

# A STUDY ON INDIAN MEDIA BUSINESS

*With reference to Cricket and Celebrities*

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**Abstract :** The research is focused on two of India's most famous obsessions- Cricket and celebrities. Celebrities and all the minutest of details of each and every aspect associated with their lives cover quite some media space and time around the globe, to which India is no exception. Cricket, on the other hand, has a separate fan base covering each and every nook and corner of India. Its popularity has seeped into the very pores of the Indian youth. The fact that India has the largest number of Cricket stadiums around the world- 51 to be precise is unarguably more than an enough testament of the same. The rise and shine of print and electronic media in India, coupled with the powers of social media, and the aforementioned two obsessions make sure that this camaraderie amongst them remain hale and hearty.

But, has this synchronization of demand and supply of the above discussed contents, undertaken by the media, reached a point of saturation for its consumers' consumption? This very question forms the crux of the researcher's study. The unrestrained coverage of the many celebrity weddings the previous year, for example, made the people ponder and question the media as to whether or not the attention given to them was even required to such an extent. Are they overdoing it? Similarly, Cricket in India has been in the media forefront for quite some time now, and continues unabated. There have now emerged special television channels dedicated especially to lure the Cricket fanatics. Not only India's Cricket matches, but also the coverage of matches featuring two other countries are broadcast over the different media platforms. Television news channels have at least a half-an-hour program, wherein journalists and a couple of experts only discuss Cricket and its cricketers. Thus, the questions remain the same. Is it being overdone? Has it taken a toll on other sports, in terms of their promotion and popularity, and consequently the players involved in them? What are the consequent merits and demerits? What role does the social media play in this media game?

The study concluded that while these organs will continue remaining the important ones, it is the media's responsibility to understand as to what comes when and where in its priority list. The supply of the contents will ensue as long as there is a demand. But the vital question our media has to answer is- at what cost?

**IndexTerms - : Celebrity, Cricket, Indian Media, Social Media.**

## I. INTRODUCTION

Cricket and Celebrities are two of India's most famous obsessions. Talking about the latter first, the 'celebrity culture' (as what we popularly call it) has become a part of India's everyday society and functions as a form of entertainment. Today, everyday citizens play an important role in the perpetuation of this celebrity culture by constantly checking the whereabouts of celebrities, the trends within celebrity culture, and the general lives of celebrity via media (Marshall, P.David, 2010). The important question here arises as to why do people love celebrities? One of the few reasons has to do a lot with what we call the terror management theory (from: The worm at the core: On the role of death in life, 2015), which starts with the assumption that people generally want to live for as long as possible. But they know they will die, and this is potentially very disturbing. So humans do the best they can; they ignore death and overestimate their health and underestimate their risk for diseases etc. So, death is a bummer and maybe even scares the living daylights out of a lot of us, but it affects less if we live on in some way post death, either symbolically through loved ones and our cultural beliefs, or through our spiritual beliefs.

So in other words, we love celebrities because they are an integral part of culture. By following and worshipping them (at times and to some extent, especially in our country), we feel as if we are participating in this hugely important cause/belief system. And that makes us feel all warm and fuzzy, and like our life matters (and in turn, does not sting as much). Jeff Greenberg of the University of Arizona, after his several tests and studies on the effects of death salience on celebrity worship, found out that people were more positive towards celebrities and fame when they were first reminded of death. This suggests that people cope with the awareness they will die by loving themselves some fame and celebrity.

Cricket, on the other hand does not need an introduction in India. With over 50 international Cricket stadiums in the country presently, and over 27 billion impressions per week in 2018 (as per BARC), Cricket has received more love than any other sports can perhaps ever witness in India. Yet the sport's take-off in our country was a highly improbable development. The game requires considerable space, a good turf wicket and expensive equipments- which only a handful of Indian cricketers have access to. Most will never strap on pads or bowl with a leather ball. So why do Indians so love the game? Why is it so close to their hearts, that when Sachin Tendulkar bids his farewell to international Cricket, the entire nation weeps in unison?

