

Sports Marketing: An Overview

Dr. Kusum Lata

Assistant Prof. in Phy. Edu.

M.K.J.K. Mahavidyalaya, Rohtak (HR)

Abstract:

This article presents a brief overview on the sports marketing and promoted strategy. Sports marketing is an element of sports promotion which involves a wide variety of sectors of the sports industry, including broadcasting, advertising, social media, digital platforms, ticket sales, and community relations. Sports' marketing is a subdivision of marketing which focuses both on the promotion of sports events and teams as well as the promotion of other products and services through sporting events and sports teams. India is a country having one of the most unorganized sports goods retail markets. Retailing of Sports Goods Market in India is growing due to the rise in per capita income, changing lifestyle, and consumer preferences. India has been a manufacturing hub for various sports products and brands sourcing which has tremendously increased. The goal is to provide the client with strategies to promote sports or to promote some other product, service, business or cause through sports. Sports' marketing is also designed to meet the needs and wants of the consumers through exchange processes.

Keywords: Consumer Preferences, Sports Marketing, Social Media, Sports Industry.

Introduction:

A sport is becoming increasingly important as a passive entertainment, both live and in the media. Sports are considered as the organized physical activities through which exercise amusement, fun and play are enjoyed. The writer also sees sports as a means of enhancing self reliance. The most popular 'equipped' sport in India is cricket; next comes volleyball and racket sports. Beyond these, sports equipments market is extremely fragmented. Home fitness equipments is nearly second only to cricket in terms of consumer expenditure. As maximum consumers of fitness equipments is by clubs and gyms. Consumers also spend more on sportswear but their spending is exaggerated by the fashion for wearing sports clothing and sports shoes as all-purpose leisurewear.

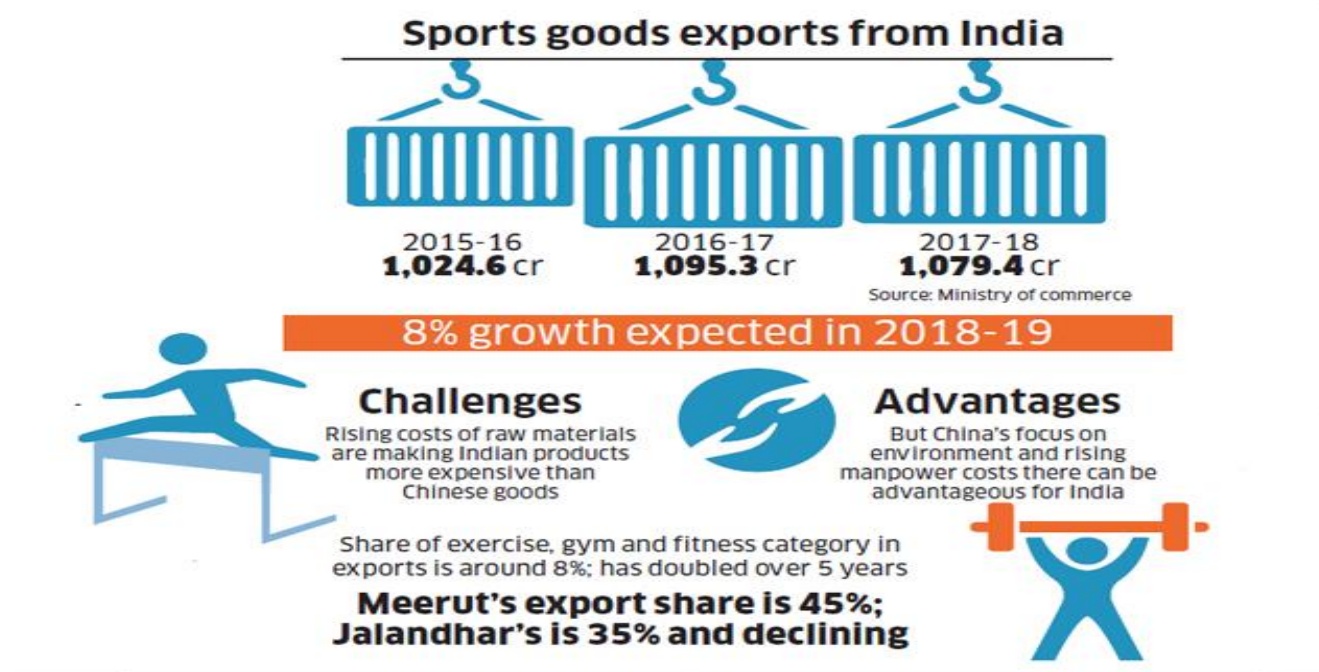
Sports marketing is an element of sports promotion which involves a wide variety of sectors of the sports industry, including broadcasting, advertising, social media, digital platforms, ticket sales, and community relations **(Mullin, 2014)**. Sports marketing is considered as the transaction of goods and services in sports for the mutual gain for both the buyer and the seller **(Eze,2007)**. The transferring of a football star from his former club to another football club is an example of sports marketing. This is because it involves the selling and buying of the services of that football star. Sports marketing are divided into three sectors. The first is the advertising of sport and sports associations such as the Olympics, Spanish Football league and the NFL, as well as sport teams like Real Madrid and the New York Yankees. The second concerns the use of sporting events, sporting teams and individual athletes to promote various products. The third category is the promotion of sports to the public in order to increase participation. In the first case, the promotion is directly related to sports. In the second case, the products can but do not have to be directly related to sports. When the promotion is about sports in general, the use of this kind of strategy is called “Marketing of Sports.” When the promotion is not about the sports but sports events, athletes, teams or leagues are used to promote different products, the marketing strategy is denominated “Marketing through sports **(Milne,1999)**”.

