



The IPL Brandenstein - Creation of a Monstrous Doppelgänger Imagery

Gaurav Sood and Prof. J K Sharma
Amity Business School, Amity University,
Uttar Pradesh, Noida, INDIA

Abstract: *Doppelgänger Brand Image is a nouveau construct in the studies of brands and brand values. It maps negative perceptions, which impact a brand, as retaliation to its positive persona. This case study traces origination of Indian Premier League (IPL), a powerful sports domain brand in India, and how it has been buffeted by its doppelgänger. The problems within (financial irregularities, match fixing scandals, nepotism, off-the-field conduct of players etc.) have been laid bare. The reader develops a good understanding of the drivers behind the formation of this brand's doppelgänger. The unmanageability of such a fearsome development has been treated akin to birth of a Frankenstein for the brand (Brandenstein).*

I. INTRODUCTION

Amongst all the sports in India, the sport of cricket carries the maddening loyalty none else can dream of. It's the opium of masses – paralyses the country to a virtual standstill on days the matches are played. Most children and adults are hooked to television channels and websites and radio commentaries, watching the affairs ball by ball or at least tracking the scores on every over. Naturally, the clout, the wealth commanded is of an unmatched stature. The celebrity players earn leviathan sums through endorsements and participation in non-game events. Various defined events flourish over the calendar year, the Indian Premier League nee the IPL, being a noticeably prominent one. Cricket has various formats, viz. Test Matches, One Day Matches (50-50 overs), and Twenty20 Matches (20-20 overs by each team). In the 'Twenty20' game, each team plays 20 overs each. IPL is a Twenty20 overs format mega event lasting longer than a month – round robin eighty games or so are played, with an ultimate final game. Multiple differentiations in shape of practices, jargon et al are woven in the game. Global TV viewership is massive. Naturally, the sponsorships pulled in are humongous. The format of IPL, a new thing for India, took a cue from emulating the football clubs thought of England. Franchisees own the teams, where the players are picked by bidding. A player's pedigree decides the price he may command. The game allows entertainment of the highest order, with cheerleaders and display of a quick momentum sport, unlike the laboriously slow Test Matches or racier than the quick One Day Matches. The whole game lasts a few hours in the evening after office hours. It was supposed to be an ingenious invention, and the property soared in its value. Started in 2008, the IPL series and the brand was valued at 4.13 billion USD a year later. This grew exponentially. Naturally, with such a stupendous growth to fame, nobody could imagine IPL running into rough weathers and infamy.

