



SPORTING

NATION IN THE MAKING VIII

group^m ESP

INDIA SPORTS SPONSORSHIP
REPORT 2021

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FOREWORD

At GroupM ESP (the Entertainment, Esports & Sports division of GroupM), we are brimming with excitement as we bring to you the eighth edition of the 'Sporting Nation in the Making'. This is an industry initiative from us that gives you a view of the state of play in the Sports Sponsorship Industry in India.



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2020 was a year that saw the business world having to grapple with the Covid-19 pandemic. The intrinsic nature of the sports sector did not blend well with the prerequisites of social distancing, which was the need of the hour. As India went into a lockdown, many sports properties were either cancelled or postponed. Two of the most anticipated sporting spectacles of the year, Tokyo Olympics and Euro Soccer, were rescheduled to 2021. The ICC T20 World Cup was another miss for 2020; this was an eagerly awaited event by our cricket fans. Even as the sponsorship and media spends were impacted, the way the sporting ecosystem reacted to the crisis was truly commendable. The very fact that sports was back sooner than expected, that too with due safety protocols in place, is a tribute to the collaborative spirit displayed by the stakeholders.

The IPL had always scored heavily for the Indian Sports Industry, since its game-changing entry in 2008. Add to this, the sporting leagues that have emerged in the past few years, and we have a winning combination that gave us a decade of healthy growth. The COVID threat came at a time when the industry was on a roll, as evident from the scorecards of the preceding years. If we zoom in on the five years leading up to the pandemic, the Indian Sports Industry had returned a very healthy CAGR of 14.6% with contributions coming from all sectors. Even in the face of an adverse context, the stakeholders came together to provide the spark the industry needed. The IPL was a big success, while the ISL was an

exemplary demonstration of India's preparedness to host major sporting events even under such taxing circumstances.

The strong exit momentum for 2020 augers well for the industry as the rights holders, sponsors, franchisees, broadcasters, and athletes come together for a potential upturn. There are many positives that came out of the Covid blues, like the tech-enabled fan engagement innovations, inflection in e-sports and most importantly, the strong sense of alignment among the stakeholders on key issues. 2021 has on offer, all the major events we had lost last year, and we are all set for near normal services to resume in Indian sports.

This report gives you a view of the sports industry from three angles- Sports Sponsorship (On Ground, Team and Franchise), Athlete Endorsement and Media Spends. While it gives key investment trends in each of these areas, it also captures the digital data (social conversations & search), along with the On Air reach & TRPs in the major sporting leagues to increase the utility to rights owners, advertisers and agencies. While we give you the trends in terms of numbers, we also explore the underlying factors, giving you a deep dive into the industry with a quantitative as well as qualitative approach. It is with deep gratitude that we acknowledge valuable contributions from rights owners, agencies and industry participants who have supported us with invaluable insights and information as we worked towards bringing this report to you.

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2020: ADAPTING AND RESPONDING AS THE PANDEMIC THROWS A CURVEBALL

In a year that held a lot of promises for India's Sports Industry, the Covid-19 threat forced the whole world to respond in a manner we had not envisaged. Major sporting events were cancelled or postponed, leading to severe impact on all stakeholders. While India missed out on many national and international events, we saw cricket lead from the front and provide joy to millions of fans who follow it. As the games returned without spectators at the grounds, many tech enabled initiatives were rolled out to engage the viewers who were watching from the safety of their homes.



The size of the Indian Sports Industry in 2020 is estimated at INR 5894 Cr (\$ 796 Mn). This takes into consideration the following - Sports Sponsorship Spends, Sports Celebrity Endorsement, and Media Spends on Sports Properties. The biggest share here goes to media, where advertisement expenses on TV, Digital and Print media were to tune of INR 3657 Cr (\$ 494 Mn); this accounts for 62% of the total. Sponsorship Spends include On Ground Sponsorships, Team Sponsorships and Franchise Fee

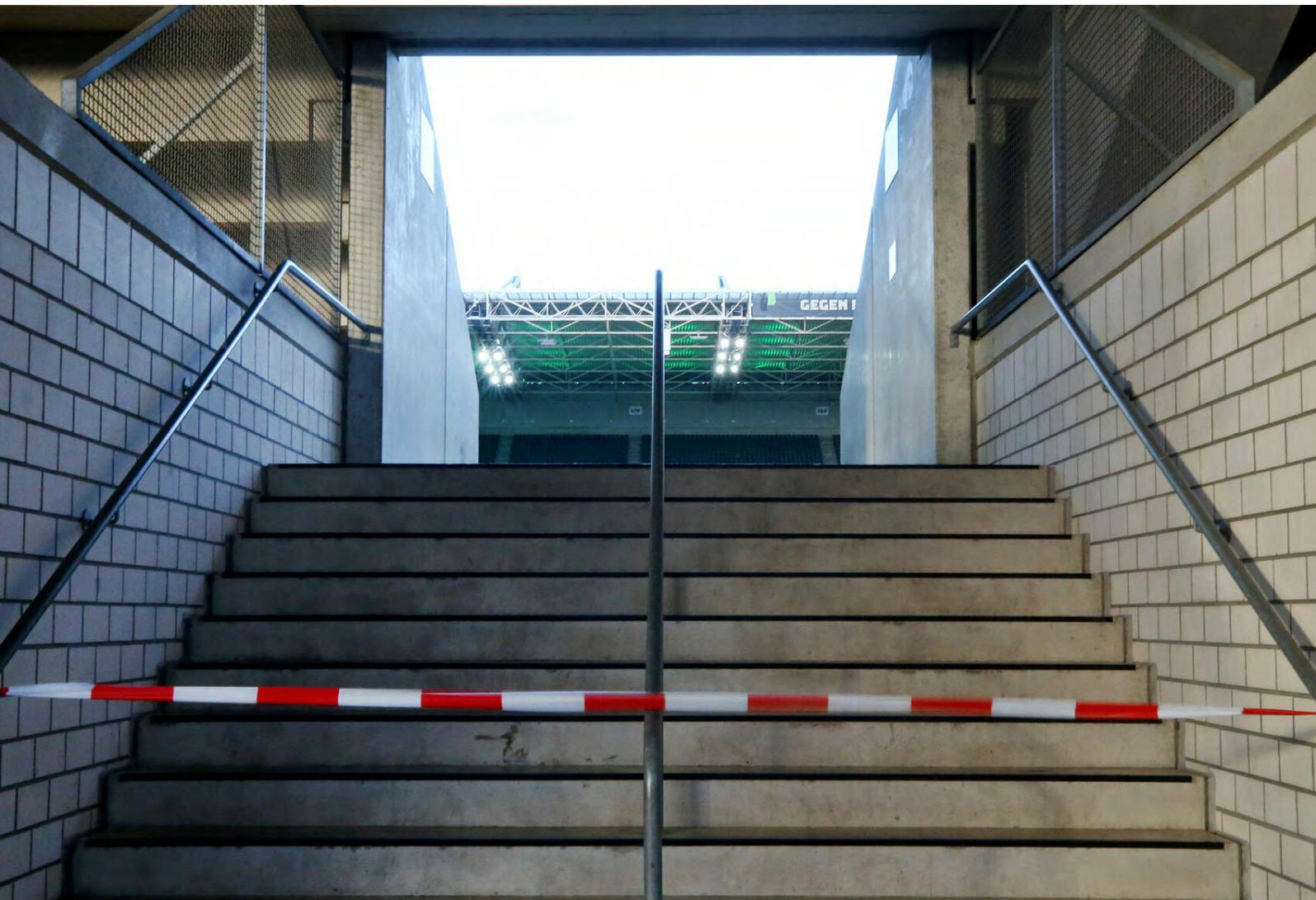
which takes up 28% of the industry pie, which translates to an amount of INR 1673 Cr (\$ 226 Mn). India is a nation that loves its sports heroes, and approximately 10% share of the spends came from the value of brand endorsement deals from our favorite stars, which works out to an amount of INR 564 Cr (\$ 76 Mn). The data mentioned above does not include the following - Gate receipts, Player Fee/Salary, Prize Money, Merchandizing, Subscription, Sports Goods and other Operational as well as Activation Costs. In the Sports Industry, it is the competitive action on the field that functions as the fulcrum around which the commercial considerations revolve.

As 2020 began, the sports fans had an amazing buffet of events that were laid out for them. But then, as we know, it was a year that didn't go as per plans for any of us. As the pandemic tightened its grip on the world, many competitions had to be called off. As a result, the year was deprived of a significant number of sporting events. With no action on the field, there were severe commercial implications. Even as the absence of a fair share of events has rendered year-on-year comparisons irrelevant, two things are extremely heartening. First, the overall levels of business seen in the industry in 2020, and then, the high running momentum as we exit the year and move on to 2021.

The Tokyo Olympics would have been the highlight of the year. India was hoping to put up a strong show at the games, and as in the case with recent years, a few medals would not have been inconceivable. It would have been a great opportunity for

many athletes to be in the limelight, and the postponement of the event to 2021 had a significant impact on the industry performance, especially from a media perspective. Other marquee events which were 2020's loss and 2021's gain included Euro Football and World Indoor Athletics Championships. Closer home, cricket always involves maximum viewer anticipation and financial implications; 2020 lost many events among which were the ICC T20 World Cup and the Asia Cup. Even the Indian Premier League (IPL) was at risk of being cancelled, before it was salvaged by shifting the venue to the UAE. India's foremost sporting league eventually got underway in September much to the delight of fans, players, franchisees, sponsors and rights holders. The success of the IPL was a great demonstration of the qualities of brinkmanship and improvisation, just what the doctor ordered to lift the spirits of a nation in which cricket is followed with religious

fervor. The Indian men's cricket team had less than half the number of international matches it had in 2019, which further compounded the travails of the sponsorship sector. Making matters worse was the cancellation of eight sporting leagues in India - Pro Kabaddi, Indo International Premier Kabaddi League, Premier Badminton League, Pro Volleyball League, Pro Wrestling League, Ultimate Table Tennis, Big Bout Indian Boxing League and X1 Racing League; along with major tournaments in sports like Badminton and Golf. Every cloud has a silver lining to it; in November the Indian Super League (ISL) got underway in three venues in Goa with strict Covid protocols and adherence to bio-bubble considerations. This was the first major sports event to be held in India after the pandemic hit us; giving ample demonstration of our ability to pull off an event of this magnitude under such circumstances. As our cricket team





toured down under, the sports world began to give impressions of having turned the tables on the virus. With the IPL leading the charge for the industry as the biggest contributor in sponsorship and media spends, cricket contributed INR 5133 Cr (\$ 694 Mn) which works out to a mammoth share of 87%. Other sports cumulatively contributed to the balance 13%, which was an amount of INR 761 Cr (\$ 103 Mn).

Fantasy Sports Platforms have been making solid inroads in the sponsorship space in India. Dream 11 has been investing in many properties around the world, the icing on the cake for them was the Title Rights they won at IPL 2020. In another significant move, MPL Sports signed up as the Kit Sponsor for the Indian Cricket Team, a position that was held by Nike since 2005. With new-age businesses like Cred and Unacademy associating themselves with the IPL, what we witnessed was a clear trend in the direction of more involvement from fast growing tech platforms in the area of sports sponsorship. Athlete Endorsement grew 5% over 2019, against the run of play in a year ravaged by the pandemic. Here again, cricketers ruled the roost, with 92% share of the pie. Of the 377 endorsement deals that happened last year, 275 involved cricket players. During the period of inactivity in sports, there was

a significant step jump in the level of social media influencer activity among popular athletes. Such deals contributed to 6% of total athlete endorsement value in 2020. With so many events getting cancelled, it was understandable that there was a 30% dip in media spends too, but when juxtaposed with the loss of events at the altar of the pandemic, this would strike as an incredible achievement too, thanks mainly to the IPL.

The lockdown had also catalyzed the growth in certain sectors. This happens when exciting business opportunities come out of evolving consumer habits, eventually getting backing from key stakeholders, like in the case with online gaming and e-sports. In the lockdown days, our young and tech-savvy population was affected by the absence of live sports along with a sub-optimal supply of fresh content. One of the consequences of this was the shift towards gaming; the month of April saw an 11% increase in users per week along with a significant jump in average time spent per gamer. This led to a sudden boom in e-sports in 2020, with communities getting built and multiplayer activities gaining ground. If we zoom out and take a view of the last three years, we can see that there has been a doubling in the gamer base as well as viewership numbers in the time period. Still, there is immense potential to grow

more, and e-sports in India is still seen to be in its nascent stage. In terms of advertising and sponsorship in online gaming, industry sources put the growth figures for the year in the region of 300-400%. As we experience rapid growth, there is a need to be agile, and to learn and fix on the go, because in India, online games have just begun their show.

The experience with the pandemic has made us wiser. Trying times like this tell us about the importance of collaborating better for a common good and the need to have a long term perspective on things. These are times in which the sporting ecosystem should work along with the government, and have more Public-Private Partnerships to support sports. As we turn back and look at 2020, it was certainly a tough year, but no doubt, it has made us stronger, and hopefully we have left a lot of turbulent clouds behind us as we move forward. If we look ahead, the route looks a lot clearer; and a lot of great sporting action we missed last year will be waiting for us in 2021.

SPORTS INDUSTRY DATA

SPONSORSHIP

1,673

2020 (INR Cr)

226

2020 (USD Mn)



ENDORSEMENT

564

2020 (INR Cr)

76

2020 (USD Mn)



MEDIA SPENDS

3,657

2020 (INR Cr)

494

2020 (USD Mn)



TOTAL INDUSTRY SIZE

5,894

2020 (INR Cr)

796

2020 (USD Mn)

CRICKET

5,133

2020 (INR Cr)

694

2020 (USD Mn)



TOTAL

5,894

2020 (INR Cr)

796

2020 (USD Mn)

EMERGING SPORTS

761

2020 (INR Cr)

102

2020 (USD Mn)



- Source – GroupM ESP
- 2020 Conversion Rate 1\$ = Rs 74

- Cricket contributed 87% and emerging sports share was 13% in overall sports spends
- Sports Celebrity Endorsements saw a growth of 5%
- IPL was the major contributor in Sponsorships and Media Spends

SPORTING NATION:

As CFG group's Mumbai City hoisted their maiden trophy signaling the successful completion of Indian Super League, the first sporting event in India and the longest football event in the world to be held in a bubble in a single city, I couldn't help but rewind to last edition's final. A last-minute call was taken to play closed door, on the back of India v SA cricket series being called off abruptly as it looked then, one had no idea what was in store.

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Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games preparations was in full swing, IPL schedule announced with MI getting ready to host CSK and preparations afoot for a host of other sporting events. Life hit a pause button. A long pause. A pause with no idea when play will happen again.

When will sport return? This question has been in the minds of many.

Amidst all that was happening around us last year, sport seemed trivial and an indulgence. Yet one yearned for it to start.

Zoom rooms around the world were staring at cancellation of sporting events, discussing force majeure clauses, looking at their crumbling finances, facing job losses, pay-cuts, furloughs, and looking in the direction of government for sustenance — as revenues were down to Zero. After all sport is largely a daily wage business — no play, no pay.