Contrary to what many believe, India's success at Cricket does not explain it; if it did, Hockey would be far more popular. Between 1928 and 1956, India's Hockey team won six consecutive Olympic gold medals, a domination Indian cricketers have never threatened to rival. India has only very recently become consistently competitive at Cricket. Infact, the game had significant presence as its part of the British legacy which India has revered as the game of kings. It first became popular with the elite and wannabe elite so that they could hobnob with the royalty and the British. After that it percolated down and became popular with the masses. A further strong push to its popularity was received in 1983 when KapilDev and his boys won the World Cup. The introduction of colour TV transmission during the 1980 Asian Games made the game further popular. Since then, the game has never looked back and continues to grow with the continuous growth of mass media and the sweet taste of advertising revenues.

Thus in this era of celebrity endorsements, TRP- hungry channels and broadcasters, and the growth in different forms of media, the charm and charisma of celebrities and cricket (and consequently the cricketers) makes it an interesting research subject in order to determine the overall impact it has on the lives of the aforementioned, plus the common man who consumes everything served before him and what the future beholds as a result for all of us.

## II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- a. The primary objective of this study is to ascertain whether or not too much attention is being given by the Indian media when it comes to covering celebrities and Cricket.
- b. Going with the supposition that the media overdoes the coverage of the aforementioned (which is more or less quite explicable), the research then draws attention towards:
- c. The role played by various tools of social media in fuelling the process.
- d. Ascertaining the merits and demerits of overdoing the same.
- e. Ascertaining whether or not the celebrities (including the cricketers) have formed elitism by feeding everyday lives on their respective social media handles, thereby legitimizing their club rules as the only benchmark of social engagement.
- f. Determining whether or not the role of the Indian Premier League (IPL) and its success in terms of viewership and subsequent revenue generation has taken a toll on other sports in the country or not.

## III. CRITICAL APPRAISAL OF REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Not many studies have been conducted on this subject, when it comes to drawing a parallel study and assessment on celebrities and Cricket as dominating spheres of coverage in the Indian media, especially in the present age. However, there are quite some articles, journals and other online works throwing some light on the different facets of the same, and try to interpret or analyze whether or not this is a healthy tradition; what are the pros and cons on giving way much importance to entertainment coverage; or is the media trying to distract or divert the peoples' attention from the issues that really matter or affect them directly; is this a TRP game, and many such small but related issues.

An article published by the popular news website 'The Quint', bearing the headline- "Is Indian Media too Obsessed With Celebrity Weddings?" gives away quite some sneak-peak of how the media in our country, coupled with the power of social media, successfully manufactures our consent and tell us 'what to think about', if not 'what to think' itself. The article (dated December 13, 2018) focused on how the media ran from pillar to post to grab and disseminate each and every minute detail of the grand wedding ceremonies of famous Bollywood and sport stars, and how the social media added fuel to the 'no-bruises' fire. The media even crossed all the 'voyeuristic lines' (during Deepika-Ranveer wedding in Italy) when despite the couple's best of efforts in keeping the wedding private, the adamant journalists landed on the shores of Italy's Lake Como, providing the inside looks of the wedding destination from across the lake! When asked whether the media is overdoing it? Uditajhunjunwala, the veteran entertainment journalist said, "I don't think it's overdoing it. Increase in social media means far more exposure to it (celebrity weddings). We just have to refresh Insta and follow five influencers and you get updates. It feels excessive, but in the last ten years, globally, we've become far more voyeuristic. It's like reality television for us. Getting a peak into how the rich and famous live."

Taking the example of Bollywood stars Ranveer Singh and DeepikaPadukone's wedding again- but this time in the context of social media, it was noticed that when the first photograph of their wedding was surfaced on Instagram, it got a million likes in just 23 minutes. Such is their craze! This kind of celebrity hysteria which is fuelled by social media in just a few moments increases our urge to know more. "Now you have digital media and 24/7 news channels. There's just content to fill and people are interested in it, which is why people follow them on social media. If you don't wanna see them, don't see them. I mean if Beyonce's coming down to perform at someone's wedding, you will want to see it, it's just human nature", said senior entertainment journalist, Naomi Dutta.