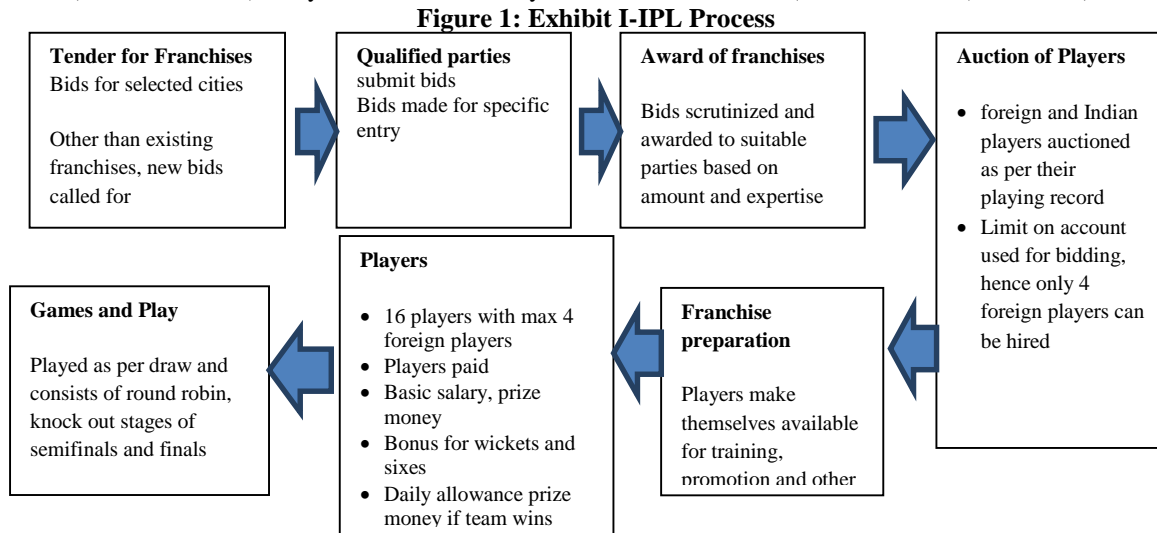
II. UPSETTING REVELATIONS

March 28, 2015, the BCCI President (BCCI was the apex governance body of cricket, Board for Cricket Control in India) was affixed to his TV screen, closely following the story unfolding on major TV News channels, esp. on The Economic Times Brand Equity program about the IPL Doppelgänger – a disparaging imagery of the IPL brand circulating in the popular culture. The socially networked consumers and stakeholders at large were creating a negative imagery of IPL on social media by mimicking the IPL brand messages and spoofing the IPL controversies, which was in stark contrast to the IPL's promoted brand imagery. The President was a worried man; he picked his phone and called for a board meeting on Monday. He informed every member of the board about his concern and asked them to come prepared for a discussion. His concern was that cricket was historically noted as a gentleman's game; however, IPL stood mired in controversies of match-fixing and mis-governance, bringing to fore uglier aspects of the commercial event. These had given rise to IPL's monstrous Doppelgänger Brand Imagery. Brand IPL was a beautiful hybrid of cricket and entertainment – it made huge business sense. The IPL model was successful and instrumental in India's control over world cricket. Yet, the television program indicated there were concerns about problems therein (financial irregularities, match fixing scandals, nepotism, off-the-field conduct of players etc.).

III. BRAND IPL: MARKED BY CONTROVERSIES

The never-ending series of governance and transparency lapses had cumulatively contributed to the rapidly declining brand value of the IPL (**Exhibit I**). Packed stadiums, close finishes and big investments by corporates and Bollywood stars – the eighth edition of the Indian Premier League (IPL) was all these and more. Yet, brand

IPL took a few hard knocks following a series of controversies. Result: decline of ratings and advertiser’s interest. IPL, which was once considered an advertisers’ delight — finally gave everyone financially associated with the event a big jolt. “IPL is essentially two things — cricket and entertainment. Going ahead, one has to reduce the distraction around sport. It is a sports league, and banking too much on entertainment is a very short-term strategy as it fades quickly. You just have to focus on making the cricket entertaining. Adding glamour just doesn’t prop up the brand in the long run,” said Santosh Desai, CEO Future Brands. Regular controversies have given a body blow to IPL, sliding its brand value by over \$1 billion (Rs 5,500 crore) in the last five years. In 2013, Brand Finance pegged the value of the IPL at \$3.03 billion (Rs 16,670 crore), an increase of four per cent from \$2.92 billion (Rs 16,062 crore) last year, but still a far cry from the \$4.13 billion (Rs 22,719 crore) in 2010. (**Exhibit I**)

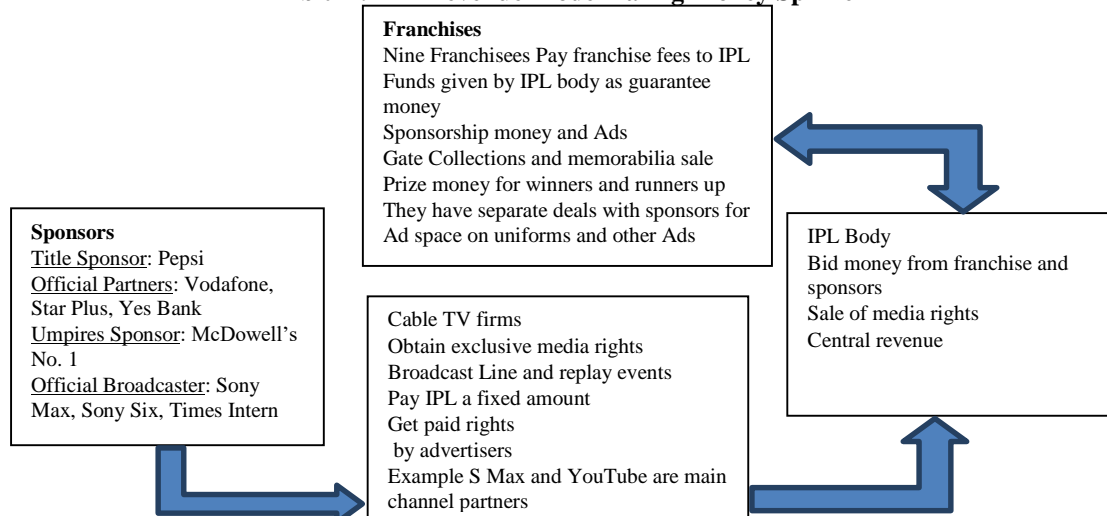


Source: Kapadia, Shashi (2013), “How sustainable is the strategy of the Indian Premier League - IPL? A critical review of 10 key issues that impact the IPL Strategy”, *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications*, Volume 3, Issue 12