It felt like a downward spiral and the edifice was crumbling.

When will sport return?
How will sport return?

Into the unknown - masked in paranoia, bathed in sanitizer but filled with hope.

Between May and June Bundesliga, Korean baseball, AFL, La Liga, PGA, Super Lig amongst others showed the way. Caution in excess was ok, but let us get the show on the road was the message. Health, medical & safety took centerstage in the return of sports. Exhaustive contingency plans, testing protocols, bio bubbles entered sporting lexicon.

Sport was making its way back.

I doubt few events could have lifted the mood of our nation like the IPL did in 2020. From extended lockdown periods, the IPL undaunted (not new to them) by the challenge of logistics signaled the festive season cheer all through from September to November. The euphoria was palpable right from the time the announcement was made in August. The industry was afoot with deal making, shoot logistics, training camps, social media posts and not to miss fantasy teams discussions. Even Zoom calls became interesting and were looked forward to with expectation and eagerness.

Sport was returning albeit with significant constraints. No fans, quarantined in rooms, limited access

to gyms, newer surroundings to play are not how the world played sport. Never mind the adversity we were all happy we could play/watch our favorites.

There was opportunity in adversity. There always is. New areas of care emerged.

- New improved measures on health, hygiene and safety of players, support staff and a host of others who were not often thought of — the camera crew, referee, commentators amongst others
- Emerging protocols for remote training — even in lockdown/quarantine you can't slack.
- New/neutral venues: Staples Center and Madison Square Garden (MSG) gave way to Disneyland for NBA, Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Sharjah were getting ready to host IPL - for a second time in 6 years.
- New order of logistics & planning accompanied the frenzy of sport returning.
- Seemingly the world was keen to get fans back and focus on fans dramatically improved/ is improving in the areas of health, safety and convenience.

But the biggest impact and change sport is witnessing and will continue to witness is in the area of technology. The impact of 2020 has catalyzed and accelerated tech adoption even amongst the ones who are slow to adapt to it — be it federations, leagues, governing organization to even administrators.

Sport is largely a social activity. Technology has re-defined interactions — both professional and personal during covid. Tech will have the biggest and lasting impact on sports post covid.

Driven by technology, 7 big themes will emerge in the business of sports.

1. Organizational efficiency

Establishments have long been seen as stooped in old world approach - meetings, committees, protocols, etc. Credit to the administrators of sport across the world, for the nimbleness and efficiency they showed is commendable. They have got sport back in the park and in your living rooms.

At an overall organization level, efficiency improvements will be seen in administration, coaching methods, better player regimes, organizational work processes amongst a host of other areas. With a little more time, experience and even education/better understanding the collective of people and entities called organizations can unleash the power of technology for greater good.

2. Wearables will become mandatory

Around end 2019, it was estimated that around 400 Mn + smart wearable devices will be sold in the year 2020. This amounted to a staggering USD 34Bn. Whilst Covid may have slowed this down a bit, this sector like a catapult, took a few steps back only to go much farther and at greater speed.

It is my belief that every professional sports person (in almost any discipline of sport) will be sporting a wearable within the next 24 to 30 months. A lot of them already do and this is only going to accelerate.

The extent of usage both for the individual as well as the team/organization they represent will not only cover the areas related to performance but also help manage injury — prevention, recovery and through deep data analytics a lot more meaning will emerge from the wealth of data.

3. Amateur meets Sports Tech

There is a huge influx of tech in amateur and recreational sports. Early adoption was seen largely in amateur sports in the disciplines of running, golf, swimming & cycling.

A lot of other disciplines are fast seeing an influx of sports tech in amateur and recreational sports. Entrepreneurs like Vishal Gondal of GoQii to sporting legends like Anil Kumble (Spektacom) amongst others are bringing alive the conversations in



recreational and amateur sports with data and improving the performance even at that level.

Another area which is fast growing and highly relevant is the 'uber for sports' opportunity — connecting venues, coaches, playing partners for amateur/recreational athletes. With increasing facilities for sports like badminton, football (5x5), basketball and other sports there is a large market to help athletes discover and connect. Companies like PlayO have shown demonstrable success and business opportunity that exists in this space.

Amateur meets sport tech is currently under leveraged in a large & unorganized sports market like India and provides a host of ground up entrepreneurial opportunity.

4. Focus on monetizing fans

Fan monetization is currently restricted to match day — tickets, F&B and to a very small extent merchandising. There is very little effort (and hence returns) in monetizing fans beyond the obvious.

Tech giants have increasingly & seamlessly moved into the monetizing fan chatter. Facebook Venues, Snap Chats, shoulder content and other such platforms are realizing the value in monetizing off-live content where the real second screen engagement happens.

Athletes, clubs etc. have only followings and Likes to show and little revenue save for the promoted posts where the athletes are compensated.

Almost all clubs/teams in professional leagues rely on central revenue which accounts for anywhere between 60-90% of their revenues. This also means they have little control on a large portion of their revenues.

Standalone digital monetization can emerge as a strong suite for clubs/teams/athletes if organized right. NBA has shown it with NFT collectible in Top shots. There will be a rush to replicate this success and it will be worth following this development closely in the months to come.

5. Race for first party data

With increasing concerns around privacy, many welcome developments are happening in the Marketing and AdTech (MadTech) world. Apple's welcome initiative on privacy and consent, Google ending targeting through cookies effective end of this year and moving to FLoC (Federated Learning of Cohorts) are telltale signs on the power of ownership of data.

Owning First Party data will mean you will have the temple keys.

With passionate and engaged fans and great content to boot, teams and leagues are sitting on a potential gold mine. Currently there are no efforts being made by teams/leagues to assimilate or aggregate fan information. What started off as getting some off-live content on social media has not spiraled to near private life of players/athletes being on display on social media platforms. This is only enriching the platform.

Teams will move to enhancing their understanding of fans and knowing who are their fans. A collective of teams in any pro-league along with the league can be a strong monetizable platform. This will require a shared goal and getting them on the same page.



Technology solutions such as blockchain can greatly aid this process and help monetize this invaluable asset that teams have - their fans.

6. Content monetization

Content monetization in sports from an Indian context has largely been driven by advertising. This has largely led to value of the sport being pegged on high reach and engagement leading to a lot of other quality sports beaten down on real monetizable value.

With a large digital audience base and significant subscription drive on digital platforms sport will remain an attractive content to own for OTT players. Subscription based monetization will play an increasingly significant role in sport content acquisitions going forward.

Added to that will be 'satchel content' monetization. Newer platforms will leverage the long tail of high quality albeit small audience sports content moving to a pay per view/pay per event/match formats. Early trend can be seen with Bundesliga, one

of top 3 football leagues in the world only available on a niche OTT player Fan code is telling. Followed by NZ cricket rights with Amazon (sub licensed to a short-term deal to Fan code), WI cricket (non India featuring) moving away from television and large platforms to much smaller audience monetizable platforms is here to stay.

From a team/league standpoint, localized content monetization in-venue will emerge — connected stadium/venues is a local monetization opportunity hereto unexploited. Venues need to look at partnerships with tech companies to leverage these large opportunities. For that we need the fans to be back in stadiums, but the opportunity is right here and to be prepared for that day.

7. eSports goes mobile

Garnering much attention while evolving structures is the whole area of eSports. General trend of anyone in gaming space (skill based or otherwise) wants to classify themselves under this banner and hopefully get more legitimacy and ride the wave.

In my view there are a) games that you can play only on digital mediums (mobile or console) such as DOTA, LOL etc. and b) games that you play in real life which have a digital version such as FIFA, eNBA, WCC, etc.

The former is a large buffet and I would qualify the ones which requiring skill under that leaving aside many of the games which are chance based whilst the latter is un/under exploited currently. Save for football, there are not many sports played in real life which has a high-quality e-version.

With pervasiveness of mobile the large opportunity for e-versions of sports is one to look out for in the years to come.

The 7 themes listed above are not exhaustive by any means and developments are happening at rapid speed in many other areas. In respect of advertisers, these are some of the areas to watch. I am sure in 12 months' time, when the next edition of Sporting Nation comes out, sporting world may be a different place — a better one than it is today.

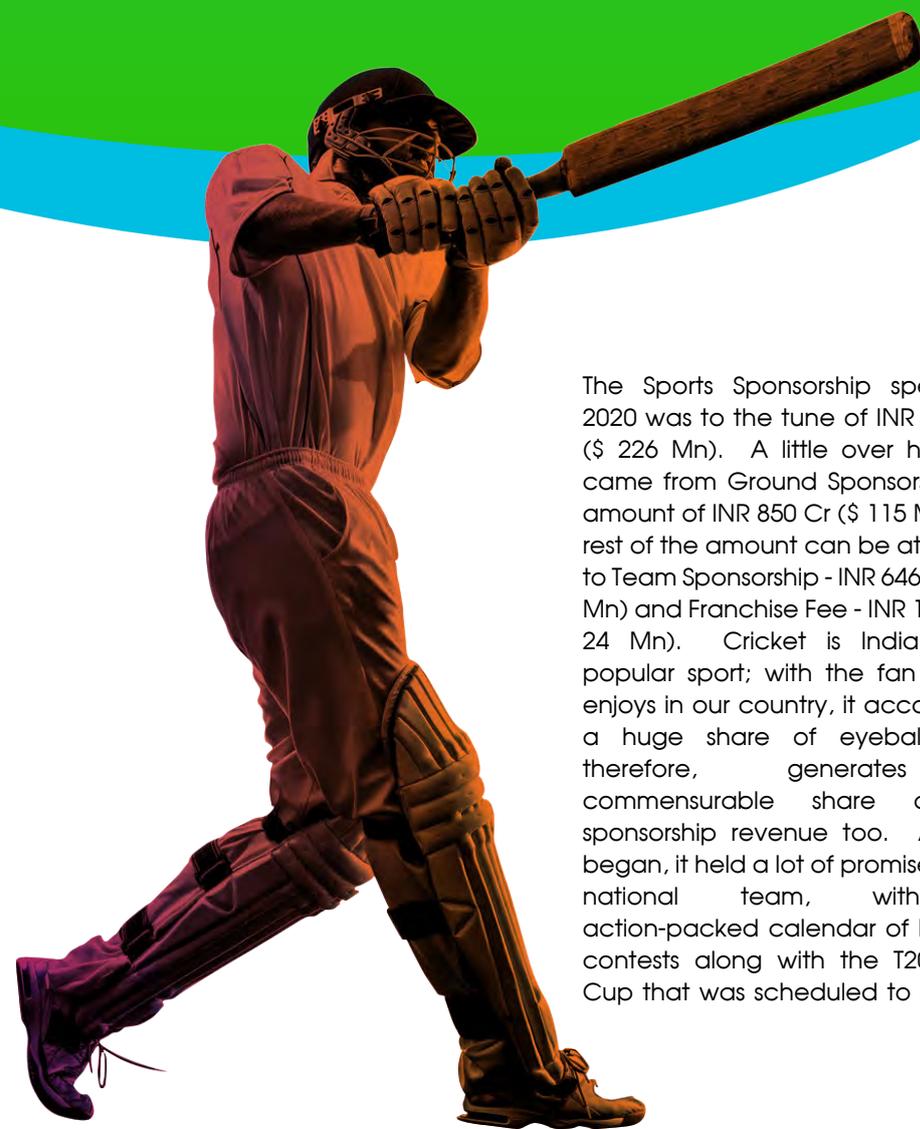


SPONSORSHIP IN THE TIME OF CORONA: BATTING ON AN UNPLAYABLE WICKET

For the sporting world, 2020 was supposed to be the year of Tokyo Olympics, Euro Soccer, World Indoor Athletics Championships, and many high-profile annual competitions. For the Indian cricket fans, the ICC T20 World Cup was a keenly awaited spectacle. As the pandemic hit us, out of the blue, the industry was badly stricken, as many events, including all of the above-mentioned ones, were pushed to 2021. For a while, it seemed that no sports competition would be held for many months. The sports world was down, but we hung in there, improvised, and stayed in the game. Soon, sporting action was back with a new set of conditions. The Sports Sponsorship industry in 2020 had to bear the brunt of the crisis, but it bounced back towards the end of the year with a clear message that we can't be tied down for long, through grit and spirit of innovation.

The Sports Sponsorship spends in 2020 was to the tune of INR 1673 Cr (\$ 226 Mn). A little over half of it came from Ground Sponsorship, an amount of INR 850 Cr (\$ 115 Mn). The rest of the amount can be attributed to Team Sponsorship - INR 646 Cr (\$ 87 Mn) and Franchise Fee - INR 177 Cr (\$ 24 Mn). Cricket is India's most popular sport; with the fan base it enjoys in our country, it accounts for a huge share of eyeballs, and therefore, generates a commensurable share of the sponsorship revenue too. As 2020 began, it held a lot of promise for our national team, with an action-packed calendar of bilateral contests along with the T20 World Cup that was scheduled to be held

Down Under in the second half of the year. A title win there would have been a huge fillip for our fans who have been eagerly waiting for a major win at an ICC tourney. In March, the spread of the Covid-19 virus reached levels that made it virtually impossible for all sports, including cricket, to be played. This was a tough phase for all, and it was important to bring the action back on the field. In India, cricket has the ability to lift the spirits of our people in a way only it can. With events like the Bundesliga resuming action, planning was already in place to get cricket back on the field. The Indian Premier League (IPL), the most keenly awaited franchise cricket fiesta in the world, was finally back in



September. As the adage goes - "When the going gets tough, the tough gets going". With new safety protocols, which included the players being kept secure in bio-bubbles, and the grounds not being opened to fans, the world's top cricketing league was played in three venues in the UAE- Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Sharjah. With a host of tech-enabled innovations at the event, the broadcast had a treat for the fans who were watching the games in the comfort of their homes, with fan walls, virtual tickets, Augmented Reality (AR) experiences and other such engagement efforts. To lift Indian sports amidst troubled times, cricket had to lead from the front; and it did exactly that, showing the way for other sports. The Indian Men's Team travelled to Australia later in the year, signifying the resumption of international fixtures too.

In India's Sports Sponsorship innings last year, Cricket took a major share of the strike and scored almost two-third of the team's total- 64% of sponsorship spends came from cricket, with the scoreboard showing INR 1069 Cr (\$ 144 Mn). With the pandemic giving us a dark phase in the middle of the year and a very unfriendly sporting calendar overall, 2020 was an outlier year in terms of sponsorship spends, one that was not comparable to any one of the preceding ones. The Indian Men's Cricket Team played only 25 matches last year, less than half of the 2019 count of 54. Among the matches missed were the games we would have played in the T20 World Cup, making the loss disproportionate to the number of games we missed. The IPL on the other hand, was a huge success with all teams selling out their sponsorship inventories in the event that coincided with the festive season in India. As many as 185 Team Sponsorship deals were made, which accounted for over INR 350 Cr (\$ 47 Mn). Considering the fact that there was serious probability of the event being cancelled, these are huge amounts. However, the challenges of percolating some of these breakthroughs to lower level events

were insurmountable, considering the timelines involved, as a result of which there was significant impact on domestic cricket. In fact, two promising T20 events, Tamil Nadu Premier League (TNPL) and Karnataka Premier League (KPL) could not be held in 2020. At the same time, it was pleasing to see that the inaugural season of two new leagues were held successfully- Odisha Cricket League and Jharkhand Premier League.