As ever, a sport in the 21st century is a market full of extremes. With markets throughout the world becoming increasingly more competitive, market research is now on the main agenda of marketing the sports goods; it means identifying customers and providing services of uncompromising quality in return for an optimal profit on investments. Sports marketing, according to **(Ekeh 2002)**, in **Eze (2007)** are the transaction of goods and services, in sports for the mutual gain for both the buyer and the seller. The Sporting Goods industry is one of the most competitive and intense industries for businesses. The constantly changing models of sports equipment, increasing competition, extremely cost sensitive consumer and the seasonality of sports, to name a few, make its needs unique. **Lessem, R. (1986)** described market as a place where people buy and sell goods especially, in an open area or a large building. Marketing is a social process that satisfies consumers wants. The term includes advertising, distribution and selling "of a product or service, **(Sahay and Sharma, 2010)**. The industry is highly fragmented. A combination of factors such as demographics and consumer spending impacts market dynamics significantly. The major drivers of the retail sporting goods industry are growth in disposable income, promoting sports government's activities and encouraging sports

participation, and a growing number of people that more readily appreciate the health and leisure benefits of physical activity, while sportswear is also increasingly being embraced by the casual wear market.

Sports Marketing in India:

It was an august period for India. The country's contingent to the Asian Games in Jakarta, held between August 18 and September 2, had notched up its best performance at the meet. As the country was celebrating its sporting heroes, a city was quietly congratulating itself for its contributions to the games. Meerut, already famous as the world's manufacturing hub for top quality cricket gear, had provided the shot puts and javelins that Swapna Barman (heptathlon), Tajinderpal Singh Toor (shot put) and Neeraj Chopra (javelin throw) used to win their gold medals. The medals were a victory for the sport goods makers in the city trying to diversify into athletics, fitness, gym and other high-end equipment.



The industry, comprising mainly small scale units, employs around 500,000 people around the country. The value of the country's sports goods market could not be ascertained as industry experts said it was difficult to estimate the highly unorganized market.

Meerut has over the past few years seen the emergence of top brands that are making a global impact in athletics and track and field gear, table tennis and niche fitness equipment,

including gear used by athletes. “Meerut is already the world’s top cricket bats manufacturing hub and companies here have been able to use the brand advantage to enter other niche products and make a mark.” Jalandhar in Punjab, which is an older sports goods hub in India, employs more people but the manufacturing sector has remained unorganized. “Jalandhar is the hub for manufacturing balls and inflatable, but it is losing ground to different countries, including Pakistan and China. Unfortunately, companies in that region have not taken enough efforts to diversify,” says Anand. Bhalla International is another such company. Barman used a javelin made by Bhalla to win gold during her heptathlon event at Jakarta.

Sales Strategy:

Sportsuchtig will approach retail sales from a salesperson-customer relationship basis. All sales associates will be trained and encouraged to assist customers in a personal manner, utilizing first names and asking the questions needed to provide the customers with the services they desire. Gathering key customer information and seeking performance feedback on the products and services offered will assist us in the following ways:

- Targeting our marketing efforts more effectively.
- Offering products and merchandising formats that will increase sales.
- Developing services that enhance the shopping experience.
- Training and developing sales associates in order to effectively service the customer.
- Increase awareness of Sportsuchtig within the retail consumer marketplace.
- Develop future sales opportunities that allow for continued growth of the business.

