiny silver color stripes on the sides of the jersey. The color tries to epitomize the matter of pride amongst the Punjabis. They are considered to be lion hearted, free spirited, passionate and brave towards the game. The lions see themselves as brave, royal players with huge hearts and try reflecting their loud and gallant culture. The red color on the jersey tries to depict the strength and fierceness of the Punjabis and their desire to excel in the game of cricket. The team has list of robust, well reputed sponsors in their ranks. Tata Motors Prima and Idea 4G are the official title sponsors for the team. Tata Motors Prima logo was placed on the front, central belly spot region of the jersey. The silver bold logo highlights the name Tata motors and Prima, their business division. The logo has no background color, it submerges itself in the red color of the jersey making it look elegant and classy. Idea, the other title sponsor has its logo placed on the back part of the jersey. The yellow color logo adds richness to the back design which is right above the player number and name section. The player name and number is highlighted in bold silver color. The official partners of the team, Valvoline Oil is placed on the core chest area of the jersey. Royal Stag and HTC occupy the right sleeves section of the jersey. KEI Wires and Cables and the IPL logo are placed on the other side of the sleeves section. The trousers are silver in color, adding contrast to the bright red jersey. TYKA, the official kitting partner have their logo placed on the right leg side of the trouser and Prayag is branded on the left leg side of the trousers. The team headgear features the Britannia Good day logo on the sides of the players' helmet. Apart from these brands, KXIP also has a series of other brands as their team partners. The official good times partner is Kingfisher. The official partner also includes Coca Cola, Surya Led. Punjab Kesari is the official media partner of the team. 92.7 Big FM is the radio partner, BookmyShow is the ticketing partner. AHF Aids Healthcare foundation is the official CSR partner of Kings XI Punjab team.



Figure 6: Kings XI Punjab

Brand Placement in Indian Premier League



Figure 7: In-stadium brand placement

Product Placement of Various Sponsors during IPL 2016 (In-Stadium Advertising)

Designation/Placement	Sponsors							IPL team sponsors
	Vivo	Vodafone	Yes Bank	Maruti Suzuki	FreeCharge	CEAT Tyres	Hotstar	
Stumps	Exclusive Branding	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Pitch Mats	Both the ends	Midwicket sign	-					
Perimeter Boards	12 boards	7 boards	7 boards	7 boards	7 boards	7 boards	7 boards	6 boards
Sight Screen	50% coverage	10% coverage	15% coverage	5% coverage	5% coverage	10% coverage	10% coverage	5% coverage
Boundary Rope	50% coverage	10% coverage	10% coverage	10% coverage	10% coverage	10% coverage	10% coverage	-
Team Dugouts	5% coverage	5% coverage	5% coverage	5% coverage	5% coverage	5% coverage	5% coverage	60% coverage
Presentation Cut-out	20% coverage	15% coverage	15% coverage	15% coverage	10% coverage	10% coverage	10% coverage	5% coverage
Commentary Cut-out	25% coverage	15% coverage	15% coverage	15% coverage	10% coverage	10% coverage	10% coverage	10% coverage

Figure 8: Analysis of In-stadium advertising

Journey of IPL - Ad Rates and Viewership

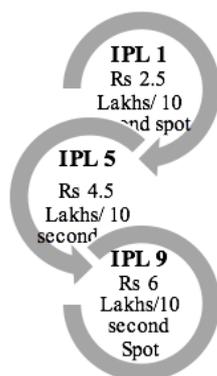


Figure 9: Ad Rates in IPL

The Indian Premier League has undergone a tremendous shift from its inception up to the 9th edition. Advertisers and marketers have always associated themselves with a view to rake up higher sales and customer ship by providing massive advertising revenues to the broadcasters.