Fantasy Sports platforms have been gaining traction with the Indian fans in recent years. In terms of sponsorship involvement, this trend reached a crescendo with Dream11 securing the Title Sponsor rights at IPL 2020. The onrush of fantasy platforms had its influence on Team India's sponsor list too; the year saw MPL Sports replacing Nike as the Kit Sponsor of the Indian Cricket Team through a three-year contract valued at INR 120 Cr (\$ 16 Mn). Paytm First Games also made a strong entry into the fray by sponsoring the first season of the Ultimate Cricket Challenge which was successfully held in UAE; along with Lifebuoy, a brand that has a consumer promise that resonated with the needs of the times that 2020 represented. In keeping with recent trends of FinTech and EdTech platforms making significant investments in sporting properties, IPL 2020 saw Cred and Unacademy signing as Official Partners. 2020 also saw considerable levels of investment by Indian brands in overseas cricketing action. While Hero Moto Corp continued their association as the Title sponsor at the Caribbean Premier League (CPL), we also saw eight Indian brands advertising their products in our cricket team's Australian tour. The fantasy gaming space

looked increasingly competitive last year as Dream11 became the Title Sponsor at Super Smash, New Zealand's top T20 league. The fantasy sport unicorn also became a sponsor at Australia's Big Bash League. Giving them company was another Indian brand - BKT Tyres. Not to be left behind, My11Circle also made their presence felt by becoming the Title Sponsor at the Lanka Premier League. With these top fantasy gaming apps jostling for attention at the top of the sponsorship pyramid, this is certainly indicative of a major trend with many more such platforms entering the field, offering innovative fan engagement models, and fighting for their share of voice in cricket.



Setting the ball rolling on Indian soil

The success of the IPL gave us the belief that sports competitions with Indian interests of the highest order can indeed be held successfully in a post-Covid world, and in fact, was a great demonstration of best practices in this regard. The scale of the property also helped in shifting the event to UAE, where many challenges related to the pandemic were mitigated. This option, however, is something that is not available to leagues with smaller budgets. The first sports league that happened in India post the outbreak of Covid-19 was the Indian Super League (ISL), the premier franchise-based football competition in the country. The fact that the event got underway in November was indeed commendable considering the severity of the situation in India at that point in time, given factors like population density and the spread of the pandemic. To reduce the event entropy, it was restricted to Goa, with matches happening in three venues only – Fatorda, Bambolim and Vasco. While this event scored many goals, the same cannot be told of other footballing events in India. The I-League which has great contests and passionate fan following for the home teams, had a rough tackle from the virus and could not be held last year; like the other domestic tournaments in the country.

Football, at an overall level, saw INR 362 Cr (\$ 49 Mn) worth sponsorship spends in 2020, which was 22% of the total amount, a number that looked impossible at one stage. Hero Moto Corp continued their strong association with the game; they were the ISL Title Sponsors in 2020 also, contributing to an approximate amount of INR 30 Cr (\$ 4 Mn) to the event's Central Sponsorship tally were the Official Partners – DHL (Associate Sponsor), Bisleri, Apollo Tyres, Nivia, Dream11, Himalaya. Byjus and Lenskart. As football fans in the country continue to follow the game at the highest level on media, Indian brands are increasingly getting

incentivized to associate themselves with properties like the English Premier League (EPL). For instance, Apollo Tyres and Gulf Oil strengthened their association with Manchester United, one of the most popular clubs in the world. While Covid brought things to a full stop briefly, European Football was quick to bounce back; similarly, in the case of India, it was the world most popular team sport that gave a clear demonstration of how to manage the show for a major sporting event on home soil, through the success of the ISL.

You win some, you lose some

With the position of pre-eminence that cricket enjoys in the country, and with the reach and increasing following for footballing action here, the IPL and ISL were shining beacons in a troubled year. The other sports, collectively referred to here as Emerging Sports because of their stage of evolution with respect to commercialization, did not have an equally fruitful 2020. They contributed to only 14% of total Sponsorship Spends, accounting for an amount of INR 242 Cr (\$ 33 Mn). Kabaddi was badly affected in 2020; the Pro Kabaddi, since its inception in 2014, has been a prominent part of our sports calendar. Unfortunately, there were major challenges with the hosting of this indoor sport in the backdrop of the pandemic, and hence it could not be held; same being the case with the Indo International Premier Kabaddi League (IIPKL) too. Badminton too saw cancellation of major events; the Premier Badminton League (PBL) and Indian Open were Covid casualties in 2020. Along with Kabaddi and Badminton, Golf also suffered setbacks at the hands of the virus. 2020 saw the cancellation of the Men's Indian Open, Women's Indian Open and PGTI Golf Tournament, along with other PGTI events.

Among the happy stories of the year was the good run that Marathons had in the country. 2020 was a year

in which marathons contributed significantly to On Ground Spends; in fact, it was the third highest contributor after cricket and football. The Mumbai Marathon was a big hit in January 2020, before the lockdown. Later in the year, as sporting action was coming back, we saw the success of other runs too – like Hyderabad Marathon (August), Delhi Half Marathon (November), Bangalore 10k (November) and Kolkata Marathon (December). The Tata Group continued to lend support to this participative sport in a year that saw rising awareness for the need to stay fit and to build immunity. While Tata was the title sponsor for the Mumbai Marathon early in the year, TCS donned the hat for Bangalore 10K and Tata Steel did the honors for the Kolkata leg of the event towards the end of 2020. Dribbling on to hockey, 2020 was a year that started on a promising note; the FIH event got underway in January and was progressing well before it was cruelly halted by the pandemic; and we had to wait till September for the event to be resumed. On a happy note for the game, the year saw the Odisha Government, Hero and Dream11 continuing their association with Indian hockey. In Tennis, the Maharashtra Open was held successfully in February with the support of Tata Sons, who were the Title Sponsors. While the IPL and the ISL were major breakthroughs, 2020 was a year that saw eight Premier Leagues (including the ones mentioned earlier) not happening- Pro Kabaddi, Indo International Premier Kabaddi League, Premier Badminton League, Pro Volleyball League, Pro Wrestling League, Ultimate Table Tennis, Big Bout Indian Boxing League and X1 Racing League.

2021: Scoring runs as the wicket improves

2020 started with the anticipation of another good year for Indian sports, on the back on some strong performances in 2019, on the field as well as on the business side too. With a host of events lined up and our athletes well-placed to do well in many of them, expectations were sky-high. The Covid-19 pandemic was totally unexpected, and a humbling experience for all of us. The focus was on life and livelihood for many, with business overdrive taking a back seat. The sports industry involves high physical contact among athletes, lots of travelling, and potential for large crowd gathering - all elements that go against the requirements of social distancing that was the need of the hour. As we went into a lockdown, there was complete stoppage of sporting action and out of these trying circumstances, we saw some good outcomes too. The sports world came together and our sporting icons used their online clout to engage with fans on social media, just what was needed to soothe a hurting nation. This phase contributed

to the formation of certain habits too; for instance, as people were housebound with limited entertainment options, online gaming gained ground with the youth of our nation. We were down, but certainly not out. The crisis pushed us to think out of the box and made it easier for us to embrace changes. The sports world was quick to bounce back with additional safety protocols in place.

In India, the IPL and the ISL showed the way in terms of managing the constraints of the new normal. The biggest change was that the doors of the stadium were closed to the fans. This was something that was inconceivable in a pre-Covid world, just like 'Work From Home' was, for the society at large. This desperate situation triggered the implementation of a host of innovations aimed at engaging the fans who follow the sport on media. It took sports properties of the magnitude of India's leading cricket and football leagues to give confidence to the rest

of the events in the country that we can indeed do it. As a result, we are in a much better position now than we were six months back. The pandemic had hit all nations in the world, for the first time since the World War II, we saw the Olympic Games not being held. But, what matters now is that quadrennial events slated earlier for 2020 are now being planned for 2021, and annual fixtures that were cancelled last year, will mark their return this year. Hence, 2021 is going to be the year in which we are going to recover a lot of lost opportunities of the previous year. There are many reasons that gives us the confidence in this regard; the Covid vaccine rollout being just one part of it. What will really stand us in good stead are the experiences of 2020 which have certainly made us stronger, and more determined to bounce back with renewed vigour.



SPORTS SPONSORSHIP SPENDS

GROUND SPONSORSHIP

850

2020 (INR Cr)

115

2020 (USD Mn)



TEAM SPONSORSHIP

646

2020 (INR Cr)

87

2020 (USD Mn)

TEAM FRANCHISE FEE

177

2020 (INR Cr)

24

2020 (USD Mn)



TOTAL

1,673

2020 (INR Cr)

226

2020 (USD Mn)

CRICKET



1,069

2020 (INR Cr)

144

2020 (USD Mn)

FOOTBALL

362

2020 (INR Cr)

49

2020 (USD Mn)



EMERGING SPORTS



242

2020 (INR Cr)

33

2020 (USD Mn)

TOTAL

1,673

2020 (INR Cr)

226

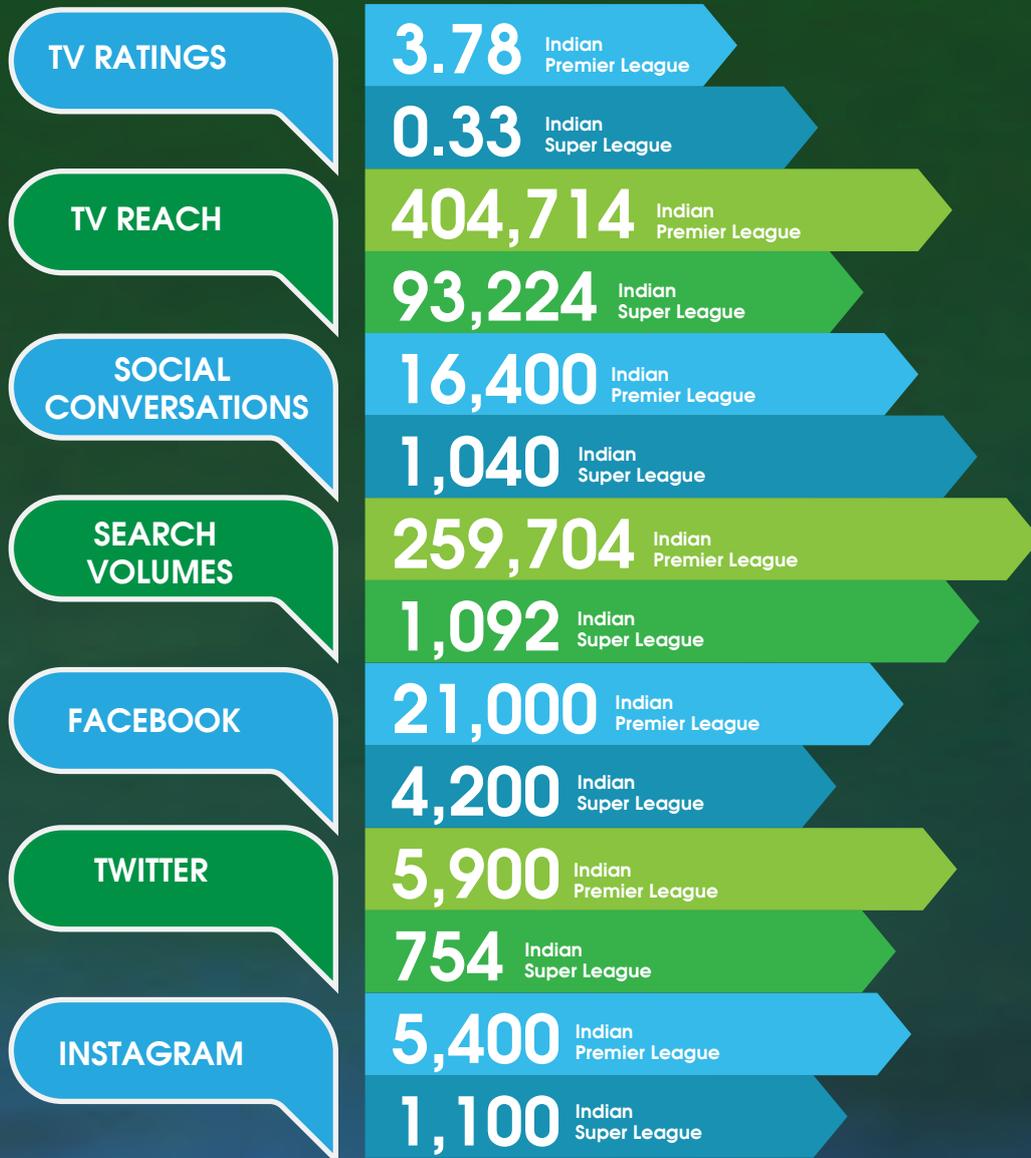
2020 (USD Mn)

- Source – GroupM ESP
- 2020 Conversion Rate 1\$ = Rs 74

- Contribution of Cricket in Sponsorship spends was 64%, whereas Football and Other Emerging Sports contributed 24% and 14% respectively
- Fantasy Gaming Apps fought tooth and nail for greater share of voice in Cricket

- Kabbadi, Golf and Badminton were the worst affected
- Apart from Football, Marathons contributed the maximum for On Ground Spends

LEAGUE DATA



*ISL data is till December 2020

All numbers are in Thousands except TV Ratings

- Source – GroupM ESP
- Source for TVR & Reach – BARC, TG – 2+, ALL NCCS, All India

TEAM DATA

IPL Franchise	TV Ratings	TV Reach	Social Conversations	Search Volumes	Facebook	Twitter	Instagram
Chennai Super Kings	4.2	313,300	9,640	10,997	12,000	6,500	6,300
Mumbai Indians	4.1	332,266	4,330	7,476	13,000	6,200	6,300
Royal Challengers Bangalore	3.7	270,022	6,370	2,131	9,400	4,200	5,500
Kolkata Knight Riders	3.4	278,966	2,080	5,108	16,000	4,200	2,200
Sunrisers Hyderabad	3.6	300,750	2,060	1,612	6,083	2,400	2,100
Kings XI Punjab	3.9	312,707	1,290	1,605	8,500	2,300	1,900
Delhi Capitals	3.8	313,470	1,510	2,686	6,900	1,700	2,100
Rajasthan Royals	3.5	294,147	1,490	2,000	4,200	1,400	1,400

ISL Franchise	TV Ratings	TV Reach	Social Conversations	Search Volumes	Facebook	Twitter	Instagram
Kerala Blasters FC	0.5	49,463	408	177	1,100	1,800	1,300
Bengaluru FC	0.3	36,833	181	636	366	284	256
Chennaiyin FC	0.3	36,528	238	1,163	464	878	307
ATK Mohun Bagan	0.4	48,934	43	437	560	373	94
FC Goa	0.3	38,173	168	916	459	343	323
Hyderabad FC	0.3	36,263	80	248	66	14	65
Mumbai City FC	0.3	36,283	92	463	571	178	180
Odisha FC	0.3	34,063	81	237	23	15	58
NorthEast United FC	0.3	37,826	27	293	358	432	186
Jamshedpur FC	0.3	38,636	75	274	123	28	131
SC East Bengal	0.4	36,749	103	61	1,313	255	96

*ISL data is till December 2020
All numbers are in Thousands except TV Ratings

Source – GroupM ESP. Source for TVR & Reach – BARC, TG – 2+, ALL NCCS, All India

IPL Franchises

Thanks to MS Dhoni announcing retirement, early exits of key squad members from the team's bio-secure bubble and everything that ensued during the season, Chennai Super Kings outshouted their fellow IPL franchises on social media in terms of conversations and search volumes. Clear indication of strong sporting franchises delinking their popularity with on-field performance.