Cricket, on the other hand is what most the kids want to play in our country. The game has produced mega icons who have carved a niche for themselves not only with their performances, but also due to an undivided media attention. The result is that even the not-so-popular mediocre cricketers have a much larger fan following as compared to the players from other sports. An article by the Times of India (dated September 15, 2011) dwells upon this very issue that arguably can be termed as the sports question of the decade: Does Cricket receive more than the required coverage and media space in our country, and whether this trend is alright in terms of fairness? As per the article, the growth of Cricket in our country (in terms of popularity and media space) has been a result of 'great strategizing', a fair share of which goes to Mr. LalitModi for bringing in the game's most shortened version- the T20 format, at a crucial juncture, when India had recently won the inaugural season of the T20 World Cup in the year 2007. He cashed on to the opportunity to strike the iron when it was red-hot and brought the game to the realm of pure entertainment through T20. The purists frowned like they had when the one-day internationals came into existence. But he delivered what the people demanded- pure entertainment, shorter duration and huge sixes galore (courtesy the flat Indian pitches). The article further exclaims that as the game grew, 'other forms of sport became more and more obscure' and moreover gave rise to random celebrity-hood. ViratKohli rules the brand market presently, surpassing all the athletes in the country, with a net worth of Rs.228.09 crore in the Forbes India Celebrity list. Former India captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni was at the fifth position (with Rs.101.77 crores) although being at the fog end of his career. Such a massive fan-following paves way for brand endorsements where cricketers- both popular and not so popular too featuring in almost every other advertisements over the television and the web. With the sustainability of the IPL and the entry of multi-millionaires from the corporate world, there has been a deluge of advertisements featuring cricketer protagonists. While on the other hand, protagonists from other forms of sport need to be incredibly lucky to get one or two ads. "The media's non-stop support- the balance has been extremely unfair, but media houses are guided by what people want- has taken cricket players to a level in which their only competitor is Bollywood", adds the article. In terms of a deluge of advertisers coming in the picture, it is rather clear that the advertisers do not invest in person, no matter how brilliant they might be. They invest in personalities created out of persons by an over-attentive media.

What makes Cricket a hit in all the aspects is great management and marketing compared to other sports. Media houses are, at the end of the day business ventures, which comprehend what sells and what not. But is the impact of the so –called ‘cricket-friendly’ media really has taken a toll on all the other sports played in the country at present? The researcher hopes to get a convincing enough answer by analyzing different views by the end of the study.

#### IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study has proceeded with many of the ‘why’ and ‘how’ questions of human experience and observations. Hence, the research methodology employed is a **qualitative** one. A qualitative research is one which produces explanations of a problem or tries to understand a phenomenon or situation or an event by exploring the totality of the situation, often with the access to large amounts of “hard data” of a non-numerical form (Bogdan and Taylor, 1990).

The researcher has taken ample and valuable opinions of journalists covering celebrity news, sports news, students currently pursuing journalism and some students of film appreciation, with good sense of cinematic knowledge, (e.g.: cinematography, storytelling, casting, locations etc.) celebrity culture, and women issues. Seeking of the insights and opinions of the aforementioned was conducted by the researcher through their extensive interview- via e-mails and phone interviews by putting forward relevant open-ended questions pertaining to the study.

The qualitative research interview seeks to describe the meanings of the central themes in the life world of the subjects. The main task in interviewing is to understand the meaning of what the interviewees say (Kvale, 1996). As per Kvale, a qualitative research interview seeks to cover both a factual and a meaning level, though it is usually more difficult to interview on a meaning level. The researcher, in this study too, tried to pursue in-depth information around the topic by putting forward the factual questions which we clearly witness through our television sets and the various tools of our social media handles. Interviews are particularly useful for getting the story behind a participant’s experience. The interview can pursue in-depth information around the topic. Interviews may be useful as follow-up to certain respondents to questionnaires, e.g., to further investigate their responses. (McNamara 1999).

The type of interview undertaken by the researcher in this study is the **Standardized, open-ended interview**. In this type of interview, the same open-ended questions are asked to all the interviewees. This approach facilitates faster interviews that can be more easily analyzed and compared.

#### 4.1 Theoretical Framework

The various theories of mass communication act as perfect generalizations about observations and consist of an interrelated, coherent set of ideas. Just as a foundation supports a house, a theoretical framework provides a rationale for predictions about the relationships among variables of a research study. Theoretical framework in a qualitative study provides direct, practical and interesting explanations to the research study problems.

In this study, there are a couple of theories involved. While one theory finds quite some significant validation, the other disproves it- related to media related studies. The **Uses and Gratification Theory** is one such. This theory discusses the effects of the media on people. Briefly, it explains how people use the media for their own need and get satisfied when their needs are fulfilled. There are several needs and gratification for people. They are categorized into five needs:

- Cognitive needs
- Affective needs
- Personal Integrative needs
- Social Integrative needs
- Tension free needs

As mentioned earlier, since there is a demand for celebrity related content as well as of Cricket and its cricketers, the media (including the social media) supplies the same as and when the fans require. By doing so, the media gratifies the people by understanding their needs and fuels the same.