The buzz was always surrounding the 9th edition of IPL, Pepsi backed out from the title sponsorship post the spot fixing allegations and removal of two highly fan followed and reputed teams after the Supreme Court verdict. But the Chinese mobile giant, Vivo grabbed the opportunity both hands and signed a two-year title sponsorship deal for Rs 160 crores. The 9th edition began with minimal turnout in the stadiums across various cities, but the advertisers grabbed the low key opportunity by sponsoring and associating their top brands with the tournament. The journey of IPL has seen a tremendous growth since its inception, the inaugural season witnessed a viewership of 102 million and revenues of Rs 305 crore. Over the 9 seasons of the tournament, the viewership and revenue has seen a steady increase. The revenues have increased at the rate of 400% valued at Rs 1200 crores and the viewership has more than doubled at 266 million during the 9th edition of the league. The top performing markets are city centric such as Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata, Bengaluru, Hyderabad and many more franchise oriented states like Goa, Maharashtra and Gujarat. According a recent survey, the IPL has managed to gain a reach of 43% in the rural areas. 46% was the female viewership figures during IPL 9, the most watched audience covered the 22-30-year-old target segment. The broadcaster Sony India, was able to sell their entire advert inventory for 60 matches more than a month in advance, an accomplishment which was unattainable over the previous 8 editions of the tournament. Over the years, the ad rates have tremendously increased irrespective of the controversies being associated with the league. There has been a steady 15% increase in the ad rates between IPL 8 and IPL 9 season. For a 10 second ad spot the advertisers had to shell out anywhere between Rs 6-8 lakhs compared to Rs 4.5-5.5 lakhs during the 8th edition. The last 4 matches during the playoff stages saw an exuberant price tag associated with adverts which were ranging from Rs 20-25 Lakhs for a 10 second spot.

The tournament is surrounded by a heavy brandscape loaded with sponsors and brand associations. More than 80 brands were associated with the eight IPL teams during the 9th edition. Companies like Freecharge and Maruti Suzuki associated themselves with the league for the very first time. Maruti Suzuki capitalized on the sponsorship opportunity and promoted its latest car, the Vitara Brezza by displaying it at every stadium during the IPL games. Since the target age group for the tournament is between 15 to 34 years, the sponsorship deal provided the company a great mechanism to connect and position its sporty new SUV car in the market. They also had their brand logo displayed on the perimeter boards, scoreboards and runner boards. Vodafone has been associated with the league from the very beginning, and it has gained a lot of popularity and reachability for its ZooZoo campaign. Several other brands like Raymond, Amazon, Volini, YesBank, CEAT Tyres, Axe, Lloyd, Hindware continue to maintain a strong bond and partnership with the Indian Premier League. These brands have managed to send across a message that the league is a risk free investment option for the brands and advertisers as the ratings and reach keep on growing season after season. The tournament provides innovative sponsoring opportunities for the brands at the core stage and profusion of prospects for the franchises through sponsorship, merchandise, licensing and the capability to influence multi screen media proficiencies covering mobile applications, web interface and broadcast. During IPL 9, over 60% of the airtime was covered by the sponsors and around 40% was for spot buys by other advertising brands.

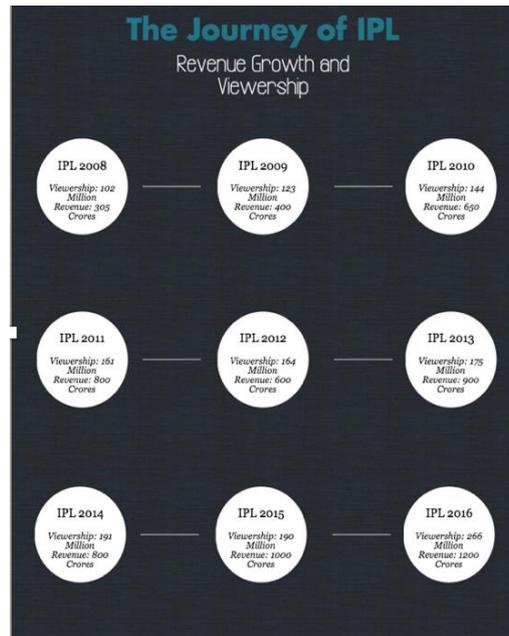


Figure 10: Viewership Growth

Expert Interviews

The Indian Premier League provides a good traction to brand advertisers for a short two-month period to promote and market their products. Since, the target audience is already segmented into cricket fans it becomes easy for the advertisers to brand their campaign in a creative manner in order to grab attention about their brand on a global platform. Brand association with teams helps creating brand recognition, awareness and loyalty. Like Monish mentioned, Aircel telecommunication managed to create a footprint in the northern part of India through their title sponsorship and strong association with the Chennai Super Kings team.