ISL Franchises

While Kerala Blasters FC and ATK Mohun Bagan top the charts when it comes to TV Reach; debutant SC East Bengal is the flag bearer of legacy football club with the highest Facebook followers.

In terms of social media footprint, Kerala Blasters FC sets the gold-standard for the rest of the franchises to emulate.

GLOOM OR DOOM: INNOVATION IS THE KEYWORD FOR TEAM SPONSORSHIPS GOING FORWARD

Authored by:



Mr. Mustafa Ghouse
CEO, JSW Sports

Like most things in Indian sport, Team Sponsorships can also be broadly clubbed under two categories: Cricket and Non-Cricket sports, both at opposite ends of the spectrum in terms of popularity and brand interest. With Team India sponsorship assets and Indian Premier League (IPL) especially its franchises continuing to see impressive growth, cricket remains by far the most popular sport for brands and marketers to target for their spends. The way the IPL was able to rope in a title sponsor within a short span of time, in the middle of a global pandemic and economic slowdown, is testament to the value and 'recession-proof' nature of cricket in India. The fact that IPL was top of the 2020 Google trends list in India, ahead of even coronavirus, is probably an apt indicator of the craze.

Having said that, sport events being such a fundamental part of the business has meant that the impact of COVID-19 is especially hard on the global sports industry. In India, it threatens to derail the momentum that some non-cricket sports had begun to see through corporate

sponsorships and new leagues being launched. While major events like the Tokyo Olympics, Euro 2020 and Wimbledon got impacted, closer home, we saw most leagues except for the IPL and the Indian Super League (ISL) shelved for the year with uncertainty around their return. With Matchday and Broadcast revenues traditionally contributing a small fraction of a non-cricket sport franchise's revenues, teams rely heavily on sponsorships and with no matches taking place and fans not in attendance, this will prove to be a difficult period for those invested in Indian sport to see through. I wouldn't go as far as saying that it's only all gloomy though, and there are silver linings that are appearing from these dark clouds.

They say necessity is the mother of invention and this pandemic has acted as a catalyst for the adoption of newer, innovative means of partnerships and brand activations, which are promising signs for the future of sports marketing in India. Focus on digital and content marketing led activations for brands produced some fantastic results

during the IPL. Some of these are also being seen in the ISL and I am confident that more such use of targeted, technology-led innovations will drive the future of team sponsorships in Indian sport.

The added advantage of having clearly measurable impact indicators and ROI through standard industry metrics- views, impressions, reach, engagement etc, have made digital the new frontier for promising growth in sport and India is well placed to capitalise on this. Similarly, nothing comes close to the attractiveness of live sport on TV; the ad rates on the Star network during the IPL and the record viewership numbers show that there is no bigger media property in India than the IPL, which is why it will always be a favourite among brands which identify sports marketing as an important part of their marketing mix. Besides, we are at a stage now where avenues for advertising on TV are also

shifting; brands are wary of controversial areas like news channels, whose reputations have taken a hit due to the TRP scandal, and while GEC shows continue to be top-rated, the migration to OTT platforms is slowly but surely taking audiences away.

Within this scenario, there exists an exciting opportunity for live sport on TV, which should benefit team sponsorships in the near future. Additionally, the shift to Direct-to-Consumer models through the influx of OTT platforms opens countless possibilities for rights holders to monetize their assets.

Another interesting aspect has been the flood of new category companies entering the Indian sporting arena. With the Indian start-up economy booming, and popular global betting companies entering the country through surrogates, there is now a plethora of brands looking at investing in Indian

sport. Edu-tech, fantasy gaming and betting are no longer fringe players in the market, and this trend looks set to continue, something the wider sports industry should look to use to their benefit. Business continuity here would be key, and it would be noteworthy to observe how the legislative aspects of this evolve, since some of these newer entrants are operating in a potentially tough regulatory environment.

With the world returning to normalcy, we expect sporting action in India to resume in earnest in 2021, with existing and new leagues being lined up. There will be an emphasis on growth and more players looking to enter, all of whom will have to work extremely hard to get back on track. Having pressed the reset button in 2020, most leagues and teams would be looking forward to returning to their fields of play with a renewed vigour, one that brands and sponsors would be well advised to keep track of. While cricket will continue to rule the roost, the gap with other sports looks set to be bridged gradually as we become more of a sporting nation.



INDIAN FOOTBALL IN TIMES OF COVID-19

Authored by:



Mr. Kushal Das

**General Secretary,
All India Football Federation**

The season 2019-20 and the period after that has been trying for Football across the world including India. Many international events like FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup scheduled to be in February 2020 in India was postponed and likely to be held now in 2022 for which dates are yet to be confirmed. Similarly, AFC U16 championship which is the Asia qualifiers for the FIFA U-17 Men's World Cup has been cancelled which is a big blow to the team as they were expected to qualify on merits for the U-17 world cup after a sterling performance in the AFC qualifiers which they won convincingly. The remaining FIFA World Cup qualifiers for the senior men's team have been postponed to June 2020 to be held at Qatar as were the AFC women's qualifier. However, despite the big problem and Covid restriction, the AIFF was the first organization to restart sporting activity in India by conducting the I-League qualifier in October 2020 in Kolkata under very strict Covid protocols.

Mohammedan Sporting club of Kolkata was qualified to play for the Hero I-League. Soon thereafter, the Hero ISL commenced in Goa from November 2020 again under strict protocols. This was the first Hero ISL whereby two legacy clubs Mohun Bagan and East Bengal participated in line with the road map of Indian club football as agreed between AIFF, AFC and other stakeholders of Indian Football.

Current season of Hero ISL was a great success despite being without spectator and in a single venue. A number of Indian players came to the forefront who have now been included in the national team.

Mumbai City FC won the league stage of ISL and will play in the next year AFC champions league. Hero I-League is also being held in Kolkata since January 2021, again after conforming the strict Covid protocols. In the meantime, U17 men's team went for the exposure trip to Dubai, where they played with the national team with UAE. Women's senior team went to Turkey in February 2021, to play an international tournament with Serbia, Russia and Uzbekistan who ranked much higher in the FIFA ranking. So, despite the huge Covid restriction, every effort was made to ensure the sport doesn't suffer but keeping in mind all necessary Covid protocols.

Indian club football has now a very good roadmap wherein in some years there will be a single league with promotion and relegation. Since this year at least 3 Indian teams will participate in AFC champions league and AFC cup competition which will be a big boost for Indian Football. The Hero IWL (Women's League) will be played in an extended format in Odisha which will now allow many more matches for the club. India will host the AFC women's Asian cup in January – February 2022 as well as FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup in 2022.

The Youth development structure is now well developed with teams in 3 age groups playing in the national leagues. Indian Arrows which is an U-20 team, playing in the I-League contribute regularly players to ISL teams and many of them are part of Senior National Team. In other words, Indian football now has a robust structure and well poised to make a mark in Asia and World Football in the next few years.

BURGEONING E-SPORTS ECOSYSTEM PRESENTS A FRESH OPPORTUNITY FOR BRANDS

While India's online gaming space has been seeing significant surge in recent years, it can be considered as one of the few beneficiaries of the Covid-related restrictions that became part of our lives last year. Even as this uptrend has been accentuated by evolving consumer trends of 2020, we have also seen huge growth in advertising and sponsorship in this space. With both endemic and non-endemic brands integrating the gaming opportunity into their marketing mix, we are seeing the emergence of an e-sports ecosystem consisting of game publishers, teams, bloggers, players, tournaments, streaming platforms and e-sports platforms. Laced with strategic partnerships that took shape in 2020, the Indian esports market looks poised for a phase of fast growth in coming years.

Authored by:



Mr. Subhamoy Das

Sr. Business Director,
GroupM ESP





The past decade has seen a huge growth in the habit of online gaming in India. Industry data indicate that, since 2010, there has been a 14x rise in the number of online gamers in the country. As per reliable estimates, there are around 312 Mn gamers in India currently. Even though the usage numbers include multiple device type users, the key takeaway is that 81.5% are mobile first gamers; and the role of mobile phone penetration in the gaming industry boom cannot be overemphasized.

On one hand, good quality smartphones are now affordable, and on the other, the reach and quality of internet service is improving by the day. India has a median age of 26.8, and with a young population in comparison with some of the other large gaming markets, we accounted for 13% of gaming app downloads in the world last year. While such market dynamics and demographic factors played a role, gaming – casual or professional – seems to have received a significant fillip because of the unique circumstances that came out of our Covid-response practices.

While the pandemic brought in radical shifts across the country and throttled the pipe for live sports and fresh fictional content across platforms; gaming industry got accelerated in its anyways skyrocketing growth trajectory. Many Indians turned to mobile gaming last year and it became an ideal mood booster that kept the youngsters positive, happy and distracted. The month of April saw a steady increase both in terms

of the number of gamers as well as the time spent per user. There was a 11% week on week increase in the number of users, and a 21% jump in the time spent per user. Thus, the pandemic played a role in the upsurge in gaming industry in the country by catalysing habit formation among Indians, especially in the 15-24 age group. Soon, there was a spike in the number of organized multiplayer competitions, leading to the evolution into an e-sports ecosystem. With players participating as teams or as individuals, community building also happened in a way that is characteristic of e-sports. To give an example to illustrate the extent of the swing, Gamerji, an e-sports platform, registered a spike in its daily active users from 12K-15K pre-pandemic to 40K-50K during the lockdown. On the back of the 2020 upswing in e-sports, its gamer base and viewership has doubled over the past three years even though the Indian market is seen to be in a nascent stage.

From an advertiser's perspective, the Corona situation has pushed brands to look for more non-traditional media opportunities and online games fitted the bill perfectly with the highly engaged audience they have. In fact, reliable industry estimates place the 2020 advertising and sponsorship growth in the gaming space anywhere in the region of 300-400%. Over the past few years many endemic brands like Dell, Intel, Acer, Paytm First Games, Loco and NVIDIA have supported the growth of the e-sports industry, by leveraging their assets and offering support in the form of computer components, software, production assistance etc. Also active in the e-sports arena is a host of non-endemic brands that connect well with the target audience because of their consumer promise. They include Red Bull, Coca Cola, Mountain Dew, Bharti Airtel, Honda Two Wheelers, Mercedes Benz, Disney+Hotstar, Louis Vuitton, Sony Liv and MTV. In fact, Red Bull has a multi-pronged sponsorship approach that involves player

sponsorship, hosting of events, creation of content and partnerships with clubs. Partnerships play a big role in driving the e-sports ecosystem in India and 2020 saw many of them making an impact. For example, Reliance Jio entered the e-sports market with a MediaTek tie-up for a 70-day "Free Fire" Tournament with the games being streamed live on JioTV and YouTube. In May of 2020, Airtel announced its entry into the gaming and esports space with Airtel India Esports Tour. Another significant move that happened in 2020 was the acquisition of the e-sports tech company SoStronk by Dream Sports, the parent company of Dream11.

With an aggregate revenue of INR 503 Cr (\$ 68 Mn), India has a 9.8% share of the global market, as per industry reports. The estimated audience size is 17 Mn in 2020 and it is a number that is fast growing on

leading streaming platforms like YouTube, Twitch and Disney+ Hotstar. And as the viewing audience base grows, so does the heat amongst gaming-only streaming platforms – especially in regional language space – the likes of Loco and Rheo. Regional language streaming, especially in Hindi, is seen to attract huge numbers of Indian audience. The most popular event in India, PUBG Mobile World League 2020, had 449K peak viewers, giving it the third spot across the industry last year. In 2020, total e-sports prize money earned worked out to an amount of INR 76 lakhs (\$ 102.7 K). While there are around 145 active e-sports players in India, the top ones are Grandmaster Pentala Harikrishna (Chess), Naman Mathur (Mortal), Yash Paresh Soni (Viper), Mihir (Ditterbitter) and Karan Mhawadkar (Excali), to mention a few names.



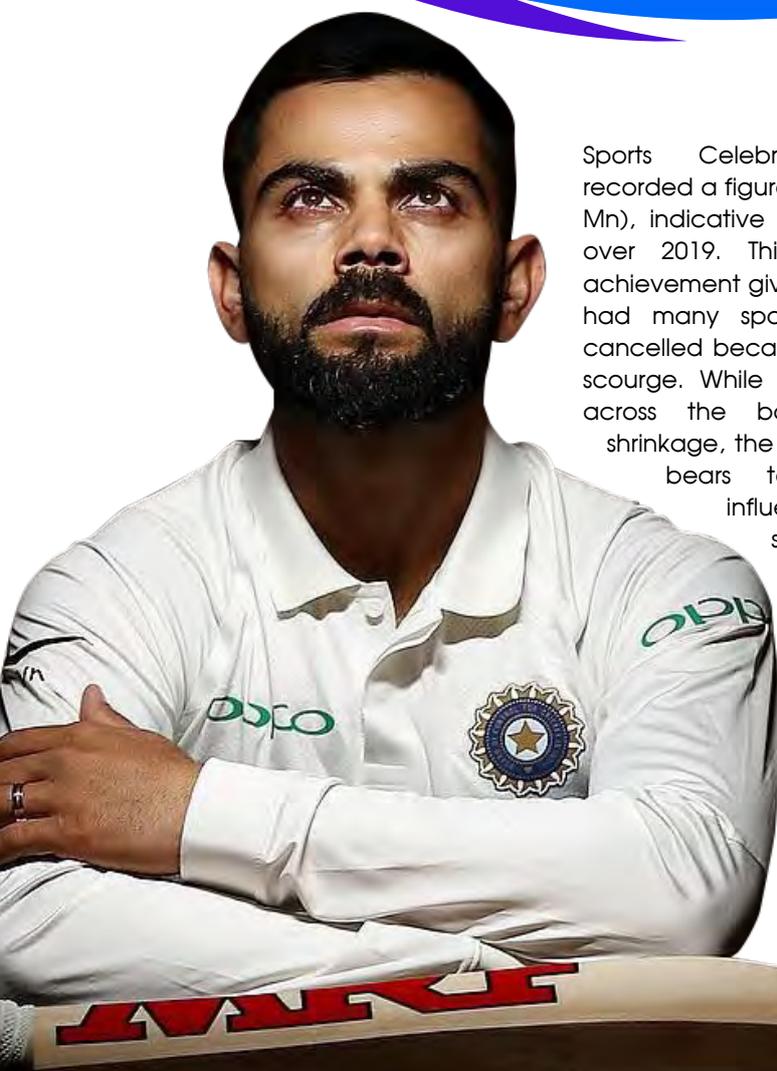
As the industry is in a phase of rapid growth, we see the next wave of swell coming on the back of gaming and esports turning into sustainable career opportunities. The fag end of 2020, was a silver lining for esports as Asian Games 2022 announced it to be a medal event. This move is expected to catalyse legitimacy of gaming amongst socio-economic circles and simultaneously boost the competitive landscape both in terms of participants and prize monies on offer. In fact, our cyber athletes lag considerably behind their western counterparts when it comes to the matter of prize-fund based earnings. In terms of event management, we need specialists to enter the e-sports arena, as they have the resources to be able to deliver much higher production value than the game publishers. Further, the burgeoning esports streaming viewer base is due to accelerate gaming's bid to be considered as an 'entertainment' genre. However, this starts at an individual level. Players need to be able to market themselves better. They are incredibly skilled, but they need help to be able to translate their abilities to matching levels of follower base.

