

# A study of Attitude of corporate firms towards commercial benefits of IPL

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## Abstract

*The study proposes to understand the attitude of corporates towards commercial benefit of Indian premier league. The research will help us understand position of IPL in marketing and media mix. The study will highlight the attitude of the business managers and decision makers towards the Indian premier league. The study will enable us to understand how and to what extent the corporates are benefitted by this association. The study will help the corporate sector to improve their brand strategy and its value while promoting products and services on television via IPL*

## Introduction

### Indian Premier League

The launch of IPL (Indian Premier League) has changed the complete landscape of entertainment value of Cricket in India. BCCI launched private league when it supported Lalit's Modi venture, IPL, Indian premier league in 2008.

A concoction of international players and domestic players in regional teams with celebrity owners has caused a stir in cricket realm. The colourful jerseys of players with different logos on display has added colour and spice to an otherwise ordinary game. It has attracted audience both in live setting and in broadcast arena. Today each and every Indian is aware of IPL. Viewers enjoy energy, drama and frenzy that is a part of IPL. A cricket obsessed nation was served entertainment on the mix platter.

High TRP's and viewership has made IPL a much sort after platform to advertise. Brand visibility and logo display benefits brands like never before. From Team merchandising being available in stadium displays to commercial launches on TV, IPL reeks commercialisation of cricket. Brands and corporates are attracted to it like bees to honey.

IPL is a complete package in terms of entertainment value to viewers and commercial benefit to corporates. It's all things and one!

## Literature Review

IPL has perfectly blended entertainment aspect of cricket for the viewers (Mittal & Manavalan, 2017) (Dham & Mishra, 2015) (Subramanian, IPL as a Sporting-Entertainment Complex, 2015). Impressive dose of Bollywood celebrities as owners and audience in IPL has added to entertainment aspect. (Raj & Sreekumar, 2016). It's 20-20 format is perfect booster for young and happening (Gupta A., India and the IPL: Cricket's Globalized Empire, 2009) (Ananthanarayanan, 2014) (Sharma, 2018). Three hour format provides full dose of cricket and entertainment to the generation that is always on the move (Manjrekar, 2016).

IPL is first league of Indian sports marketing Initiatives. It has its share of up and downs. It has been in the news for all the right reasons and for all the wrong ones too. There was a time when everyone was ready to write off this controversial league (Lakshman & Akhter, 2013) (Subramanian, Not Just Cricket: The IPL as the Politics of Speed, 2013). But due to effort of brands, the teams and the BCCI that the IPL continues with its season 11 this year for its viewers. The feeling of association and nostalgia makes viewers wait for the game every year every season. (Janardhan, 2018).

**It's a learning ground for the other sports leagues as well. It's the testing ground for the brands to ensure their best marketing mix.** It is an idea whose time had come. It's an experimenting field for corporates and an entertainment option for the viewers.

In this paper we are here to understand the commercial value of IPL w.r.t. to Brands and corporates. Lots of brands are investing and associated with IPL. **It will be interesting to understand how and to what extent the corporates are benefitted by this association. The study will also encompass the attitude of the business managers and decision makers towards the league. The study will help the corporate sector to improve their brand strategy and its value while promoting products and services on television via IPL.**

## Research Methodology

The research methodology chosen for the research was –

(A) One-on-One, qualitative in-depth interviews with 12 corporate stake-holders. These stakeholders were responsible for promotion and media selection for their respective brand

### Rationale

In-depth interview is a useful tool when one wants detailed information about a person's Thoughts and behaviors or want to explore new issues in depth. In-depth interviews work better than focus group discussions when one wants to distinguish individual (as opposed to group) opinions about the subject.

The primary advantage of in-depth interviews is that they provide much more detailed Information than what is available through other data collection methods, such as surveys. They also may provide a more relaxed atmosphere in which to collect information — People may feel more comfortable having a conversation with you about their program as Opposed to filling out a survey.