Both the interviewees believe that controversies and scandal have a short term impact on the brands and their image in the market. Since, IPL is more of an entertainment form of cricketing tournament such controversies and scandals indirectly help the brands to gather more publicity and news. Brand loyalty works in IPL if the brands have a sustained relationship with their associated teams. It needs to be a two-way interactive communication between the players and the brand to create exposure and awareness in the minds of the cricket fans.

Aashish had a contradictory view compared to Monish regarding the factors of brand association with IPL teams. According to Aashish, brands attribution is not a critical factor, but Monish believes that various marketing factors like region, audience reach and team performance factors matters, these are few factors which is taken into consideration by advertisers and brands before associating with any IPL team. Indian Premier League provides a foundation for brands to place themselves in the market over the 2-3 month IPL window, which ultimately requires a follow up in the long run for more cohesive market strategy. Apart from big and established brands, upcoming new and local brands reap the short term benefits of IPL advertising by positioning themselves in the market. Both the interviewees agree that advertising, marketing and promotional strategies provide the IPL teams an opportunity to earn high revenues for their several investments. Sponsorship and merchandising is critical part of promotional activity that needs to be better leveraged and cashed in, so that it appeals all the fans. To have efficient consumer interaction and experience it is necessary for the brands to facilitate and plan an effective communication strategy.

VI. CONCLUSION

The Indian Premier League as a tournament has come a long way since its inception. The emergence of the league has transformed the gentlemen's game into a business proposition that has been embarked as one of the top sports brands in the world. IPL has glorified the quintessence of the game as a branded commercial offering with a strong business revenue model that offers high level of profitability and growth opportunities to the various parties and stakeholders who are involved in the tournament. Sports has turned out to be a significant contributory towards the economic and social sectors in the Indian economy. IPL's business model provides a huge economic output to the Indian economy. The last few editions of the league have consistently contributed around Rs 14/15 billion to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The IPL being the second highest paying league in the world, 4 million USD is the average yearly salary of a player in the tournament. A

successful combination of sports and entertainment has created a new niche in the business market termed as sports entertainment.

Based on the above research study, the researcher draws the following conclusion by taking various parameters into consideration by conducting content analysis of official team kit apparels and team jerseys. It helps us draw towards positive conclusions about the role of product placement and branding in the IPL tournament. The tournament has seen a shift from multinational companies like Nike, Adidas, Reebok sponsoring to growth of national brands as official kit suppliers in form of Shiv Naresh, Spartan, Seven. Similarly, every team jersey has huge potential for prospective advertisers to promote their brand through means of product placement.

The league has managed to maintain its dominance in the marketing and advertising strategic arena for all the brands that are associated with it from a wide range of spectrum. The league directly and indirectly does promote and support the Indian economy on various counts, some of the key benefits of the league include providing employment generation across various sectors, growth and development of tourism, support base to tier II cities in the country by providing exposure and opportunities of cricket participation and recognition on a global platform.

Product placement does play a major role in creating brand awareness, loyalty and recognition through the means of regular advertising. Advertising and marketing helps in creating a business oriented and revenue driven platform for various brands through premier sports tournaments like the Indian Premier League (IPL). Product Placement has turned out to be a vital component for advertisers for consistent communication and awareness of their products through the means of brand IPL. The reachability and viewership numbers of the tournament has helped advertisers spend huge sums as expenditure for global connect and brand building benefits through the league. The spectators supporting their respective teams or players as symbolic fans has helped in the growth of sports sponsorship and brand promotion which overall leads to an experience based positive affective attitude and viewer response. The growing brand value of IPL has its derivation from a wide variety of sources keeping in mind the audience vernacular tastes, cricketing gyaan and the Bollywood, celebrity quotient. Great sporting events and tournaments are built through hardcore fan following, successful team performances, the ability of the players to deliver on crucial stages and most importantly the association of these tournaments with large brands and companies through partnership and sponsorship mediums. The brand and franchise teams are interdependent on each other for extracting the benefits of brand potential. The team's on and off field performance helps in not only gaining key game points, but also attracts popular brand deals and associations. In Indian Premier League, main sponsors (lead spots on the team jersey) are prized at 100 percent more premium as compared to other co-sponsors.