From a brand's point of view, when it looks at the e-sports space, India offers a fresh opportunity. There is a high number of casual gamers who are also e-sports viewers, and the most hardcore fans provide a good base of young, engaged, and targetable consumers. The e-sports ecosystem offers multiple integration opportunities at various levels. The future looks bright, and there will be a lot of upside for brands that look for marquee associations and own multiple touch points in the e-sports value chain.



ENDORSEMENTS: VIRAT AND TEAM WIELD GREAT POWER WITH GREAT RESPONSIBILITY

2020 was a year that saw our sporting icons lift the spirits of the nation amidst a pall of gloom as the world was ravaged by the pandemic. Our cricketing heroes displayed spontaneity and warmth as they engaged with the fans on social media when there was no action on the field. Athlete endorsements bucked archetypal 2020 trends by overhauling the tally of the previous year, fuelled primarily by cricket. With the Olympic Games and many blue chip events getting cancelled, there was an inevitable drop in the non-cricketing space. Many top female athletes continued their good endorsement runs in a year that ended on a note of sanguinity for 2021.



Sports Celebrity Endorsements recorded a figure of INR 564 Cr (\$ 76 Mn), indicative of a growth of 5% over 2019. This is an amazing achievement given the fact that we had many sports fixtures getting cancelled because of the Covid-19 scourge. While we had businesses across the board experiencing shrinkage, the boom in this space bears testimony to the influence our leading sports stars have on our fans and the commitment they had shown to stay connected with us in a difficult year like this. On slicing this data further, we find that this YoY growth can be attributed mainly to the

incredible 13% growth in cricketer endorsement in 2020, delivering a value of INR 517 Cr (\$ 70 Mn). In fact, a total of 377 brand endorsements deals were made in 2020, of which 275 involved cricketers. This is at an upside from 2019 when we saw 329 deals being made, 228 of them with cricket stars. Consequently, the year witnessed the cricketers gaining a greater share of the overall endorsement pie in Indian sports, reaching 92% from the 2019 share of 85%.

The Indian Cricket Team had an action-packed schedule as 2020 commenced, a plan that was jeopardized by the contagion. With a high number of away fixtures, it was a challenging year for the boys, and Virat Kohli led the squad admirably as we reinforced our standing as a force to reckon with in world cricket. In terms of endorsements, the Indian



Skipper continued to rake in the big bucks, crossing the INR 200 Cr (\$ 27 Mn) mark yet again. In a tough year for all, Virat lent his credibility to many brands across different product categories, and the poster boy of Indian cricket truly fortified his position as the most influential name in Indian sports by quite a distance. The person from whom Virat took over the reins of Team India, MS Dhoni, had a good year from an endorsement perspective. 2020 must have been the year in which MS announced his retirement from international cricket, but his connect with the fans continued unabated, as evidenced by the confidence bestowed on him by brands. As Dhoni added three new brands to his kitty, the top two names in Indian

cricket contributed to a humongous 58% share of the total athlete endorsements spends in 2020. It has been seven years since Sachin Tendulkar decided to hang up his boots, but he continues to represent an emotion that connect very well with the Indian sports fans. The master's scorecard crossed INR 25 Cr (\$ 3.4 Mn) as he ended the year as the third most successful athlete in terms of number of brands endorsed. Of the 275 deals involving cricketers, 47 were new tie-ups, with 13 of them involving Rohit Sharma. The Vice-Captain of the Indian white-ball team has built quite a reputation for himself, and his popularity with fans was leveraged well by brands in many high profile campaigns on Indian TV. While these

top guns scored heavily in terms of endorsements, adding new brands to their lists and gaining in endorsement value were the rising stars of Indian cricket – Jasprit Bumrah, KL Rahul and Hardik Pandya. Many overseas cricket stars enjoyed good following from the Indian fans in what can be termed as a coming of age year for the business of fantasy sports in India. Dream11, the Title Sponsor at IPL 2020, continued their association with international stars like Ben Stokes, Jos Buttler, Quinton De Kock, Faf Du Plessis, Jonny Bairstow, Andre Russell and Jason Holder. Among women cricketers, the leader in terms of brand endorsements continues to be Mithali Raj, a legend of the game.

The year of the Olympics throws up new stars in the Indian sporting galaxy, as seen in the past. When our athletes do us proud at the greatest sporting event on the planet, they also get rewarded by the love of the fans and the concomitant success in the endorsement space. With the virus spreading the way it did last year, many leading sports events had to be either cancelled or postponed to 2021. The Olympics didn't happen, just like many leading sports leagues in India. Consequently, there was a 43% dip in the non-cricketing endorsement space. Amidst the despondency caused by the pandemic, it was heartening to see female athletes pulling in the brands, thereby dominating the non-cricketing part of the pie. Successfully continuing their endorsement stints in 2020 were prominent athletes on the distaff side - World Champion PV Sindhu, the legendary Mary Kom, ace shuttler Saina Nehwal, tennis star Sania Mirza, Rio medalist Sakshi Malik, and the incredibly talented Hima Das. The continued success of these stars is proof of the fact that we are proud of our champions, and their achievements will inspire more and more girls to take up competitive sports, reinforcing a sporting culture in the nation irrespective of the gender of the child.

An interesting shift that gained momentum in 2020 was that many sports stars were signing up for brands in social media influencer roles; such deals contributed to as much as 6% of the total endorsement value for the year. Also, we are observing the early stages of a trend of athletes engaging with brands for specific campaigns, as against long-term brand endorsement deals. As the nation went into lockdown early in the year, the fans were deprived of any form of sporting action and in this phase we saw top sportspersons using their reach on social media to engage with each other, and giving us nuances of the games as well as sharing with us other shades of their personalities, something which was welcomed with open arms by the Indian sports fan. The commercial

success enjoyed by these top cricketers is proof of the power they have with their fans, and if we go by the happenings of 2020, it is safe to conclude that they have handled this great power with great responsibility.

Indian men's cricket team ended 2020 on an emphatic note by winning the Boxing Day test in Melbourne, setting the stage for some electrifying performances from them in 2021. With the World Test Championship to be won, and with a lot to play for at the World T20 Cup that we will be hosting, we can expect fireworks from Virat's boys this year. Big money will continue to chase the boys as corporate India will be looking forward to associating more with them as the economy bounces back. 2020 lost many sporting events, and given the way the road ahead looks now, 2021 will see them coming back to life. India is expected to put up a strong contingent at the Tokyo Games, and there are real prospects of a few medals. As the sporting nation waits eagerly in anticipation, the odds look heavily stacked in favor of a strong upside in endorsements from non-cricketing athletes too, in 2021.



SPORTS CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENT



456	65
2019 (INR Cr)	2019 (USD Mn)

517	70
2020 (INR Cr)	2020 (USD Mn)

CRICKET

**EMERGING
SPORTS**

81	12
2019 (INR Cr)	2019 (USD Mn)

46	6
2020 (INR Cr)	2020 (USD Mn)

TOTAL

537	77
2019 (INR Cr)	2019 (USD Mn)

563	76
2020 (INR Cr)	2020 (USD Mn)

- Source – GroupM ESP
- 2019 Conversion Rate 1\$ = Rs 70
- 2020 Conversion Rate 1\$ = Rs 74

- Endorsement industry grew by 5%
- While Cricketers endorsement grew by 13%, other athletes lost 43% share
- Total of 377 brand endorsement deals have happened, out of which 275 endorsements were signed up by cricketers
- 92% of Total Brand Endorsements have come from Cricketers
- 58% of Total Brand Endorsements are from Virat Kohli & MS Dhoni
- Influencer activity on Social Media has gain prominence, contributing 6% of the total endorsement value

ATHLETE DATA

Athletes	Category	Social Conversations	Search Volumes	Facebook	Twitter	Instagram
Virat Kohli	Cricket	12,500	22,470	43,375	40,500	99,267
M S Dhoni	Cricket	9,840	14,165	24,856	8,100	30,400
Rohit Sharma	Cricket	5,490	13,826	17,000	18,500	17,500
Hardik Pandya	Cricket	1,230	10,459	7,900	6,400	16,200
KL Rahul	Cricket	1,610	4,942	7,080	5,300	9,200
Jasprit Bumrah	Cricket	921	3,688	6,800	3,200	6,200
Shikhar Dhawan	Cricket	983	3,809	15,000	5,700	7,900
Rishabh Pant	Cricket	578	3,811	4,196	2,100	4,200
Ravichandran Ashwin	Cricket	611	1,294	4,000	10,200	2,700
Shreyas Iyer	Cricket	606	6,459	728	1,100	4,200

Athletes	Category	Social Conversations	Search Volumes	Facebook	Twitter	Instagram
P V Sindhu	Badminton	326	1,196	2,400	2,900	1,700
Saina Nehwal	Badminton	341	1,381	8,200	8,500	1,500
Mihitani Raj	Cricket	193	1,621	3,453	782	1,400
Harmanpreet Kaur	Cricket	141	873	2,000	359	801
Mary Kom	Boxing	85	1,044	3,581	1,400	254
Hima Das	Athletics	119	609	635	407	345
Sakshi Mali	Wrestling	146	1,140	729	503	156

Source – GroupM ESP
All numbers are in Thousands

Athletes – Cricket

The Kohli – Dhoni duet: in 2020 the Kohli-Dhoni duo generated 1.8x times more social conversation in comparison to the next 8 top cricketers in the country – thanks to fatherhood on one end and retirement from International duties on the other.

King Kohli – When it comes to social media King Kohli is in a league of his own. He well and truly eclipses his compatriots on Facebook and Twitter. When it comes to Instagram, in 2020, the team India captain had more followers than the combined might of the next 9 top cricketers – including MS Dhoni & Rohit Sharma.

UNLOCKING VALUE IN A RELEVANT, TRANSPARENT AND EMOTIONAL ECOSYSTEM

The year 2020 was anticipated to be an exciting and fast-paced year for the sports industry, featuring two marquee events on the international calendar: The Tokyo Olympics and the World T20. Instead, it turned out to be a Test - of character, relationships, spirit, vision and approach. The trajectory of sports business evolution entered a world of unknown for the entire ecosystem.

Authored by:



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Celebrity endorsement has always been a key aspect of marketing in India. This is clearly evidenced by the fact that over 50% of endorsements in India feature celebrities, compared to, say, the United States, where this number hovers around 20%. With the increased consumption of television and rapid adoption of social media as a marketing tool, the last decade has witnessed both significant growth and evolution of the Indian endorsement space. In terms of growth, as per industry reports, over the past decade, the number of celebrity-led endorsements has increased at a steady rate of around 15-16% year-on-year. Historically dominated by film stars, the endorsement market witnessed sports stars (to be read as cricketers) occupying an increasingly larger share.

Equally interesting has been how endorsements have evolved. An endorsement deal traditionally focused on utilizing an athlete's IP, in-person offline appearances at launch events, shoots, fan engagements and shows. Social media engagement was generally bundled, as add on value, to these primary deliverables. Further, in almost each instance, the approach

to endorsements was to have a single star face representing the brand, with only a few exceptions proving the rule.

This has slowly changed over the last decade. Today, in recognition of the diversity of this country, the celebrity endorsement space has evolved from being focused on a single star face for the brand to often selecting multiple faces. This allows the brand to reach out to a broader audience, segmented and targeted as per their internal audience splits. Gillette's 'Break The Beard' and Dream11's IPL campaign are classic examples, wherein a brand has signed multiple celebrities to endorse a campaign.

This shift from one star to multiple stars has also been supplemented by a shift in the business model governing these partnerships. Traditionally, brands would sign the biggest athletes for a fixed term engagement with a consistent fee. However, the rapid emergence of start-ups and expansion of business sectors and categories has led to innovative strategic partnerships with tools like equity stakes, royalty and other similar collaborations finding increasing acceptance and adoption.

The Pandemic Pandemonium: An Empathetic Approach

The stalled 2020 resulted in brands finding it tough to sustain, let alone, increase their top and bottom line numbers. There was a significant unknown, which everyone was exposed to. Resultantly, marketing budgets took a hit and brands became wary of celebrity endorsements basis longevity and Rols. To cater to the unknown, brands were forced to identify ways of reducing short term costs, including celebrity endorsements.

An unfortunate, but understandable reaction, from several brands was to try and trigger Force Majeure clauses to exit their endorsement contracts. For others, that took a more long term view, the approach was to ask for a reduction in the endorsement fee or a reduction in the term of the contract owing to the lockdown. Others began to look at endorsements tactically, rather than strategically, and sought to sign athletes for one-off campaigns and projects.

This is where empathy took over. For us, at RISE Worldwide, it was natural to reciprocate the trust vested in us and our talent by our brand partners, irrespective of whether the contracts covered this situation or not. Rather than debating Force Majeure clauses and tactical plays, we worked with our brand partners to help them achieve their strategic objectives. At RISE, we focused on finding solutions that allowed the brand-talent partnerships to be sustained – enhanced deliverables, extended contractual terms and deferred payments were all on the table as we looked to jointly overcome the impact of the pandemic.

Empathy, Trust & You

Empathy meant that 2020 became all about trust and belief in time and in long term partnerships. There were two things that people were looking forward to – unlock of the lockdown and the Covid vaccine. But, what till the dawn of the vaccine?

The sustenance of partnerships, based on transparency and innovation, opened new avenues. For instance, Athletes felt increasingly empowered to promote, highlight and campaign social issues and causes close to their heart. Research shows that 95% of athletes in the world with more than five million followers on Instagram, advocated for causes on social media in 2020, collectively generating US\$314 million worth of Quality Indexed media value globally. Another report showed that advocacy posts drove 63% more engagement for brands.

Brands realized the power of this innovative tool to communicate with their audiences during the pandemic. In a world united by the pandemic, it was no longer about

the brand 'I', but the stakeholder 'You'. Inspirational and empathetic messaging overtook sales conversations. This was 'the new normal' for everyone and held relevance. Suddenly, in adversity, the interests of athletes, brands and audiences were perfectly aligned. A new tool was unlocked – of emotional connect, of giving a level of freedom to a celebrity, which she would otherwise not have. They became the voice of relevance to talk to fans and business partners. Take for example, Rohit Sharma, where he created self-shot videos during lockdown for Hotstar, in which he spoke about the Avengers or about saving the ocean and saying no to plastic straws as he sipped on water with his daughter. It was a classic case of content innovation, where the message isn't necessarily about 'buy my product' but an emotional way to connect and talk to the audience at large.