### Process

The process used for conducting these in-depth interviews followed the same general process of: planning, developing instruments (discussion guides), collect data (actual interviews), analyze data, and disseminate findings.

### Planning

We wanted to assess the interest of corporates in the format as one of the primary promotion vehicle or partner, their past history, past experiences, need gaps and expectations. Therefore, senior level corporate professional were chosen who were in a decision-making role when it came to choosing media for their brand/product promotion

### Developing Instrument

The discussion guide for corporates was crafted to generate responses that could help us understand the current standing of IPL as a promotion partner with an aim to find ways to make the platform even more relevant for corporates to invest and leverage better results and eyeballs. The corporate instrument dwelled upon the following areas and aspects.

- Needs from a platform for advertising purposes, what all do you look-out for
- Platforms they have you been associated with in the past and their reasons
- Return on investment with association with these platforms
- Assessment of IPL as an advertising platform in their minds
- Decision making journey and rationale behind IPL association, if any.
- Satisfaction with IPL as a promotion partner
- Barriers to choosing IPL as a promotion partner

- Eliciting ways to make IPL the preferred choice of brand promotion

### Data Collection

The participants were invited to a suitable and neutral place for a one on one detailed discussion to elicit information in order to achieve a holistic understanding of the interviewee's point of view or situation; it can was also used to explore interesting areas for further investigation. This involved asking informants open-ended questions, and probing wherever necessary to obtain data deemed useful for the research.

Several projective techniques were also used to elicit desired responses from the consumers. Projective techniques are indirect methods used in qualitative research. These techniques allow researchers to tap into consumers' deep motivations, beliefs, attitudes and values. This is important because psychology has told us for a long time that much of what drives behavior can be emotional and irrational in nature. To some extent, these emotional drivers of behavior lie below conscious awareness. Since people tend to have limited understanding of their own behavior; likewise, people often have difficulty articulating their motivations and desires. Thus, to dig into consumer's deeper values and beliefs, projective techniques came handy.

### Data Analysis

Inductive approach was used to analyze the data. The purposes for using an inductive approach were to (a) condense raw textual data into a brief, summary format; (b) establish clear links between the evaluation or research objectives and the summary findings derived from the raw data; and (c) develop a framework of the underlying structure of experiences or processes that are evident in the raw data. The general inductive approach provides an easily used and systematic set of procedures for analyzing qualitative data that help produce reliable and valid finding.

Here, the raw data was clubbed together under various analysis heads to find similarities, differences and patterns that were emerging to get a holistic understanding and view of the subject. This form of data analysis also helped us to understand the subject within it's universe and the effects of the universe.

| Sno. | Analysis Head   | Findings   | Verbatim  |
|------|---|--|---|
| 1    | Factors that influence choice of advertising platform | Logo/Brand visibility, Target audience, ATL & BTL activities, Sponsor fees, Regional presence. | Is it a fit with my brand. Is it something that can be taken to multiple media, on ground, or multiple categories?<br><br>Geography, in case of team being a regional player. For example IPL. We also evaluate market share and potential to grow. |
| 2    | Competitive advertising options vis –a-vis IPL        | IPL, Kabadi pro league, EPL  | The reason was sports, youth – brand's personality  |
| 3    | IPL presence in media plan                            | TOP 3  | IPL really clicked as a property as the property TG matched nicely our brand TG. Good media value we got as per ratings. Deliverables   |