**Affective needs:** It includes all kinds of emotions, pleasure and moods of the people. People use media; say television, to satisfy their emotional needs. Thus, when the media diffuses such content, (Cricket in this study) the people, or rather the fans of the game experience all kinds of the aforementioned emotions.

**Personal Integrative needs:** This is the self-esteem need. People use media to reassure their status, gain, credibility and stabilize. Thus, they consume media content and assure themselves that they have a respectable status in society. For e.g. Celebrity endorsements of various products in the advertisements related to say jewellery, apparel, watches etc. Compel the people, especially the fans of these celebrities and cricketers to buy these products so that they can change their lifestyle. Similarly, in our Cricket crazy nation it somewhat becomes mandatory for people (especially the boys and men) in some states of the country to keep themselves updated with the current affairs, at least pertaining to Indian cricket. Else, they become prone to social stigma (although an irrational one). Hence the media helps them to do so in fulfilling these needs.

**Tension free needs:** People sometimes use the media as a means to escapism from the real world and to relieve from tension and stress. As discussed earlier under ‘Why do people love celebrities?’ yet another basic reason as to why people indulge themselves in celebrity gossips is that they use the celebrity culture as an escape from their own less thrilling lives. As per an article by the ‘quirkydaily.com’, people working a tough 9-5 day, week in week out to earn a decent living, may indulge in this alluring world every now and again. The article further questions whether the unrealistic lifestyles that the culture presents, is a healthy pass time or not? The answer to this however, is one to ponder for another day.

Another mass communication theory- the **Agenda Setting** theory- fails to completely convince the researcher regarding the validation of the essence of the theory, pertaining to the topic of research. Simply putting, the theory describes the ability (of the news media) to influence the importance placed on the topics of the public agenda. That is, if a news item is covered frequently and prominently, the audience will regard the issue as more important (source: Wikipedia). The press, as per this theory “may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling people what to think about” (Bernard Cohen, 1963).



But, as mentioned in the earlier part of this study, more than the media dictating terms while setting the agenda, it is the people who largely dictate terms and 'demand' which sort of content they wish to consume. The media, catering to the users' needs, are simply fulfilling that created demand and in turn reap the TRP benefits too.

Diving back to the history of the theory, the term 'Agenda setting' was coined by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw in their study of media coverage and voter attitudes in the 1968 U.S. presidential election campaign. They found that the media exerted a considerable impact on voters' judgement of what were the salient issues of the campaign (1972). On the basis of this and similar studies, it is argued that although the media might not be able to tell us what to think, they have an influence on what we think about.

But, Agenda Setting has been dismissed (which also holds true in this study as well) as at best, a hackneyed half-truth on the grounds that it downplays the existence of multiple agendas by media organizations and voters alike (Wilson, 1996). McQuail notes that the direction of flow in the agenda setting model could be reversed, raising the possibility that rather than setting the agenda, the media merely reflects the attitudes of voters, and in our case, reflects the attitude of the consumers of celebrity and Cricket-related content. For McQuail, agenda setting remains a plausible but an unproven idea.

## V. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study relies on the interviews of entertainment journalists, sports journalist, students undergoing journalism studies and other students of film appreciation who keep a close eye on celebrity culture, women issues and the likes. Their valued opinions form the very basis of the researcher's study.

The questionnaire deployed to the participants in the interview aimed at bringing out their honest opinions about the current scenario of the media in the country, in terms of the coverage of celebrities and Cricket, with all the experience they have gained over the years being associated in this field directly or indirectly. There perhaps cannot be better interviewees than the people who have been on field working in and out covering celebrities, their way of life and everything about them right from their clothes and accessories, to their movies. This also includes our cricketers as well, who are emulated by the people on the same page as the film stars (or cover even more of the page at times).