The Future is bright

Some changes alter paradigms entirely and the pandemic's impact on celebrity endorsements has seen a permanent seminal shift. The pandemic unlocked a vast canvas of opportunity to innovate for brands and athletes to unlock additional value in endorsement deals. The industry will never go back to the service contract mentality- moving forward, endorsement will now marry deliverables in traditional celebrity endorsement and innovations unlocked by the pandemic, causing a steep increase in endorsements. Set out below are some seminal shifts that will become the new normal:

1

Commercialising digital IPs: The lockdown led to extensive usage of social media by celebrities. Some, who previously did not have any presence on social media, are now setup on these platforms. For example, Kareena Kapoor took to Instagram with immediate posts for Puma. People came to know, connect and engage a lot more with their stars, be it seeing Rohit Sharma play with his daughter or seeing Katrina Kaif scrubbing utensils. Followers grew rapidly as conversations became more real and the 'Reels and Lives' of course, amplified fan engagement further.

Having experienced success with digital campaigns during the pandemic, brands will now opt for increased digital engagement with athletes. This will not only deliver better business for the brands, but also increase the commercial value of the athletes' digital platforms significantly.

4

Empowering smaller brands and new entrants: The emergence of new athletes and increased digital engagement with multiple influencers also enables brands with lower budgets than established powerhouses to enter the market. This will contribute to the expansion and evolution of the entire ecosystem. The trend is already visible in Gaming, E-Learning, Fantasy Gaming, Education, Finance and Medical devices and will grow to several more industries going forward.

2

Innovative content: As we have discussed, content has become more relevant and brands now have a more data driven and far more nuanced understanding of what content works. Brands will realign 'brand' content and utilize newer tools and methods for fan engagement, be it via Live engagements or self-shot videos. More organic and transparent content, with an emotional human connect will open avenues to create new IPs as well.

5

Disruptive fee structures: The industry can look forward to a more disruptive and dynamic fee structure amongst athletes owing to digitization and different weightage to offline and online deliverables. Athletes will restructure their fee brackets between offline and online with the latter being much more in demand going forward.

3

Emergence of young talent: The cricket market is currently dominated by the big three – Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli and MS Dhoni. The flip side to this was that the universe of categories to which they were available had shrunk considerably. With the expansion in the market and acceleration in following and engagement, the younger brigade including the likes of Hardik Pandya, Jasprit Bumrah, Shreyas Iyer, K L Rahul and Rishab Pant, are emerging as powerful platforms. We expect their presence and performance in the endorsement market to grow exponentially, catapulted by their consistent on-field exploits.

6

Expansion of regional horizon and outreach: Social media helps brands appeal to a wider target audience through relevant celebrities. Brands will hence, look at bucketing their campaigns and celebrities according to their targeted demographics in an easier and more economical way.

The pandemic created havoc across the world and the sports industry was amongst the hardest hit with live events, the core of the industry's existence, coming to a sudden halt. Yet, in this adversity, there were silver linings, none more important than the shifts in the endorsement market. As the world returns to a near normal, the sports industry will emerge stronger, live events, now supplemented by a more robust and fast expanding endorsement market.

MEDIA SPENDS: CRICKET SHOWS THE WAY IN HOSTILE PLAYING CONDITIONS

It was a year that saw unprecedented levels of cancellation of events in the sports industry. As we witnessed a disruption like never before, the resumption of the games saw the gates of the stadia being closed to the fans. With a greater emphasis on engaging the remote fans, broadcasters had a big role to play. While media spends saw significant drop in the absence of many marquee events, the IPL and the Star Network put together a great partnership as they made up for a lot of lost ground. With many non-cricketing competitions getting called off, we saw a surge in the share of India's most popular sport in overall media spends for the year.



A large number of non-sporting brands advertise on sports media to connect with their prospective customers. Media expenses, therefore account for a big share of the overall Sports Industry. In 2020, it accounted for INR 3657 Cr (\$ 494 Mn) which was 62% of the overall spends in the industry. As the year began, the expected numbers were higher than this, and in the middle of the year, these numbers seemed impossible too! In fact, 2020 was a year that didn't respect plans and projections. By March, the spread of the Covid-19 virus had brought the world to a veritable standstill. Many top notch sports events were slated for the upcoming

months – like the Olympic Games, World T20 Cup, Asia Cup Cricket, Euro Soccer, and many others. India was gearing up for another season of premier sporting leagues that have become very much a part of our lives now. With all sporting action coming to a halt as we went into a lockdown, there were cancellations en bloc. Hosting a sports event and opening the gates for fans posed several challenges in the wake of the situation with the pandemic. As social distancing was the order of the day, it seemed for a while that it was highly improbable that we will see any form of competitive sports soon. With no action on the field, the net result was a huge dip of 30% in media spends by the time the year ended.

The fact that at least some of the competitions were resumed soon is a tribute to the efforts put in by industry professionals to bring back the games. In the Indian Sports Industry, the IPL is the most keenly awaited extravaganza, and it was important to get it moving. And by September, it was back, with additional safety protocols for players and no fans in the ground, with the games to be played in UAE only. It was very important to give the fans viewing the games on media, an experience that indicates a carnival atmosphere in the grounds, and a sense that normal services have resumed. With innovations like virtual fan walls, Augmented Reality, pre-recorded fan cheer scores, LED screens, teleportation technology for presenters, and other such innovations, there was considerable upgrade in the viewer experience on media. The IPL was a sell-out success in terms of media investments too, as the event saw many brands, old and new, running impactful campaigns and connecting with their consumers. The IPL represented India's first major

sporting activity after the outbreak of Covid-19 though it was shifted to an offshore location for safety reasons. While the event had a big role to play in the media revival for the year, the Indian men's cricket team also played its part, making it a well-rounded effort from the sport. Team India had only 25 international matches in 2020, significantly lower than the 54 it had in 2019; something that did not help in YoY comparisons. Overall, cricket contributed to media spends, an amount of INR 3547 Cr (\$ 479 Mn), which works out to a huge 97% of the total. What this implies is that, around 60% of the Sports Industry size came from media expenses by brands on cricket related coverage.

The postponement of the Olympic Games was a major setback for sports media. Tokyo 2020 looked like an event that would have seen brand spends reach heights on media, the absence of which further accentuated the dependence on cricket. With one sport delivering 97% of overall media spends, a good

part of the other 3% came from the ISL, India's leading football league. The competition, which started in November, was the first sports league to be played on Indian soil post the onslaught of the pandemic. The situation that prevailed in 2020 was such that the success of these two leagues could not be replicated in other such competitions, and as a result, we saw the cancellation of eight leagues - Pro Kabaddi, Indo International Premier Kabaddi League, Premier Badminton League, Pro Volleyball League, Pro Wrestling League, Ultimate Table Tennis, Big Bout Indian Boxing League and X1 Racing League. There was considerable loss of media opportunity in some of them, like the premier leagues in Kabaddi and Badminton. Similarly, the fact that tournaments like the Indian Open Badminton, as well as the Men's and Women's Indian Open Golf, could not be held, also did not help the cause. Adding to the woes was the cancellation of cricket leagues like the Tamil Nadu Premier League and the Karnataka Premier League.





In 2019, TV accounted for almost 82% of total media expenses, with digital media contributing to around 17%. With the spate of cancellations and the increasing dependence on cricket, there was a decline in spends and in 2020, TV accounted for around 87% of the total, which indicates an increase in contribution in the smaller pie.

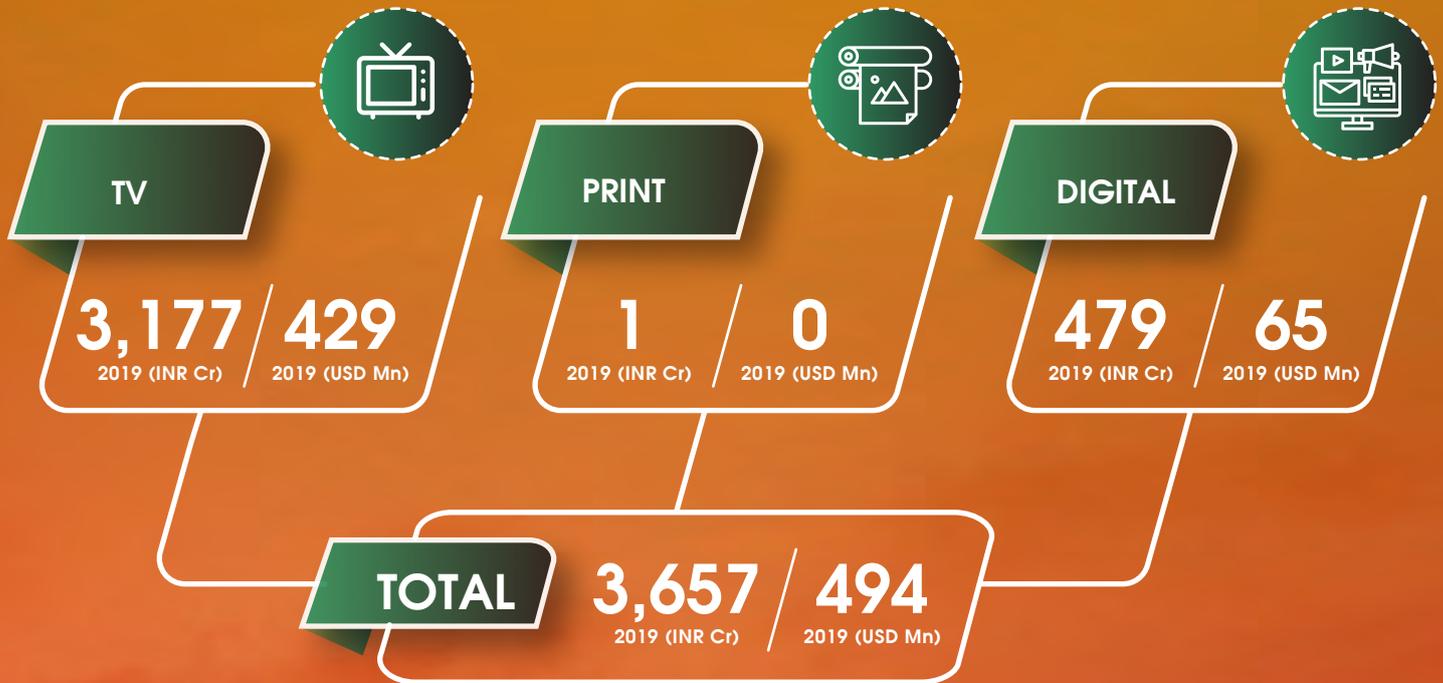
Digital spends, which had seen rapid growth in 2019, showed 2020 numbers that looked closer to the 2018 figures it had; while TV spends looked closer to the 2017 scale. Print media saw a huge decline, in fact, it was virtually non-existent. This is a drop that looks significantly sharper than the fall it had in recent years and could, to a considerable extent, be attributed to the extraordinary situations that prevailed in 2020.

If we look at 2021 with a fresh guard at the wicket, we can see far better playing conditions than what we saw a few months ago. It is going to be an action packed year; the sports world is going to have the Tokyo Olympics, the Euro Soccer Tournament, World Indoor Athletics and a host of events we missed in 2020. For the Indian cricket fan, we

are going to have an IPL on regular schedule on Indian pitches, the World T20, the World Test Championship and many other events to win. The leagues and tournaments that were cancelled last year, are expected to make a triumphant return. The experiences of 2020 have made us wiser, we have accelerated many tech-enabled innovations to gratify the fans, and the stakeholders of the sporting ecosystem are committed to working even better together. Also, events like IPL, ISL and the Indian Cricket Team's matches have shown us how to work in post-Covid circumstances. With all these elements falling in place, fans are in for a treat on media; and this is a great sign for businesses that are looking at sports properties to build their brands.



SPORTS MEDIA SPENDS



- Source – GroupM ESP
- 2020 Conversion Rate 1\$ = Rs 74

• Media Spends on Sports saw a dip of 30% due to cancellation of International & National marquee events

- Print spends on Sports has declined drastically
- Cricket share in Sports AdEx is 97% - IPL is the major contributor

TEN-YEAR STORY: A MULTI-SPORT ECOSYSTEM EVOLVES AS CRICKET HITS A PURPLE PATCH

The past decade has seen the foundations being laid for a bright future in the sporting nation. The introduction of the IPL marked the arrival of a unique platform for athletes, fans, broadcasters and business entities who saw various opportunities to integrate themselves with the value chain of this T20 spectacle. This winning momentum eventually inspired the launch of similar franchise-based events in other sports which enjoyed differing levels of success. With corporate India recognizing the value that sports can deliver, we saw a steady growth trajectory year after year on the back of increasing popularity of the games, driven by corresponding scale-up in the sponsorship and advertising outlays. As sports met entertainment, there was a treat in store for fans, which made for more win-win deals that propelled the business of sports in India.

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2008 marked an inflection point for the business of sports in India. We saw the unveiling of an event, which in many ways changed the course for the industry- the Indian Premier League (IPL). In our sporting history, there were many moments that put India on top of the the world, like eight Olympic Gold Medals in Hockey, wins at All-England and World Badminton, World Title in Chess, the exploits of our icons who won individual medals at the Olympics, and several others. Among them, the 1983 World Cup win in cricket was special, as it triggered a major popularity wave for the sport in our country. While we went on to win more ICC tournaments over the years, by the time the last decade

began, we had produced some of the biggest names in cricket, and the sport had grown into an emotion that had the ability to bind us all together. The format of commercialized sporting leagues had gained momentum in more developed sports markets like the USA and Europe in the previous century itself, and the IPL marked its arrival in India. As 2010 came to an end, the league was three years old and had already given indication of the times to come; and as a country we had given ample demonstration of our ability to give the world a prominent multi-sport competition when Delhi hosted the Commonwealth Games earlier that year.

Even though 2020 had witnessed hitherto unseen levels of disruption in the sector in India and abroad, the Indian sports industry returned figures of INR 5834 Cr (\$ 796 Mn); a number that takes into account the following activities, mentioned here with their contributions to the total- Ground Sponsorship (14%), Team Sponsorship (11%), Franchise Fee (3%), Athlete Endorsement (10%), and Media Spends (62%). Considering the headwind faced by the industry in the last year due to the pandemic, these are numbers that bear testimony to the way the ecosystem fought the difficult circumstances. 2020 came after a great

year for Indian sports on the field and on the business side too, and with 2021 all set to cover up for the temporary setbacks we had last year, the journey till 2019 will be the best expression of the grounds we covered in recent years, in quantitative terms. 2019 saw the industry grow at the rate of 17% and reach INR 9109 Cr (\$ 1301 Mn) with a high share of the incremental value being contributed by Media and Ground Sponsorships which grew at 18% and 25% respectively. The uptrend has been steady and has come with support from solid groundwork that had been done year after year, with consistent deliveries and investments from different stakeholders. 2014 was another significant year in the making of the sporting nation, as we saw the

emergence of new non-cricketing leagues which connected well with the Indian fans. With the top three leagues already in place, it would be interesting to evaluate the growth performance from that year onwards. In the five years from 2014 to 2019, the Indian Sports Industry grew at a CAGR of 14.6%, with impactful contributions across the board. The CAGR numbers for the different areas speak for themselves, with Ground (20.3%), Media (15.7%), Team (13.5%) and Endorsement (10.3%) performing consistently over the five years.