IV. THE FALLING TRPS

Falling TVviewership is also a cause of major concern. TRPs (television rating points, a measurement of viewership) for IPL 6 had been on the decline in the last few years. IPL registered TRPs of 3.8 in season 6 as compared to its peak TRP of 5.5 in 2008 when the tournament started. In the current IPL season. IPL is in its Eighth season, and the analysts see it has reached a maturity stage. Brands which have been with IPL for the last seven seasons are coming back. Besides this few new categories are also adding to the list. With 70 advertisers and 12 sponsors, IPL-7 had at least Rs 1,500 crore riding on it, with ad revenues alone around Rs 800 crore from Rs 650 crore in the last season. In its eighth season, IPL clocked an average rating of 4.4 television viewership ratings (TVR) for the first five matches against 3.1 TVR recorded in the previous season.

Exhibit II: IPL Revenue Model - a Big Money Spinner



Source: Kapadia, Shashi (2013), “How sustainable is the strategy of the Indian Premier League - IPL? A critical review of 10 key issues that impact the IPL Strategy”, *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications*, Volume 3, Issue 12

V. TURNING POINT 2014

No doubt IPL was an interesting concept but the moot point was that some players took suborning and other unethical illegal means to supplement their earnings. The crime money always seems easy and additional. Last year especially rocked the game with match fixing scandals being proved and franchise owners questioned, which destroyed the ethos of a brand. Venality hits the probity, and is often taken unkindly by the viewers. They would naturally feel cheated on knowing the surprise element in the games was doctored, with rumours of as many as 100 aspects of every match having been pre-fixed, so that specific betters could win. This was anything like who would win the toss, who would bat first, what shall happen every 5 overs, the scores star players would max, which team would eventually win, by what margin, etc.

One of the key challenges for IPL is if the brand can last for the next couple of years, or a death knell had been irreversibly sounded. There is no point of a brand growing in the short term with a tactical entertainment packaging. There has to be repeat audience/viewers and a loyalty base developed across the nation in strictly marketing terminology. This is what IPL needs to monitor in the 2015 edition if one is to do justice to the brand that gave a new imagery to cricket and brand India.

VI. BCCI PRESIDENT'S CONCERNS

The BCCI President mulled over the whole episode. The crowd had to be brought back to stadia. The advertisers' faith had to be restored. The TV slots had to be filled. The bidding process had to be made transparent. Ethics of players, by keeping them away from possible bookies had to be sanitized.

Essentially, he wanted the board member to discuss and develop strategy on Monday morning in that Stakeholders at large are using social media to exploit these IPL controversies. There were culture jamming messages and were creating a parallel imagery of IPL – The Monstrous IPL Doppelgänger. The stakeholders were employing Culture Jamming as a practice of criticizing and subverting IPL messaging and formatting in the social media (**Exhibit V**). The internet growth figures indicate that 30 million new users have been added since January 2014 alone, amounting to a 14% increase. Social media use is also growing, with Facebook alone adding one new user every second since January 2014. This digital growth is empowering IPL stakeholders to create IPL Doppelgänger imagery by way of social media backlash.

Next two days are crucial and filled with anxiety for the President. Hopefully he will find a solution to this social media backlash and manage the game in its full glory. And he expects the meeting called to brainstorm, and project a few feasible strategic solutions, that can impact fully counter the Brandenstein threat. This was akin to a Frankenstein raising its ugly head – a planned event getting out of control.