Since all the questions were open-ended and opinion based, the foremost and basic question the participants were asked was whether or not they think too much attention is being given by the Indian media in covering Cricket and celebrities. As was expected, all the participants responded with a positive nod and admitted that the media overdoes it. But, it has its own obvious reason(s) for doing it. Debjani Chakraborty, a celebrity journalist who covers the entertainment section for the 'Times of India' (Ranchi edition) said, "From the very beginning, Indian media has cashed on the 'celebrity' factor to get larger readership. While the print media in itself began with the aim to spread the news, gossip essentially made the backbone of the news roll in India. Yes, I think too much attention is being given by Indian media while covering Cricket and celebrities (especially cinema), although it is primarily readership driven." Reiterating the fact that there is supply only because of a huge demand, Bhavya Kumar, student of mass communication and film appreciation said that every media house has a special segment on film and sports stars (especially cricketers) focusing only on what they do in their personal lives. He further adds that since there are people waiting to have a sneak-peak in terms of 'who they are with', 'where are they partying tonight'; the media does whatever they can get such content telecasted or webcasted. "Media is doing it because there is a huge consumer base", he concludes. Cricket too, has been on the top of the priority list of media organizations. Projesh Das, Sports journalist in 'Kashish News', a local news channel in Ranchi (Jharkhand), in response to the above question said that cricket sells in India. "Cricket has for long time helped media generate more revenue and will continue doing so for many, many decades to come", he said. Social media on the other hand has well truly been a supporting arm of the media vis-à-vis the researcher's study. Celebrities' social media handles, their posts and even user comments have been picked up by the media on a regular basis, thereby extending the already existing length of the media arm. On asking whether and how the social media fuels the media coverage of the same, Aditi Sidhant, currently pursuing Journalism from a renowned Institution, says that the social media has boosted the celebrity-fans connect. "In a cultural landscape where social media follower covets far exceed any tabloid's paid circulation; celebrities have more control over the media coverage than ever before. She further adds, "It is hard to imagine the time when people (the fans) had to read a magazine to get celebrity news. Now, social media has led the common people into the personal lives of these celebrities." Arya Sharan, a former journalist (intern) at the Pioneer newspaper organization on the question said, "The social media has played a major role. Most of the media has gone digital now and, as per what I have observed, there is a deluge of celebrity gossips and cricket-related content being surfaced to cater to the popular demand. Moreover, people are enticed to click on the news, courtesy the often quirky headlines they provide for the news, which, in most of the cases have no relation to the actual news." Debjani Chakraborty said that with the advent of internet and the celebrities creating a sense of documentation of their day-to-day life, the coverage has moved from exclusive stories to minute to minute about their lives. "For example, cricketer MS Dhoni's daughter makes it to online news while Taimur, son of Kareena Kapoor is splattered all over the newsprint ever since he was born."

Next, was to ascertain whether the cricketers and film stars have fomented elitism by setting a benchmark for social engagement, by feeding their everyday lives, pretending to be one amongst us? The participants had a mixed reaction to this question. Arya Sharan says that it depends on the people, who are watching a lot. She further exclaims, "If you are aspiring to have a certain kind of luxury just because it appeals well to your eyes then maybe you should reconsider your choices." Sports journalist, Projesh Das also held similar views in context of the cricketers doing the same. He said, "In a capitalist economy to survive and earn, players endorse glamour and a specific kind of lifestyle; which isn't their fault, that is how the world works." Debjani Chakraborty on the other hand holds a different viewpoint; she agrees that the benchmark of social engagement changes with the trends set by the celebrities. "For example, Dubs Mash became a rage in 2016-17 when all the celebrities started lip syncing while the concept of mega selfie was popularized by the Hollywood fraternity during the Academy Awards a few years ago." Bhavya Kumar too agrees with the same, but rather holds the gullible fans responsible, if they try to replicate their social media lives. "In the urge to emulate their favourite stars, they fall in this enticing trap. People don't realize that they have worked so hard to be where they are in order to post such stuff. Moreover, they filter what to show the fans, which obviously would be quite alluring and full of brands and all the luxury." Aditi Sidhant too agrees that the stars have, although subtly, raised the

benchmark of social engagement. She said, "Using social media, stars and their anonymous assistants, showcase the day-to-day aspect of their lives. All of this material is designed to make stars seem relatable to the public, while maintaining the rarified nature of celebrity. This desire for relatability as per her fulfills the "stars are just like us" narrative of contemporary celebrity.

