



## Changing Consumer Behavior towards IPL

\* Nirav R. Vyas \*\* Dr. Vijay Vyas

\* Assistant Professor at Shri Jaysukhlal Vadhar Institute of Management Studies

\*\* Dean- School of Management, R K University

### ABSTRACT

*The pilot season of IPL with 8 teams taking part in it got the roaring success which was more than the expectation of even BCCI and the Chairman of IPL. Successively it was decided to held IPL every year instead of every 2 years. However the second season in 2009 was in a little bit of controversy because of the timing of the tournament which was getting clashed with the general election in the country. Still IPL went on to be again successful in season 2.*

*The problem really appeared right from the season 3 of IPL. The viewer ship and the TRP ratings started increasing at a declining rate and then undergo a steep decline in the middle of the season. The question as to why the most famous and most talked about cricket tournament was experiencing this steep decline was something which was left unanswered by most of the experts.*

*This article is an attempt to find out the reasons behind this declining viewer ship using the concepts of Consumer Behavior.*

**Keywords : Consumer Behavior, Consumer Behavior model, Perception, Motives, Evaluation, Problem recognition**

### Introduction

Indian Premier League went on to become the trend setter, huge success and one of the biggest platform for getting leverage on Indian cricket revenue generation and cricket struggles right from the first edition of it. There has been much fuss about this particular cricket form since the first day of the first edition of it across the cricket playing nations.

It was understood by most of the cricket experts that the game is not going to remain the same as soon as ICC made twenty twenty form of cricket as official. The T20 world cup of 2007 was a huge success and again the Indian cricket team won it which made the platform for BCCI to announce this particular form of club cricket.

However since the third season there has been a strong decline towards the viewer ship of IPL which kept on even declining in 2011. This is a sign of worry for the corporate who have bought the teams and have barely managed to reach to the break even in three seasons.

The Statement of Problem can therefore be called "Changed consumer behavior or Changed Consumer viewing styles towards IPL". The Problem can be properly answered by studying the consumer behaviors of cricket fans.

Consumer behavior is the study of individuals, groups, or organizations and the processes they use to select, secure, use, and dispose of products, services, experiences, or ideas to satisfy needs and the impacts that these processes have on the consumer and society.

Consumer Behavior in other words is the way the consumer decides to purchase any product or not to purchase any products. This behavior is influenced by various variables such as age, demographic, family influences, group influences, classical conditioning etc. It is always been a challenge for the marketers to develop a strong favorable consumer behavior for their products in order to satisfy the needs of the target segment and earn profits.

This paper is an attempt to find out, the reasons behind the change in consumer behavior towards IPL following. The consumer behavior model can be used to relate the change in preference and buying or viewing behavior of the Indian cricket fans towards IPL

### 6 stage model of consumer behavior related with IPL viewership

Let us understand the problem of changing consumer behavior towards IPL using the most used and common model of Consumer Behavior.

**Problem Recognition:-** Problem recognition is basically need analysis. The consumer finds out the basic needs by finding out the difference between his desired state and actual state. Sometimes this need is even initialized by the marketer.

**IPL relativity:-** Indian cricket fans always had a strive of watching more and exciting cricket matches. The international matches were only held for shorter seasons and most of them used to turn out to be one sided and boring and hence there was a growing need in the cricket fans of watching more number of matches plus watching exciting matches

**Information Search:-** To satisfy the needs analyzed earlier in stage 1, the consumer uses his internal memory to search out options or can be influenced by external factors like friends, relatives or marketer.

**IPL relativity:-** After recognizing the problem and that was to watch more cricket and exciting cricket, the Indian cricket fan only previously had one option of watching the International ODIs that were played by the Indian team and that was again not every time exciting. Most of the games turned out to be longer to watch and also used to go on a one sided affair.

**Evaluation of alternatives:-** Consumers establish criteria for evaluation, features the buyer wants or does not want. Rank/weight alternatives or resume search phase.

IPL relativity:- The criteria for evaluation of Indian cricket fans were 1)excitement, 2)less amount of time to be spent and 3)watching the Indian players to play. In order to satisfy the needs, the consumers used to search the options like watching the English county cricket, Caribbean domestic T20 games. However, they did not have the opportunity to see the Indian players being a part of it. IPL served as a platform for solving all the three evaluation criteria.

Purchase Decision:- Purchase decision is basically choosing one of the alternative and foregoing the other options. This purchase decision of any consumer can be affected by store design, sales promotion or the product package too.