Sales Forecast:

We expect sales in year 1 to be flat as the new owner comes into operating the business. Businesses generally see a sales decline in the first year of new ownership. We believe, however, that this business is strong and that we can at least maintain the current level of sales in 1 year. The sales forecast could turn downward if the outside sales team has difficulty gaining traction. The competition is comfortably entrenched in the segments to be targeted, so success is not guaranteed.

Sports Goods:

Sports Goods are defined as tangible, physical products that offer benefits to consumers. Conversely, services are intangible, non-physical products. Most sports products possess the characteristics of both goods and services. Sports goods industry is comprised of all establishments primarily engaged in retailing new sporting goods, health and fitness equipments, apparels or hosiery, sports shoes various sports equipments and accessories which are sold by sports good retailers and whole sellers. In many sports events participating trends are clearly correlated with consumer's products. One believes that sports product is a good, service or any combination such (a) Product availability in the region, b) Geographic location of the region, c) Economic condition of the sports participants, etc. are the few points to be mentioned.

- Indian Retail Sector of sports goods
- Sports goods Retail market in Vidarbha
- Services offered by sports goods retailers
- Marketing
- Product selection (Quality and Range of Products Retailed)
- Level and quality of retailer service

Key Challenges for Sporting Goods Retailers:

- Manage assortment complexity
- Deliver a seamless shopping experience
- Enable transformation of physical stores
- Personalize service and product
- Gain pricing and promotions agility

Sports Marketing through Social Media:

Professional leagues, teams, and athletes have started using social media as a part of their marketing strategies during the recent years. The most popular social media platforms are Facebook and Twitter, but athletes and teams are also using sites including Instagram and Snapchat for marketing. As in case of all businesses, the advantages of social media use in sports include building brand awareness, reaching a larger audience in an easy and cost-effective way as well as creating brand advocates and engaging passionate sports fans (*Mangold, 2009*). Many teams have incorporated sponsorships into their social media strategies, such as the Minnesota Vikings “Touchdown Tracker” Instagram image, which was sponsored by FedEx. The Cleveland Browns also displayed sponsorship integration in their tweets recapping touchdown drives, sponsored by Cooper Tires.

Many athletes including Kobe Bryant, Russell Wilson, and Rafael Nadal have taken advantage of social media to increase their followers and improve their brand recognition. Athletes have also promoted brands through social media including Russell Wilson's sponsorship of Recovery Water and Serena Williams' promotion of Wheels Up. Because of this marketing tool, these fan-based website pages have increased greatly in numbers and give them the recognition that they were looking for.

Marketing:

Marketing is one of the most misunderstood and confused terms used in business. Many of us are often confused between marketing and selling. However, these two concepts have exactly opposite connotation. Marketing has existed in the world of business and commerce. The marketing concept is very logical. In general, marketing activities are all those associated with identifying the particular wants and needs. The two can be differentiated as (1) Manufacturers create a product, which is given to sales representatives to find a customer and sell that product; whereas in the marketing approach the information is given to the designer who develops a product and finally the manufacturer who produces the desired product.

Sports Marketing:

Sports marketing are a subdivision of marketing which focuses both on the promotion of sports events and teams as well as the promotion of other products and services through sporting

events and sports teams. It is a service in which the element promoted can be a physical product or a brand name. The goal is to provide the client with strategies to promote sports or to promote some other product, service, business or cause through sports. Sports' marketing is also designed to meet the needs and wants of the consumers through exchange processes (**Lovelock, 2004**).

Benefits of Sports Marketing:

The benefits of sports marketing are wide-ranging. Stakeholders involved in sports include leagues, teams, athletes, and fans as well as cities and countries hosting sporting events. The media and businesses who promote their products and services through sports also receive benefits. Direct benefits to leagues, teams, and athletes include revenue from tickets, media rights, and sponsorships. Cities and countries also receive revenue from taxes, and all of the stakeholders gain from the exposure provided through sports (**S. Mason, 1999**).

Sports Marketing Strategies:**1. Develop Your Target audience:**

Before diving into any sports marketing campaign, its best determine the target audience you are trying to reach. A target audience is a specific group of people at which a product or marketing message is pitched.

2. Position Your Brand:

A unique, distinct logo is a crucial player in marketing strategy. Sports organizations use branding to occupy a distinct spot in fans' minds. By differentiating your brand from the competition, your organization will become a more-recognizable entity. Sports organizations, like Shootout for Soldiers, a lacrosse tournament that raises money for wounded veterans, are remembered more easily by being affiliated with a specific cause.

3. Create Partnerships:

Because there is no "I" in team, sports organizations are not likely to win over fans without creating partnerships. All winning sports marketing strategies involve partnerships with

influencers or charities. Sports organizations often highlight their sponsorship of a charity within their community. This can raise the profile of both organizations and draw them new audiences.