The penultimate and one of the vital questions put before the participants was regarding the pros and cons of overdoing celebrity and media coverage. Projesh Das said, "For the media obviously there is more money, as is for the players as well. But the cons as far as sports are concerned would obviously be that there is less time devoted to other sports. Moreover, what is more disappointing is the fact that we are glamourising the mundane stuff; the sport per se the money involved and the subsequent luxury and fame, rather than the core values of blood, sweat, toil and hard work which is associated with every other sports person in the world of sports. This is how a country excels in sports and becomes a sporting nation. Glamour does not produce world class players; the core values do." Aditi Sidhant on the other hand feels that overdoing it comes at the cost of the privacy of a celebrity and his/her family too. "We recently saw how Shahrukh Khan's daughter was surrounded by a dozen paparazzi while she was waiting for the lift to come down, which clearly made her uncomfortable. Then there is the new born Taimur Ali Khan, who has been unnecessarily given coverage just because his parents are popular film stars. This needs to stop." Debjani Chakraborty, with all her experience in covering entertainment stories had a different say. As per her, overdoing cricket and celebrity coverage might sound without its benefits but it has a large audience base. She said, "Many people have built their lives around such stories with dedicated fan pages and clubs for the same. Continuous news feed and coverage feeds these, and is the only merit. As far as the demerits are concerned, as per her it is the chance of saturation. She said, "Too much information fed in results in lesser retention, making it impossible to make a lasting effect on the reader or viewer." Bhavya Kumar feels that there are certain merits of doing it as fans get to know minute stuffs like what do they eat, what they wear, the brand of bag they carry, the sunglasses they put on and the likes, beyond what their work is. This is a merit as there are people who take inspiration from the sport stars and the film stars in terms of their health and the way they conduct themselves throughout the day." The demerit as per him is that they overdo, they exaggerate it way too much and in the process leave out issues like poverty, unemployment, corruption from the daily scope of discussion. "The people rejoice in the media overdose of such content and extent their full support. The media, most often, averts its attribution to scrape off bits from cricketers' and celebrities' lives for the generation of TRP. In doing so, the media leaves out important issues of national concern."

The ultimate question deals with the revolutionary Indian Premier League (IPL) and its massive success over the past ten years. Breaking all the records in terms of revenue generation and media space, the participants were asked to give their opinions on the impact it has had in relation to the popularity of other sports in the country. Projesh Das said, "IPL and over hundreds of its sponsors have paved the way for international leagues of other sports in the country like, Football, Wrestling, Kabaddi, and Badminton. The brand value that IPL has created has clearly helped other games to fetch the confidence of the sponsors. It has created a credible environment for the sponsors to invest in other sports as well." Debjani Chakraborty on the matter said, "It took a few years for other sports to come up with their professional leagues, inviting players from all over the country. When IPL commenced in 2008, it looked as if the monopoly of Cricket over other sports will continue and sustain unabated. But the change is visible, though there is still a long way to go for other sports' in India." Arya Sharan fears the development of Cricket itself might be at stake, since the advent and liking of the T20 format are pushing people away from the longer formats of the game. However the IPL, as per her, has worked magically for Indian cricket and will surely help other sports prosper; the seeds of which have already been sown. "Products of IPL have been regular features for our national side in all the formats; and the hunt for the next big thing in Indian cricket keeps continuing with every season. The same is being reflected in other sports league, like say Kabaddi, where the products of the Pro Kabaddi League are regular features in the national Kabaddi team as well. "If everything goes well, India might be the next big thing in the sporting world", she concludes.

The analysis provided above allows inferences to be drawn from the valued opinions of the participants. The first question, regarding which the researcher already had a conjecture or hunch about the outcome, was whether the participants thought that the Indian media was overdoing celebrity and Cricket coverage. All the participants admitted the fact but also provided more valuable insights to the same based on their experience. The participants were of the view that the media overdoes it because there is quite some demand of the same. It is readership driven and there is a huge consumer base for the deluge in such content.

The social media on the other hand acts like a fuel in delivering the content to as many consumers as possible. As per the participants, there has been a significant boost in the celebrity-fan connect, courtesy the social media handles which connect the fans and the celebrity, thereby facilitating effective communication and interaction between them. The celebrity-fan interaction had never been so easy before. Apart from this, almost all the print and broadcast media platforms have gone digital, and come up with those quirky headlines related to celebrities and cricketers which help increase the web traffic to these websites. Moreover, as per one of the researcher's participants, social media aided coverage has shifted media's focus from exclusive stories to minute-to-minute news.