As the decade unfolded, with growing relevance of broadcasting and the ever increasing clout of media, sports became even more appealing as a platform for brands to connect with their consumers. Leading the surge, through its immense popularity, was cricket. Twenty eight years after we first won the ODI World Cup at Lord's, history repeated itself, this time at Wankhede. India won the 2011 ODI World Cup by defeating Sri Lanka in the final. While the event was a great sponsorship and media success, the home team's tournament victory led to an era of bullishness around India's leading sport. The IPL, the money-spinner of Indian sports, saw the addition of two new franchises in 2011. Adding to the flavor of the cricket masala were Kochi Tuskers (KT) and Pune Warriors India (PWI). The new teams added to the value of the property even as the initial eight saw strong organic growth in the same time period. While KT was suspended after 2011, the Pune franchise was part of the league till 2013. In the meantime, India was attracting more world-class events. The Formula One tour had a pit stop in our country, with the Buddh International Circuit in Greater Noida becoming the venue for the Indian Grand Prix, from 2011 to 2013. The following year saw a couple of fresh beginnings that revealed the true latitude of the IPL model in Indian sports. Even as the T20 league inspired the launch of similar competitions like the Big Bash League (BBL) and Caribbean Premier League (CPL) in other cricketing nations, we found the learning curve from the IPL coming in handy for the unveiling of two successful leagues in other sports in India. Even though India had a history of footballing clubs, the launch of the franchise-based Indian Super League (ISL) in 2014 brought in a flavor that was not seen before in the sport in India. In the same year, we saw the launch of the Pro Kabaddi (PKL), which gave a fresh shot of energy to a game that originated in India. Both these leagues attracted high profile franchisees and sponsors, and grew in relevance in their own ways, sowing

the seeds of a sporting nation that is not just about cricket. Riding the wave of the rising popularity of badminton in India, thanks to the exploits of our stars on the world stage, was the Premier Badminton League (PBL) which saw its inaugural season in 2016. The event gave an opportunity for fans to see the best Indian players competing against some of the leading stalwarts in the game. All the while, cricket continued to score heavily in the sporting box office. Even though we saw some of the legends of the game like Sachin Tendulkar announcing their retirement, we had modern-day greats like MS Dhoni and Virat Kohli carrying the legacy forward.

In the years that followed, a few sponsorship and media deals were made around cricket that aggrandized the sporting industry in the country. These tie-ups hint to the fact that these growths are based on solid fundamentals and that the bedrock of this positivity lies in the ever-increasing levels of fan involvement in the sport. In 2018 Vivo secured the IPL Title Sponsorship for five years at an astronomical figure of INR 2199 Cr (\$ 323 Mn). This deal came at an incredible 450% increment over the previous one. In the same year, when the media rights were up for grabs after ten years of this cricketing fiesta, Star India bagged it for 2018-2022 at a jaw-dropping amount of INR 16347 Cr (\$ 2.4 Bn). In comparison with the previous deal, this came at an increase of 367%. The runs were coming not just from the blade of IPL, in fact it was sharing a fast-paced partnership with the Indian Cricket Team. In the same year, Star India bagged the Worldwide TV & Digital Rights for Indian Cricket for five years, for an amount of INR 6692 Cr (\$ 984 Mn), which, on a per year basis, came at an increment of 50% over the previous deal they had secured in 2012. In another significant move, India's leading education and learning brand Byju's replaced Oppo as Team India's Title Sponsor in 2019. The smartphone player had previously inked a 2017-2022 deal for an amount

of INR 1079 (\$ 163 Mn). The incremental revenue through this shift worked out to an amount of INR 580 Cr (\$ 83 Mn). 2019 also saw FinTech major Paytm renewing their Title Sponsorship rights of Indian cricket from 2019 to 2023 for INR 327 Cr (\$ 46.7 Mn), which was at a 58% increase from the previous deal. While cricket did the heavy scoring, there was ample support at the other end too. In 2017, Vivo secured the PKL Title Sponsorship rights for 5 years, at an amount of INR 262 Cr (\$ 39.7 Mn); this deal came at a 100% incremental value. The year also saw the two-wheeler major Hero Moto Corp renewing their ISL Title Sponsorship till 2019 at 196% rise in value, from their previous agreement. In another move in 2017, Vodafone secured the Title Rights for the PBL for a period of three years with a payout of over INR 20 Cr (\$ 3 Mn). Running across to marathon, when Tata Sons secured the Title Sponsorship for the flagship running event in Mumbai, it had come at a rise of 50% from the previous sponsor. While all non-cricketing leagues have not enjoyed similar levels of success, the rising value of properties like these clearly hint at the opportunities that lie ahead for India as a multi-sport nation.

The changes happening in the business environment in India will also find their reflections in the sponsor list of major sports properties. If we glance through it, year after year, we see many sponsor slots changing hands from traditional brands to new-age ones. Recent years have seen increasing presence of technology players, FinTech and EduTech are two such spaces. BCCI's high-stake deals with Paytm and Byju's are clear examples that illustrate this fact. More recently, in Covid-ravaged 2020, we have seen the impact made by Unacademy and Cred at the IPL. Today's sports fans are not passive observers, they want to express themselves, and even love it if they get the selector's hat, albeit in a fantasy platform. Of late, Fantasy Sports Platforms have been making a dream run in cricket and other sports too. Of all the players



in that space, Dream11 has been garnering maximum share of voice. While they were part of many sports events in India and outside, the Indian Unicorn reaped rich rewards by winning the Title Sponsor Rights at cricket's most valuable property, the IPL. Competing with Dream11 are apps like My11Circle and Mobile Premier League (MPL), the latter becoming the Official Kit Sponsor of the Indian Cricket Team, in a significant move. In terms of athlete endorsement, cricketers continue to attract brands and high value deals, taking a lion's share of the pie. In fact, the share of cricket in sports celebrity endorsement rose from previous

year's 85% to 92%, in 2020. Even as more than half the endorsement amounts are earned by just two sportsmen, the current Indian cricket captain and his predecessor, it is heartening to note that the highest earning non-cricketing athletes are female, with PV Sindhu leading the list in recent years. In a decade that saw the growing role of media in the commercialization of sports, there were huge improvements in broadcast quality and viewer experience. Advertisement Expenses continued to be the biggest contributor to the sports industry with TV being the dominant medium. In fact, its share of total media spends

has consistently been above 80% for some time now. With technology playing a big role, especially with OTT gaining ground, digital medium has been growing very fast, if you consider 2020 as an outlier, given the uncertainties caused by the pandemic. Print medium in sports has lost out to TV and digital in the past few years. While print spends clocked more than thrice the value as digital medium in 2016, the tables were turned completely in just three years; 2019 advertising revenue on digital medium was more than ten times that on print; a significant shift indeed.

The past decade has seen the sports ecosystem coming into its own. Today, in a year, we have over 1000 hours of live sporting action, 550 Mn reach of sports on media, and 60 city-based sports teams in India. The Sporting Nation has 450+ Team Sponsorships in addition to 55+ Central Sponsorships. We have evolved to a stage where we have eight premier leagues in the country, in different sports in different stages of maturity- Indian Premier League, Indian Super League, Pro Kabaddi, Premier Badminton League, Ultimate Table Tennis, Pro Wrestling League, Pro Volleyball League and Big Bout Indian Boxing League.

Even as we are upbeat about this, it must be taken on board that not all leagues have a rosy picture to show currently; among the Indian leagues that got discontinued are Hockey India League, Super Boxing League, Super Fight League, International Premier Tennis League, Cue Slam and P1 Powerboat. For a sporting league to succeed, there are many ingredients that are part of the formula. We need the athletes, rights holders, media houses, franchisees and sponsors to come together in a win-win ecosystem to give the fans their due, because, for all these business interests to be served well, spectator gratification is of paramount importance. The success stories of the bigger events should benefit the rest. For instance, in Covid-affected 2020, the incredible success of the IPL and the fact that the ISL was the first major sports event to be held in India after the pandemic outbreak, should serve as the ideal shot in the arm for us as India looks at 2021 and beyond to scale even greater heights.



10 YEAR DATA

Year	2011 ₹ Cr.	2012 ₹ Cr.	2013 ₹ Cr.	2014 ₹ Cr.	2015 ₹ Cr.	2016 ₹ Cr.	2017 ₹ Cr.	2018 ₹ Cr.	2019 ₹ Cr.	2020 ₹ Cr.
Overall % Growth	5314 32%	4405 -17%	4381 -1%	4617 9%	5363 16%	6400 19%	7300 14%	7762 6%	9109 17%	5894 -34%
On Ground % Growth	705 -30%	712 1%	759 6%	795 5%	1030 30%	1166 13%	1337 15%	1603 20%	2006 25%	850 -53%
Team Sponsorship % Growth	724 60%	669 -8%	465 -30%	494 6%	558 13%	700 25%	820 17%	892 9%	934 5%	646 -30%
Franchise Fee % Growth	618 117%	481 -22%	527 10%	482 -8%	541 12%	548 1%	684 25%	353 -48%	400 13%	177 -55%
Endorsement % Growth	267 5%	293 10%	382 30%	328 -14%	416 27%	476 14%	395 -17%	482 22%	537 11%	564 13%
Media Spends % Growth	3000 50%	2250 -25%	2250 0%	2518 12%	2817 12%	3511 25%	4065 16%	4432 9%	5232 18%	3657 -30%

Year	2011 \$ Mn	2012 \$ Mn	2013 \$ Mn	2014 \$ Mn	2015 \$ Mn	2016 \$ Mn	2017 \$ Mn	2018 \$ Mn	2019 \$ Mn	2020 \$ Mn
₹ - \$ Conversion Rate	47	53	59	61	65	68	66	68	70	74
Overall	1131	831	743	757	825	941	1106	1141	1301	796
On Ground	150	134	128	130	159	171	203	236	287	115
Team Sponsorship	154	126	79	81	86	103	124	131	133	87
Franchise Fee	131	91	89	79	83	81	104	52	57	24
Endorsement	57	55	65	54	64	70	60	71	77	76
Media Spends	638	425	381	413	433	516	616	652	747	494

Source – GroupM ESP

TOKYO2020(NE): THE LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL?

-Through the lens of Mr. Mustafa Ghouse, CEO JSW Sports

Silent cheering, no access to bars and restaurants outside the Games Village and testing at least every four days: just some of the many provisions mentioned in the "Playbook" released by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) for athletes as everyone races against time to ensure the ill-fated Tokyo Olympics actually goes ahead. Irrespective of what shape the Games eventually take, they will be far different than the extravagant celebration we have been accustomed to over the past many editions.



The world has changed drastically since the September evening in 2013 when Tokyo won its bid to host the Olympics for the second time after 1964. If 1964 was about showcasing the economy's post-war emergence, 2020 was set to be a spectacle unlike anything seen so far: the most gender-neutral Olympic Games, with innovative new formats and urban sports which promised a glimpse into the future of the Olympic movement. All of this complemented with an inclusive public transport system in the urban megapolis of Tokyo, complete with talking robots, drones and driverless cars to boot!

Instead, we are stuck glaring at the uncertainty around whether the Olympics will even go ahead, less than 5 months before its rescheduled start date. The cost of hosting the Olympics is estimated to have increased by over a fifth to \$15.4 billion due to the postponement. Athletes, who spend their entire lives

preparing for their moment to shine, find themselves unable to do the one thing they love: play sport! Broadcasters and advertisers, hamstrung by the pandemic's impact on business, unable to plan their sporting calendars, and the domestic and international fans, unsure of whether they will be able to support their favourite athletes.

Domestically, most Indian athletes have been stuck in camps with limited access to competition and training exposure. Sponsors and brands, who typically see the Olympics as the one occasion to capitalise on the media attention and market Olympic athletes are taking a cautious approach and deal pipelines are tentative.

To understand the scale of the obstacles facing both the IOC and the Tokyo organisers to reschedule the Olympics, originally slated to begin on July 24, 2020, one only needs to look at the numbers:

10,500+ athletes representing up to 206 National Olympic Committees and over a million visitors, all expected to converge in central Tokyo for what was to be 17 days of the greatest sporting celebration in recent memory.

The challenges around organising an event like the Olympics, balancing the interests of the many stakeholder groups from the athletes themselves to the broadcasters spending billions on rights, are far too detailed to go into. However, if there is one thing that truly embodies the Olympics and Olympic athletes, it is the triumph of spirit and the pursuit of excellence. It is this pursuit that, I am hopeful, will see Tokyo host a successful and important edition of the Olympic Games, one that reminds us to be grateful, celebrate the present and in the words of the IOC President Thomas Bach, ignite the Olympic flame, which shall be the "Light" at the end of this tunnel.