Based on the researcher's analysis, it is assessed that on average, franchises spend around 20% to 30% of their revenues towards marketing, advertising and team promotional activities during the two-month long tournament. Popular teams like the Royal Challengers Bangalore, Kolkata Knight Riders, Mumbai Indians invest a significant portion of their revenue as a part of brand building exercise. These teams have managed to garner tremendous support and confidence of their sponsors and partners which ultimately has helped them attract a huge team support and fan base. The tournament has become a distinct brand in itself by means of celebrity ownership, high money spends, licensing, partnership and sponsorship, fan zone, blog spot and other miscellaneous forms of associations lead to a brand by itself. Various sporting activities during the Indian Premier League tournament like the fan park event, television advertisements, merchandising, in-stadium promotional freebies undertaken by the team franchise has helped in acquiring exposure and support which ultimately has transformed into brand benefits and huge revenue gains for both, the franchise and the brand advertisers.

Celebrity ownership, presence of marquee players in a team has helped the franchises and brand IPL to gain massive popularity and positive brand equity stakes. Teams like Kolkata Knight Riders, Delhi Daredevils, Mumbai Indians, Royal Challengers Bangalore have a higher support base because of their geographical advantage and huge population base as compared to other smaller teams in the league. The mega brand IPL can be experienced through fields of branding, marketing and service experiences which engages the audience in several ways to perform, interact and actively engage in concepts of brand experience and coordination. Through the league, the audience experience the games live and close up in the stadium by immersion or at from a great distance via the means of television by absorption technique. The fruitfulness of the viewing experience leads to creation of the IPL has an experiential brand.

The immersion of the fan through close and active experience and more intense driven stimulation of the senses helps the teams to create an aesthetic appeal in form of attractive and colorful team jersey and apparel, merchandising and other forms of promotional means. IPL has turned out to be a great form of escapism for the viewers. Cricket in the form of t20 format and especially the IPL provides the viewers a means to escape from his daily mundane life and problems. The pleasure of watching cricket cum entertainment helps him to overcome stress and gain happiness. Every popular brand has certain unique proposition attached to it which

helps it to distinguish from the rest. The Indian Premier League has its own set of distinctiveness, mass sports fan base following and family oriented viewership. Especially the women segment has gained enormous interest in the t20 format of cricket through the Indian Premier League.

The merchandising and promotional branding has a huge future and profitable industry in relation the IPL. The various forms of merchandising and innovative promotional techniques for audience connect and engagement has contributed towards the power of IPL branding. Indian Premier League has managed to gain a large amount of success over the last decade since its inception through the means of audience popularity, high viewership numbers, expensive team sponsorship deals, increased ad points. Irrespective of the several controversies that have surrounded the tournament, it has still managed to retain interest and presence in the eyes of the viewers.

The successful revenue model of IPL is not only helping the BCCI to earn large sum of money, but also generating economic dividends to the Indian economy in form of brand advertisements and sponsorship promotions. Although, high costs are involved for various parties and stakeholders in the tournament, but still the revenue model of IPL is slowly moving towards sustainability through audience attraction and positive future viability prospects. Several brands like Aircel, Vodafone, Citibank, Kingfisher and many more have used the IPL bandwagon to their optimum advantage. These brands have not just spent huge sum of money as advertising and promotional expenditure, but they have also managed to position their brands in the market. Aircel has now become a known telecommunications network on Pan-India level, post its title sponsorship with the Chennai Super Kings team. The Vodafone Zoo-zoos campaign became a major creative success in its initial years and now over the past few editions of the tournament it has become a major highlight.

Similarly, the likes of Kingfisher and Citibank have also managed to create the brand presence through regular advertising and product placement initiatives during the Indian Premier League t20 season. Although the tournament has been consistently associated with number of controversies and spot fixing scandals, but these issues seem to have a short term impact on the brand advertisers. Previously, DLF and Pepsi did terminate their title sponsorship contracts, but such a drastic step was only taken after jurisdiction verdicts were passed by the Supreme Court. Indian Premier League as a tournament offers an upright grip to advertisers for a brief two-month period in order promote and market their brand. Since, the target audience is already segmented into cricket fans it becomes easy for the advertisers to brand their campaign in a creative manner in order to grab attention about their brand on a global platform. Brand association with teams helps creating brand recognition, awareness and loyalty. The marketer works hard for its brand in order to gain and retain the positive customer attainment. One of the rare features of the IPL tournament is its sustainability and diversity opportunities that it offers the brands as an advertising and marketing platform. Product Placement has played a major role in creating the Indian Premier League as a brand.

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