|   |  |   |   |
|---|--|---|---|
|   |  |   | <p>with IPL as property were in demand throughout and all across markets.</p> <p>Good brand recall in terms of logo association.</p> <p>Very fruitful: CSK has been the winners this year.</p>  |
| 4 | Score given to various as advertising platform vis-a vis IPL | IPL Average 8/10<br>Other associations- Average 5/10        | <p>In India cricket is taken as religion so cashing on IPL was easy.</p> <p>Reasons: continuity and exposure</p>  |
| 5 | IPL as advertising platform                                  | Desirable, Expensive, Energetic, Cluttered, Wide Brand fit. | <p>Because of cricket as religion in india, IPL as property has taken brands to heights.</p> <p>As an advertiser, I think it is too cluttered. Only those communication pieces stand out that are very different and refreshing.</p> <p>Apart from this, to advertise on the medium is also very expensive.</p> |
| 6 | Reasons to choose IPL  | Brand recall and logo association, Energetic, Young.        | <p>Relevant association (sports, youth), well managed exposure, excitement around the event (from end users and channel partners)</p> <p>Media value brands get from IPL advertising is huge if the logo placement and more importantly the logo make is perfect.</p>   |
| 7 | Highs and lows of IPL  | Highs-<br>• High and focused                                | The tie-up was received well in our focus market.   |

|   |                          |  |   |
|---|--------------------------|--|---|
|   |                          | <p>exposure,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stand apart from daily soaps</li> <li>• Most watched.</li> </ul> <p>Lows-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expensive</li> <li>• Cluttered</li> <li>• Marred with uncertainties like scandals, Government interference, moving of venues etc.</li> </ul>  | <p>Only those communication pieces stand out that are very different and refreshing. The “same old stuff” won’t and doesn’t work.</p> |
| 8 | Way ahead for corporates | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep star player value in each team. Every team to have at least one star player who is bankable</li> <li>• Indian player value in each team with known faces and names</li> <li>• To help ease the clutter, have a strict limit (restricted number) on the amount of brands that can partner with a franchise.</li> <li>• Keep small advertisers in mind – work out smaller packages / or regional packages</li> <li>• Managing meet and greet more – creates more interest and participation</li> <li>• Brand merchandise/hospitality tickets to be better managed</li> </ul> |   |

## Summary and Conclusion

- IPL seen as a potent platform for advertisers due to its TRP and wide viewing. Some key-words associated – energetic,
- The game format has a wide appeal in terms of gender and SECs and age brands, it caters to a larger audience and a wide TG is an easy fit, especially, youth
- Brand recall and logo association ranks highest for the advertiser and IPL aids this with strategic brand and logo placements
- IPL is seen as a vehicle for new/targeted ad launch and the advertisers are developing communication specifically for IPL. Some examples being Jio Dhan Dhana Dhan, Pepsi IPL Emoji, Vodafone Zozo, Vivo – Kaun Jeetega etc.
- IPL also rides high upon ‘pride of association’ for corporates. The corporates are bidding high enough to outsmart competition to be seen with IPL

IPL is seen as Wide brand fit by the advertisers. Therefore IPL is found to be on the top of the list for media plan of large number of corporates. Ardent Fan Base ensures a loyal consumers and top of the mind brand recall. IPL's Energetic avatar makes associated brand be termed young and youthful thereby attracting the major chunk of consumer demographic. IPL is considered as most watched, High TRP garnering event of the year, Thus advertisers prefer it for brand association for higher visibility. It works well for regional promotions in case of regional teams like Chennai Super Kings, Mumbai Indians and Kings XI Punjab gives more focused exposure. IPL comes across as Clutter Breaking Annual Event that stands apart from the daily soaps and repetitive reality shows. It works perfectly for brands with large budgets and are building brand saliency.

## Limitations of the Study and Direction for Future Research:

We made an attempt to study the corporates attitude towards commercial benefit of IPL.

The study tell us a story of corporates and brand journey with IPL. It provide us with insights into a marketing manager's attitude towards commercial aspect of IPL. It has provided us with word association and provided us with glimpse of strategies.

The study suffers from following limitations:

- Empirical study can be done with a structured questionnaire to collect data based on likert scale after which data could be subjected to statistical analysis.
- Additional analysis could be attempted using some of the statistical tools and techniques for reinforcing the conclusion and making the study richer.

Despite these limitations, the study hopefully fills up an important gap in the literature on attitude of corporates towards commercial benefit of IPL. The study give us a perfect ground work for empirical study of the corporate and brand decision making.. From this point of view, this study is a useful attempt .

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