The overdoing of film stars and cricketers and giving them more space in the media sphere has made the consumers of the content, wanting to emulate their stars to a certain degree. This has although in a subtle way created a benchmark for social engagement popularized by the cricketers and film stars. Recent trends like Dubsplash, the mega selfie, the ice-bucket challenge and the Kiki challenge became quite a hit among the fans who tried to replicate them as perfectly as their favourite stars did. Such trends help the fans relate with them and, as mentioned by one of our participants, "fulfilled the 'stars are just like' narrative of contemporary celebrity". But, some other views of the researcher's participants revolved around the fans too, who fail to realize the amount of hard work that goes in the celebrities' lives before they post such quirky stuff, which makes them look happy and gay, making the fans believe that they have everything sorted out in their lives. This is not the case more often than not, as the celebrities themselves decide what to post and what not to. Thus, just as one of our participants mentioned that if the fans aspire to have a certain kind of luxury, just because it appeals to their eyes, they should better reconsider their choices.

One might not be able to think of any merits of overdose of content related to cricketers and celebrities. But there are people around us who have built their lives around such people via their dedicated fan pages and clubs. A deluge of such content helps these people to thrive and prosper in life. Moreover, these stars are a source of information for a lot of people. Hence, every other detail regarding their lifestyle really gives them that 'kick' which they expect in their lives. There are quite a few demerits as well- like the dearth of popularity and importance given to sports, other than Cricket and less time slots and space to the

important and real issues engulfing the country, like corruption, unemployment, agricultural distress etc. Moreover, the intrusion into the private lives of celebrities and their families is one of the grave issues of concern, putting a question mark over journalistic ethics that are supposed to be followed by media organizations.

## VI. CONCLUSION

Star India- the new premier broadcaster of the IPL for the next five years- 2018-2022 picked up the rights for broadcasting the same for Rs.16, 347.5 crores. Overall, Star had clocked a reach of 603 million viewers on TV and 202 million on Hotstar last season, which included live matches, repeat telecast and wrap-around shows. Thus, the growth has been simply phenomenal and magnanimous. But this, has not led cricket enjoy the monopoly, as its massive success has roped in the investors' confidence for investing in professional leagues of other sports as well, which is quite a healthy sign for sports in the country. Starting with the Hockey India League in 2013, sport leagues in India have never looked back since then, and continue to garner the attention of quite some spectators on the field, as well as the viewers watching the live broadcasts over their TV sets and mobile phones. The Indian Badminton league, Pro Kabaddi league, the Indian Super League (Football, in 2014), the Pro Wrestling League (2015) and very recently the Pro Volleyball which got underway on February 2, this year, which recorded 14.3 million TV viewers and 1 million fans on digital fans in the very first week, make sure that the sporting culture in India keep witnessing a purple patch.

Thus, rampant Cricket coverage has in a way, acted as blessing in disguise for the rise and shine of other sporting stars in the country. But, the cons of overdoing it still remain intact. The cricketers in our country, who are no less than celebrities are still unfairly expected to give their opinions on problems that engulf the country at large, and any deviation from the popular opinion make them subject to hate and malice on traditional as well as on the social media. Moreover, they are also expected to be apparently 'perfect' with the way they conduct themselves in their social lives as they own the media spotlight most of the time. The recent HardikPandya- KL Rahul debacle is a case on point, where their alleged sexist and misogynistic comments during a celebrity chat show landed them in trouble, and even lead to their suspension from international Cricket for some days. Their coverage has been overdone to such an extent that their every move, even apart from their professional lives are subject to scrutiny and are thereby expected to conduct themselves alike an ideal human being. The same holds true for film stars as well.

But, at the same time it is not entirely sensible to blame the media as well. If there is excessive coverage, there is considerable demand for it as well, with the social media easing out the entire process. The media's attempt to decode Bollywood actor Sridevi's reason for death took up a lot of media space and time only because the channels were witnessing higher TRPs with the coverage. If celebrity weddings are covered extensively by the media, rather than devoting on much larger issues of the society, it is because somewhere down the lines we, the consumers, prioritize the former over the latter.

Thus, Cricket and celebrities are, and will continue to be the important organs of the media business which will continue to cater to the audience's demand. The media on the other hand, has the responsibility to strike a perfect balance making sure that the dose of entertainment does not exceed the point of saturation of the consumers. Cricket and celebrities are the important organs, and there ought to be supply whenever there is demand. But, at what cost? That is the questions our media needs to ask itself.

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