4. Craft a Compelling Message:

In sports marketing, messaging is the foundation of an organization's public communication. From Facebook to press releases, a strong, consistent message should guide all of your public communication. It's best to tailor your sports organization's messaging to your target audiences. In content marketing, simple defeats complicated every time.

5. Select Distribution Channels:

Once you have developed your sports organization's message, it's time to select the right distribution channels to reach your target audience. These could include social media marketing channels, like Facebook and Twitter, or content marketing options, such as blogs or email.

6. Plan Special Events:

There's nothing that can put fans in the stands like a special event. Special events such as promotional days are a mainstay of the sporting world. These special events can draw new audiences that might not normally be exposed to your sports organization. By merging new and old audiences, your organization can quickly increase its fan base.

Marketing through Sports:

Marketing through sports is a concept that's been used since the 1980s, but has increased in importance in the last two decades due to the growth and expansion that the different types of sports have enjoyed since then. "Marketing through sports" it is a marketing strategy that can be used in sports in two different ways. First, the use of marketing and promotion can be carried out through the sport or through the sports club. In the first case, the use of marketing is under responsibility of the different sporting associations, while in the second case, the responsibility falls on the different sports clubs. In this manner, marketing and promotion through sports and through the club involve sponsorship, corporate events and boxes, licensed merchandise, names and images also known as "endorsement", advertising through broadcaster, advertising such as

advertising as ground signage/clothing/equipment advertising, promoting games, promoting using players/club/league or developing ‘business opportunities.’ The peculiarity of sports is that “sports is the only entertainment where, no matter how many times you go back, you never know the ending.” This singular fact is used by marketing companies as an advantage: every time the audience attends an event it will see the advertisements again and again, providing a wide range of opportunities for the different companies which operate in this field (**Beech, John,2006**).

As a result, inventory lifecycles are shorter and fulfillment is incredibly complex. Online retail will continue to grow and result in a significant impact on the role of the retail store. Brands that have established omnichannel capabilities and have begun to transform their stores to showcase the brand and product are set to benefit.

Conclusion:

Generally, a growing market is more desirable, not only there is great sales potential but also usually easier to enter and build sales in a growing market place. Contemporary economic and sports experts have recognized sports as big business. A lot of money is invested in sports by both the government and businessmen. Numerous authorities have unequivocally stated that contemporary sports cannot survive with only government funding and that there is the need for aggressive marketing of sports where the full weight of the mass media is brought to bear on this venture. In view of this, the mass media should pay attention to institutional sports by helping them to get sponsors for sporting events at those lower levels including the professional and club sides. There is need to integrate sports marketing and their strategy education in the curriculum of physical education. This is to provide the students with the tools to develop a business plan and create a new venture and evolution of good sports marketing for national growth.

References:

1. Eze. W.U. (2007). Promoting and Popularising Economic Reforms in Nigeria Through Sports Marketing Journal of Sports Management and Educational Research(1) 3.
2. Lessem, R. (1986). Entrepreneurship: How to be a successful individual in a successful Business Alder shot: Wildwood House
3. Sahay. A. & Sharma, V. (2010). Entrepreneurship and new venture creation. New Delhi. Excel Books Printers
4. Ekeh, F.I. (2002). Mass Media-A Strong Instrument for sports marketing. Jonapher. SD Vol. 2 No 1

5. Lovelock, Christopher; Reynoso, Javier; D'Andrea, Guillermo; Huete, Luis (2004). Lovelock, Christopher; Reynoso, Javier; D'Andrea, Guillermo; et al., eds. *Administración de Servicios [Service's Administration]* (in Spanish). Pearson Educación Times. p. 760. ISBN 978-0-273-68826-6.
6. S. Mason, D. (1999). "What is the sports product and who buys it? The marketing of professional sports leagues". *European Journal of Marketing*. **33** (3–4): 402–419.
7. Beech, John; Chadwick, Simon (2006). Beech, John; Chadwick, Simon, eds. *The marketing of Sport*. Prentice Hall and Financial Times. p. 592.
8. Mullin, B. J., Hardy, S., & Sutton, W. (2014). *Sport Marketing, 4th Edition*. Human Kinetics.
9. Milne, G. R., & McDonald, M. A. (1999). *Sport marketing: Managing the exchange process*. Jones & Bartlett Learning.
10. Mangold, C; Faulds, D (2009). "Social media: The new hybrid element of the promotion mix". *Business Horizons*.52 (4): 357–365.