



SPORTS MARKETING: AN EMERGING PHENOMENON

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Abstract: Nowadays we cannot walk down the streets without seeing giant billboards of Sania Nehwal or Virat Kohli urging you to buy some electronic gadget or some sports drink. Sports marketing is not new in India. Sports marketing industry exists in India for quite a long time, but has been undervalued. In past few years it can be said that sports marketing is a growing phenomena and the money the industry generates is attracting more and more people. Sports marketing have emerged as a multi-million-dollar business in India. A number of factors are at work, including changing demographics, lifestyles, acceptance of other sports, top players attracting lucrative contracts and endorsement deals from a wide range of corporate sponsors, increased number of career opportunities. In fact, recent years have been many specialist sports marketing firms being established to handle the growing demand. The launch of Premier Leagues of many different sports by the governing bodies of the respective sport has contributed significantly to the sports marketing business. The recent scenario shows that the marketing and the branding techniques equally contributing for the upliftment of sports in India as the athletes and the Sports Federation of India are doing. Hosting some of the major international events like Commonwealth Games, Cricket World Cup and now the U-17 FIFA World Cup has given a unique opportunity to create a youth revolution in the country and take sports to the whole nation. In India, a country whose sporting affections are yet to be seriously diverted towards games other than cricket, sports marketing has contributed a lot and making constant efforts in creating people's interest in other sports. Sports marketing is largely older and developed in multisport nations like South Africa and Australia, while the infrastructure in India is still found wanting. However, there is a lot activity seen now in India, with many sports marketing companies and finding success.

Introduction:

Sports has a global reach. It's accessible to all and understood by all, but above all else, it evokes emotional highs and lows in us like no other form of entertainment. For the right brand, an association with something that powerful is highly desirable. The value of linking sports with brands has been understood for well over a hundred years, which is why sports marketing is not the new phenomenon people might believe this. The global sports sector is estimated to be worth between \$480-620 billion. However, in India, sports is yet to be recognized as an economic sector, mainly due to the fact there has been little or no comprehensive study done on the available opportunities that are on offer. The sports industry sector may include several different segments such as sports tourism, sporting goods (in manufacturing and retailing), sporting garments and the available opportunities in sporting management and sponsorship. It is seen across the globe that sports as a full-

fledged industry can and may contribute about 1 to 5 percent of the country's GDP.

India's relationship with cricket needs little introduction, but while the sport—something close to a religion in the country—continues to drive the growth of the Indian Sports industry, other sports are adding rich diversity to the sector. Following the city-based franchise model which has worked well for the Indian Premier League (IPL) sports such as Hockey, Football, Kabaddi, Tennis and Badminton are in process of attracting new audiences and fans to the sport, crafting commercial prepositions for sponsors and quenching the thirst of a country eager for live entertainment content.

Meaning:

Sports marketing is the specific application of theoretical marketing principles and processes to sport products and services; the marketing of non – sport and sport related products and services through an association such as a sponsorship with sport; and the marketing of sport bodies

and codes, their personalities, their events, their activities, their actions, their strategies and their image.

Being a subdivision of marketing, sports marketing focuses on two major areas i.e. promotion of sports events and teams as well as the promotion of other products and services through sporting events and sports teams. It is a service in which the element promoted can be a physical product or a brand name. The aim of sports marketing is to provide the client with strategies to promote the sport or to promote something other than sport through sports. Sport marketing is also designed to meet the needs and wants of the consumer through exchange processes. These strategies mainly include planning, positioning, packaging and perception. Sports marketing is an element of sports promotion which involves a wide variety of sectors of the sport industry including broadcasting, advertising, social media, digital platforms, ticket sales, and community relations.

Factors Influencing Sports Marketing:

The factors that influence sports marketing are discussed below:

Sport Businesses: The supply of sport services by profit motivated businesses has significantly increased the range of opportunities for people to participate in fitness, sport and recreation. An increasing number of small business operators can also be found in Sport coaching (e.g. Football Academies), Outdoor Recreation, Swim Schools and Personal Training. As a result of the increased number of profit motivated businesses there is an increased amount of marketing and promotion, and this has an effect on demand.