IPL relativity:- IPL was the biggest extravaganza of BCCI which had a beautiful and catchy package. All the big players all over the world were part of it, the teams had Indian regional names, the format was T20, cheer leaders made it look youthful etc, made the purchase decision of the consumer very easy compared to English county cricket or Caribbean T20 matches.

Actual Purchase:- Actual purchase might differ from the purchasing decision. It is basically depending on the ready availability of the product.

IPL relativity:- IPL matches were generally organized in the evening part of the day and that is why it was possible for most of the viewers to complete their work and then in their leisure time to see the matches. So we can say that the availability of the product was handy.

Post Purchase evaluation:- It is basically a stage when the consumer evaluates his own purchase decision and finds out whether the product purchased actually took him to his desired state which he/she identified in the problem recognition phase or not.

IPL relativity:- IPL matches in the initial seasons were very heavily competitive and nerve breaking and it made the consumer feel good about watching the matches and the consumers did not find any cognitive dissonance after watching the matches.

Thus, every stage of the consumer behavior model relates with IPL viewership in a totally fixed manner which gives a perfect setting to the tournament to be very successful. Still the problem still awaits to be answered as to why the viewership declined so heavily.

#### **Reasons for declined viewership taking into consideration the disturbance happened in 3 stages of the model**

Problem recognition:-

With increase in the international matches of Indian Cricket team, the desired state of watching more exciting cricket was satisfied even without IPL. Hence IPL transferred from a "Must watched affair" to "Can be watched affair".

#### **Purchase decision:-**

As discussed, purchase decision is mainly dependent on package of the product, or how the product actually is attractive. IPL in the beginning stages came with all innovative ideas like creating a carnival environment over the games. However, the same things were then repeated with many other International T20 games which made the consumer believe that there is hardly any USP left with IPL and hence they were diverted towards other things rather than IPL.

#### **Post Purchase evaluation:-**

After all the news of corporate scandals involved in the IPL, the news of late night after match parties where the viewers found their respected players in compromising positions

made them think again over their purchase decisions. As mentioned earlier, they found the cognitive dissonance in their purchase decision.

#### **Other consumer behaviors concepts attributing to declined viewership**

##### **Perception:-**

Perception refers to the image about a product that a consumer carries in his mind. Perceptions can be of two types

1) Selective Exposure:- Select inputs to be exposed to our awareness. This basically means consumer will relate the negative or positive information that he gathers regarding the product and forms his own belief about the product

2) Selective Distortion:- This is a thought process whereby the consumer amends and modifies the information available in such way as he/she wants to form his perception about.

As far as IPL is concerned, most of the Indian fans formed their perception using selective exposure. During the third and fourth season of IPL, a lot of fuss regarding scandals, after match late night parties, match fixing etc. was brought into attention by the media which helped the viewers to perceive negatively about the product i.e IPL.

##### **Social group effects:-**

Buying behaviors are widely affected by social groups like opinion leaders and family influences. Opinion leaders are the people who are influential to a larger part of the society and the buyers in the society generally follows the perception and attitudes of these opinion leaders. In case of IPL, the opinion leaders was basically the Media. Media basically highlighted the negative points regarding IPL which made the entire social group following the media to learn and form negative attitudes towards IPL.

Family influences are also very effective. In case of IPL, because it is broadcasted on the prime time, the other non cricket fans of the family opposed to follow it on a regular basis. It should be understood here that the buying behavior, can never be individual but it is composite decision of each member of the family.

##### **Motives:-**

Motives means the energizing force which comes from within the consumers regarding purchase of any product. It is to be noted here that when IPL was announced it was the first of its kind and the consumers wanted to experience the product which served as a positive motive towards buying the product. However in the later stage when it became a regular product, the motivation towards watching IPL started declining as later IPL was not a luxury but it was just like a common disposable product in house, the absence of which does not matter much.

##### **Conclusion**

Apart from the reasons mentioned above, there are some other reasons like the last season of IPL was immediately after the world cup which declined the viewership. There is a lot more overdose of cricket happening and especially for the Indian cricket team which makes the viewers lose interest.

Declined viewership of IPL is a lesson to be learnt by all the marketers. The marketers should know that only glamorizing the product and even giving the consumer what they want, does not always yield good results in sales.

What is more important is the amount of "dose" of the product to be injected in the consumers. There has been just "too much cricket" for the viewers in the recent days. This overdose of cricket has made viewing cricket as waste of time from enjoying some hours of sport.

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