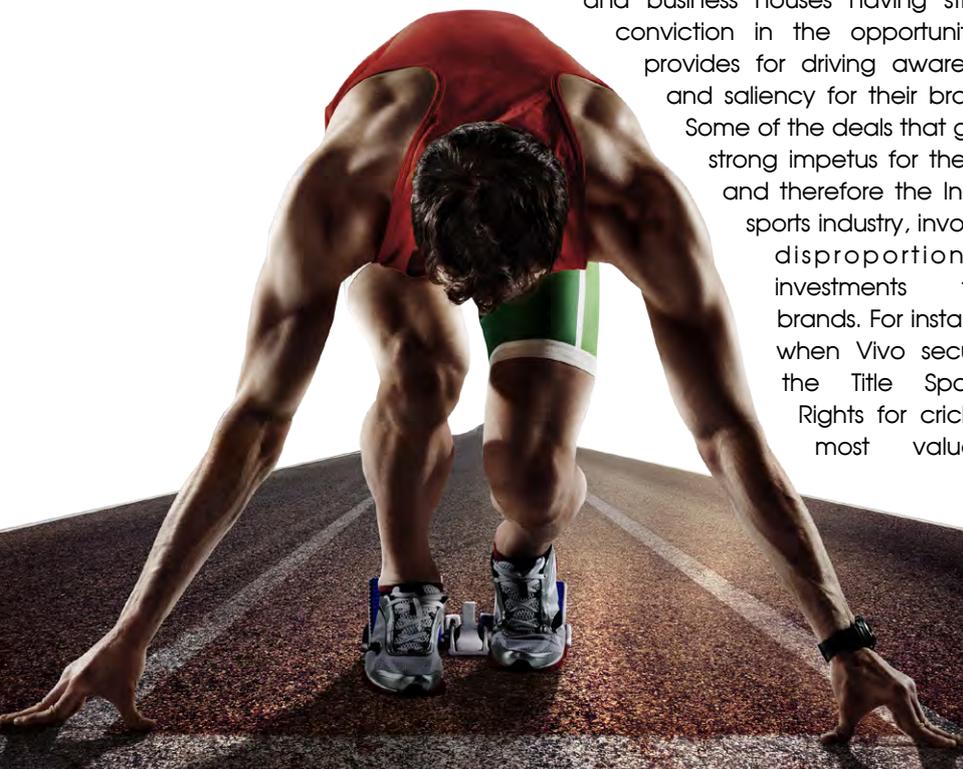
2021 AND BEYOND: WARMED UP FOR A POST-PANDEMIC RESURGENCE

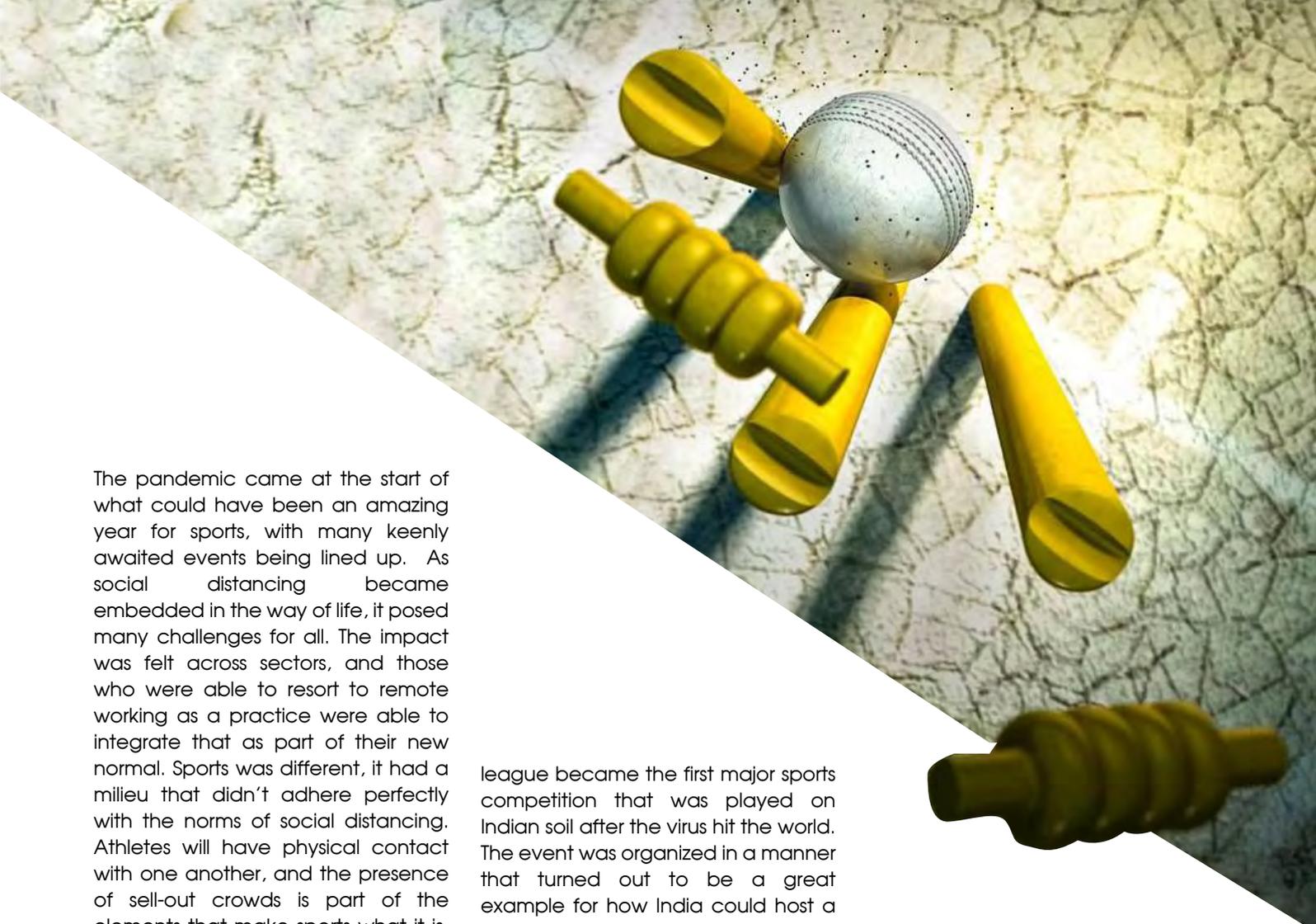
The sports sector in India has come a long way since the IPL took the cricket world by storm in 2008. With the national cricket team and the pre-eminent sporting league boosting the run rates in terms of sponsorship and media spends, other sports too entered the arena, adding more dimensions to the industry. Even as the Covid-19 threat put the brakes on the ecosystem, it has brought the stakeholders closer to one another as we found ways to work around the crisis. 2021 has an exciting line-up of sporting events for us, and we can expect a high scoring year in the business of sports.

The decade from 2011 to 2020 has seen significant shifts in the commercialization of sports in India. With more and more live action being made available to fans, media plays a huge role in making sports an appealing proposition to brands. The advent of the IPL had changed the paradigm for the industry, with fans getting a new flavor of sporting action, and business houses having strong conviction in the opportunity it provides for driving awareness and saliency for their brands.

Some of the deals that gave strong impetus for the IPL, and therefore the Indian sports industry, involved disproportionate investments from brands. For instance, when Vivo secured the Title Sponsor Rights for cricket's most valuable

league in 2018, they paid an amount that had a 4.5x growth with respect to the previous deal. On the media front, when Star India bagged the IPL rights in the same year, the amount involved was at an increment of 367%. As media rates shot up, it didn't show any reduction in the propensity of brands to spend on advertising. For Indian Cricket team's fixtures too, there was no looking back, as seen in the high-value deals with Paytm, Oppo, Byju's, and others. With other IPL-inspired leagues gaining traction, like the ISL which has the backing of Hero Moto Corp, and the PKL, which had Vivo as the Title Sponsor from early days, the second half of the last decade saw a fast-paced game being played all across. As cricketers kept on hitting the ball outside the boundary line at the IPL, we saw that the boundaries that define the scope of sponsorship and media investment in cricket, were continuously getting redefined by India's foremost sports league.





The pandemic came at the start of what could have been an amazing year for sports, with many keenly awaited events being lined up. As social distancing became embedded in the way of life, it posed many challenges for all. The impact was felt across sectors, and those who were able to resort to remote working as a practice were able to integrate that as part of their new normal. Sports was different, it had a milieu that didn't adhere perfectly with the norms of social distancing. Athletes will have physical contact with one another, and the presence of sell-out crowds is part of the elements that make sports what it is. As we went into a lockdown, the long whistle was blown on all sporting action. That was a low phase for India and amidst the encircling gloom, there was heightened activity on social media by our favorite athletes, as they used their online presence to engage with their fans. Even as the virus had gripped the nation, our sporting icons had used virality of a better nature to lift our spirits. The games had to come back; the base product in the sports industry is the competitive action on the field, with the rest of the activities revolving around it. The demographic patterns in the country posed severe challenges as we tried to ameliorate the threat posed by the pandemic. Soon, sporting action was back with a new set of safety protocols in place; players were protected in bio-secure bubbles and the doors of the stadia were not opened to fans. The IPL, which was earlier scheduled for April, eventually got underway in September in the UAE. The event was a great success from the point of view of sponsorships and media investments. The ISL followed suit, in November the premier football

league became the first major sports competition that was played on Indian soil after the virus hit the world. The event was organized in a manner that turned out to be a great example for how India could host a major league in light of the Covid concerns. ISL was restricted to just three venues, all in Goa, with strict safety protocols in place. The success of the league was a major landmark in the Sporting Nation's response to the pandemic, and will serve as a beacon of inspiration for smaller leagues as they resume action in 2021 after the brief hiatus last year.

Extreme situations like the disturbance caused by the pandemic can force us to think in ways we may not have done before. In the absence of on-field spectators, we saw greater emphasis on engaging fans on media, which led to the acceleration in several technology-led broadcast innovations. Also, the pandemic seems to have contributed to the evolution of the e-sports industry. As online gaming saw frenzied increase in adoption and stickiness, it led to collaborations and partnerships that set the pace for the industry. Covid-19 has taught us many things, one of them is about appreciating relationships and long term visions, and realizing that we have come thus far by working together. As the

industry went into a downturn, it became apparent that the key stakeholders need to come together for a collective good. We have seen in the lockdown how our athletes stayed connected with fans using their online reach, and gave us a glimpse of how they view their sport and the world we live in. Similarly, rights holders can also get into strategic tie-ups with broadcasters for initiatives that can give the industry a thrust in times like the Covid situation we saw last year. The lockdown has also brought to light the need for the industry stakeholders and the Government to work together in Public-Private partnerships. As unforeseen situations like the pandemic happen, there is need to be fleet-footed in reacting to them, which calls for the right mix of stringency and leniency in matters like travel policies, quarantine rules etc. Also, as India evolves into a multi-sport nation in the coming decade, there is need for the Government to work together with media houses to support events like the National Games and other grassroot initiatives.

As India moves into the decade of the 20s, we can expect a continuous evolution in the state of affairs in the sports industry. One such example will be with the way we look at sports data. Currently, there are no protocols between rights holders and platforms, but with the rate at which we are seeing growth in areas like fantasy sports, the need to safeguard consumer interest will lead us to a point where regulations will be in place, as per which, there could be financial arrangements to procure official league data from rights holders. Technology-driven brands are taking key sponsorship slots in Indian sports these days; these organizations are quick to pivot into adjacent business spaces, possibly switching sponsor categories as a result of the shift. As the tech space continues to evolve, we could see newer categories getting blocked, driving the premium for category exclusivity. As new content platforms emerged in the wake of the shortage of live sports in 2020, it will cause a demand for new sporting content,

leading to the launch of new properties like the Jharkhand Premier League. With many sporting events coming up in 2021, fans might have to make choices between certain events in terms of what, when and how much to watch, leading to rise in demand for subscription viewing in live sports.

When 2020 began, the fans had a delectable set of sporting events to look forward to. It was supposed to be the year of the Tokyo Olympics that was eagerly awaited in India. The other marquee events at world level included Euro Soccer and World Indoor Athletics. The Indian cricket team was supposed to travel down under for the T20 World Cup, which was a great opportunity to bring home an ICC Trophy that had been eluding us for a few years. Add to these, the top annual events like the IPL, and there was a feast in store for us. However, the pandemic put paid to the plans of the industry. Lot of action was lost; even as IPL and ISL gave joy to our fans, the other

sporting leagues could not be held in 2020 because of challenges that were insuperable then. The sports industry showed great resilience in India and abroad, and sporting action was back sooner than expected. We have shown that we can hold major events in the post-pandemic world, and with the added learning from the experiences of 2020, we can certainly be optimistic about the way ahead. As we look at 2021, all the postponed blue chip events are on the cards, and the annual events that got cancelled last year are expected to make a return. Hence, 2020 looks like that proverbial backward step we take before a giant leap, like the one we are expected to take in 2021, as part of the making of the sporting nation.



THE LAST WORD

When the unforeseen strikes, it is sure to set you back. It tests your resolve and forces you to think outside the box for solutions. The enormous goal of getting things back on track calls for a unique combination of crisis management skills and ingenuity.

Authored by:



Mr. Prasanth Kumar
CEO - GroupM South Asia

This, in a nutshell, was a key takeaway from the way Indian sports fought the pandemic in 2020. As the virus tightened its stranglehold, the sporting world was startled. We had lots of competitions lined up, including the Tokyo Olympics. After the high of 2019, there was a lot in store for cricket fans too. Two major T20 events were scheduled for 2020; if the first half of the year had the IPL, then adding pyrotechnics in the latter half was the ICC World T20 Cup. With the lockdown being enforced and subsequent stoppage of play on the field, the void was stark with no visibility on how the anti-Covid efforts will pan out. Even without any sporting activities, our favourite stars stayed close to us; in fact, they came closer by actively engaging their followers on social media. Even in such uncertain times, the spontaneity of this online content flow, and the open arms with which we welcomed it, clearly demonstrated the power of sports in our country. It was a reminder that we need to stay together and work together towards a common good.

As the competitions were resumed, the fans got some live-action. Certain changes were inevitable given the circumstances, like the bio-bubble

systems that were implemented, and the closure of stadium gates to the fans. The IPL was a great affirmation from India that a truly world-class sports event of this scale could be organized by us. The change of dates and venues along with the safety protocols were deemed necessary and were duly executed. The fans on media were in for a real treat and the event was a great advertising platform for brands. Sponsorship and media inventories were sold out and IPL 2020 was a thumping success, reinforcing its standing as one of the world's leading events of its kind across sports. Close on the heels of this top of the line T20 blast was the ISL, India's premier football league. This event was held on Indian soil, amidst demanding circumstances, and showcased India's ability to host an event of this magnitude in a post-pandemic world. 2020, in general, saw many changes being implemented, and it often takes circumstances like the pandemic to overcome the inertia of continuity associated with legacy practices. Speedy responses and improvisations on the go were what the situation demanded and among the many things the Covid-19 situation taught us, was the need to be adaptable as the tide turns fast around us.

A quantitative look at the Sports Industry indicates a reduction in the size of the pie, in Sponsorships and Media spends in 2020. The substantial loss of actual game time across different sports did not help the cause too. A glance at the Indian Men's Cricket Team's calendar will tell the story, with only 25 international games in 2020 as against 54 in the previous year. The leading sporting leagues in India, outside of cricket and football, were called off as it happened with important international level tournaments in sports like golf and badminton. The impact was felt across the value chain; while the players had the extra pressure associated with being in the bubble for long periods, the organizers had heightened responsibilities to ensure safety even as they tried to get things off the ground, and the media had to offer fresh excitement to viewers in light of the new normal while meeting revenue goals. Even as we grapple with the present, there has to be an eye on the future. Problems do happen, how we react to them is what defines us.

While the return of sporting action was essential for all stakeholders, it had to be done in a way that doesn't jeopardize the larger agenda of public safety, and achieving this balance was a significant win of 2020. Even though many events could not be held last year, we now have a

template for organizing a sports competition in a manner that satisfies the boundary conditions of a post-Covid world. The need of the hour is to draw from all the positives of 2020 and move forward with a far stronger conviction in overcoming the hurdles that may come up, with the world has made considerable progress from a Covid response standpoint. For a sports aficionado, there is a lot on offer in 2021. As for the industry stakeholders, there were lost opportunities last year, though a close look will reveal that a good share of those misses were revenue opportunities that were deferred to the current year. Among these events, the real big one is Tokyo 2020 in which India has a few medal hopes, and for the footballing world, the Euro will be a keenly awaited spectacle, something which the growing number of fans in our country will be eagerly waiting for. As the icing on the cake, we have the ICC T20, which will be held in India this year. There is a lot of great sporting action to look forward to, with an impressive array of events that can serve as great brand-building opportunities, as a comeback year unfolds in Indian sports.





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