Involvement of Media: Some sports have, by their very nature, great commercial value. Media organisations, excepting the national broadcaster, can only exist if they can derive revenue from advertising. The monetary value of any television or radio commercial, or newspaper advert, is determined by the number of viewers (or readers). Some sports have inherently more entertainment value and command a large and dedicated band of followers. Broadcasting these sports on a regular basis enables the media organisation to connect

advertisers with consumers. Furthermore, the emotions felt by consumers as they watch/listen to their favourite sport enable the advertiser's message to have a more powerful effect. While some sports constantly yearn for more media exposure, the reality is media organisations are driven by the profit motive far more than their social conscience. As a result, children are attracted to play sport and emulate the sports stars they see on television.

Economic Factors: Participation in most sports is not expensive and costs around 1-2% of income per capita. Nevertheless the affordability of involvement in sport and recreation is influenced by the level of employment / unemployment, interest rates and fiscal (tax) policy. At times when the economy suffers a slow down or contraction, there is less spending by the population in general, and consequently less spending on sport and recreation.

Changing Demographics: India is continually subject to demographic changes. These changes include an increasing proportion of the population over the years, an increasing urban lifestyle, smaller families, Educational level, consumer occupation, age of the consumers, etc. The effect of demographic change on a year to year basis is too small to be noticeable. Equally, the affect of demographic change on sport is very slow. Nevertheless, over 1-2 decades, the fortune of some sport and recreation activities may prosper or perish dependent upon demographic change.

Technological

factors: Technological innovation is perhaps the most significant factor that has influenced the sports market. Whereas be confined to a single room for many hours a day would have been viewed as a punishment decades ago, the situation now exists where a very significant proportion of the population voluntarily put themselves in this situation. The rise of computer games and social media provide for an addictive and sedentary past-time. While such time involvement has some beneficial effect on the development of technology skills for employment, it undoubtedly has a detrimental effect on health and fitness, and participation in sport and recreation.

Marketing Techniques:

Following are some of the Marketing Techniques which have come a long way in contributing to the Sports Industry.

New and Upcoming Technological

Devices: In order to build popularity and showcase the success of a particular sport, a person not only needs that zeal but also needs an arena which could drive him towards the goal. Keeping this in mind, marketers and brand specialist are investing a lot of money and time in new and advanced technologies where they can advertise the popularity of the sports. Since the youth of India are so keen on mobile technology, therefore they have hit the bull's eye by targeting the "second screen". New and advanced apps have been built which can be used to book tickets, browse through the scores and also view live matches! Marketers are also coming up with engaging ways such as surveys, and competition which keep increasing the attention span.

Publicity and Advertisement: Media has a very strong influence on the mind and attitude of the youth. Just like print media made cricket a very popular game, Social Media revolution is opening up similar interest in other sports, the best example being the Pro Kabaddi League. New Age branding techniques are helping peak the interest of youth in other sports thus helping surge in more investments leading to better showcasing and viewer experience. In the past, established brands like Pepsi and Hero have proven their success in engaging interest towards Football and just recently celebrities like Salman Khan have been applauded for their contribution to PKL brand.

Using Technology for Sponsorship and

Amalgamation: Sponsorship plays a very important role in making a sport popular; It does not only mean attaching its brand or logo in the stadium but also building an association with the players and the audience. Premium mobile phone provider Vodafone has been the official sponsor for Badminton and with the success of SaniaNehwal in the recent World Badminton League has brought about greater zeal in the youth of today. SaniaMirza and RohanBopannai added yet another jewel to

the Indian Crown of Tennis and then were sponsored by Micromax.

Internationalization of the Home Ground

Team: India is an enormous country and Indians are present all over the world. The success of any sport in India is cherished even by NRI and Indians settled in other parts of the world. Apart from spreading the message in our home grounds, media has been successful in making off beat games popular in faraway land as well. The Indian Gymkhana Club in UK is a very good example of patronizing Indian sports such as Hockey and Football. They have very loyal sponsors such as Passage to India. This makes Indian sports such as Hockey's presence more significant all over the world.

Conclusion:

Sports marketing have emerged as a multi-million-dollar business in India. And the way the industry is generating money attracting more people towards sports and providing more career opportunities as well. The more the industry grows the participation in sports increases which helps to improve the standard of the game and add more achievements at international level.

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