Exhibit III: IPL Brand Value

Game for Value Play					
Brand IPL Value: \$ 3.03 billion (Up 4% from \$ 2.92 billion in 2012) IPL					
How the team stack up					
Rank 2013	2012	Franchise	Brand Value 2013 (\$mn)	Brand Value 2012 (\$ mn)	Change %
1	2	Chennai Super Kings	45.42	45.28	.05
2	4	Kolkata Knight Riders	44.98	39.03	15.2
3	1	Mumbai Indians	44.62	48.21	-7.5
4	3	Royal Challengers Bangalore	37.81	41.15	-8.1
5	5	Delhi Daredevils	34.22	32.19	6.3
6	-	Sunrisers Hyderabad	31.49	-	-
7	8	Kings XI Punjab	30.78	28.66	7.4
8	7	Pune Warriors	29.45	28.88	2
9	9	Rajasthan Royals	27.05	26.93	0.04
Source: Brand Finance					

Source:

http://www.brandfinance.com/images/upload/brand_finance_report_ipl_v_league_table_final_04042013.pdf

Exhibit IV: IPL Brand Value

Year	IPL Brand Value
2010	\$ 4.13 billion USD
2011	\$ 3.67 billion USD
2012	\$ 2.92 billion USD
2013	\$ 3.03 billion USD

Source:

http://www.brandfinance.com/images/upload/brand_finance_report_ipl_v_league_table_final_04042013.pdf

Exhibit V: Creating IPL Doppelganger through IPL Culture Jamming on Social Media.



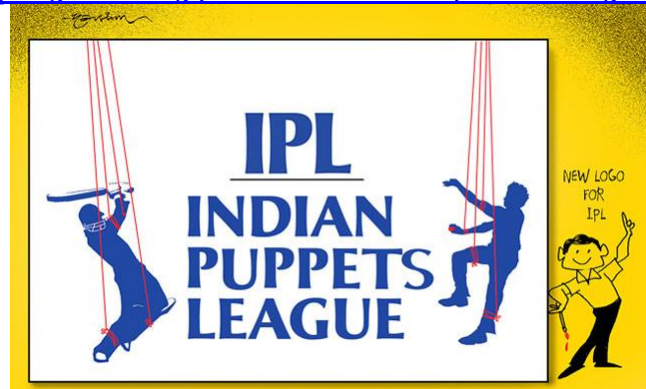
Source: <http://cartoonistsatish.blogspot.in/2013/06/acting-experience-in-ipl.html>



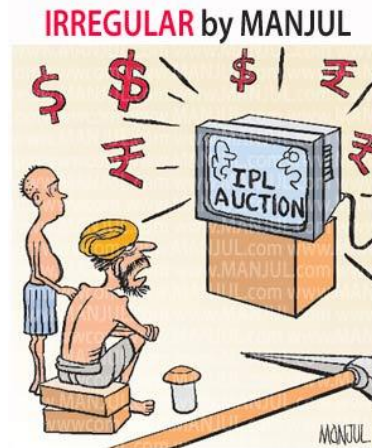
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Source: <http://ngelstalk.blogspot.in/2013/06/i-ndian-p-roblem-l-eague-its-atea.html>

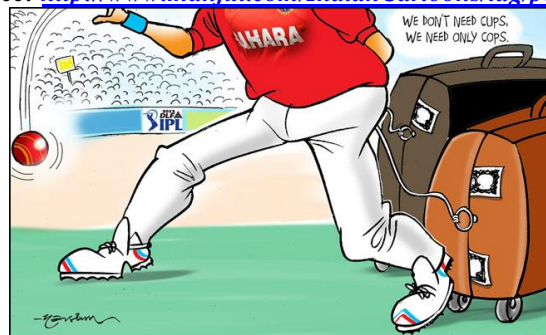


Source: <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/gallery/cartoon-of-the-day/232/6301.html>



Watching this reminds me that we are a rich country

Source: <http://www.manjul.com/IndianCartoons/tag/poverty/>



Source: <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/gallery/cartoon-of-the-day/233/6301.html>



Source: http://cartoonistsatish.blogspot.in/2012_05_01_archive.html

IX. THE ISSUES TO BE RESOLVED

1. Can IPL reclaim its glory? What would be the action plan?
2. Is Doppelgänger an effective tool in hands of brand marauders/ raiders?
3. Are the brand derailers counterable or is their offensive unresponsive? Is their intent intermittent or sustainable?
4. What defences can any brand build against a possible Doppelgänger onslaught?
5. Can these defences be proactively installed or are they only reactive?
6. Which lessons can the product brands and celebrity brands take from this episode?

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1. http://www.brandfinance.com/images/upload/brand_finance_report_ipl_v_league_table_final_04042013.pdf
2. Kapadia, Shashi (2013), "How Sustainable is the Strategy of the Indian Premier League - IPL? A Critical Review of 10 Key Issues That Impact The IPL Strategy", International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications, Volume 3, Issue 12.