



While we stare at huge losses be it Sponsors, sroadcasters, BCCI, the environment is not conducive to host IPL 2021 or similar matches any more, says Ambika Sharma, Founder & MD of Pulp Strategy.

BUSINESS

Environment not conducive to host IPL 2021-like events: Ambika Sharma



By [Nandika Chand](#) t

Published on May 8, 2021



SHARE



Share



TWEET



COMMENT

While we stare at huge losses be it sponsors, broadcasters, BCCI, the environment is not conducive to host IPL 2021 or similar matches any more, says Ambika Sharma, Founder & MD of Pulp Strategy. The Indian Premier League (IPL) 2021 came to an abrupt halt earlier in the week after a number of players and support staff tested positive for COVID-19. The bio-security bubble

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ©

buckled and the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) suspended IPL 2021 for the health and safety of everyone.

In this regard, [The Plunge Daily](#) in an interaction with **Ambika Sharma**, Founder & MD of **Pulp Strategy**, tried to see the kind of impact IPL 2021 suspension will have on similar events in the near future as well as on the country's image:

What is your opinion in regards to the suspension of the IPL 2021? Should it have been suspended? Should the government have stepped in?

The battle with Covid-19 which started a year ago has disrupted the operations across the globe. In India, we are facing a human crisis that is unprecedented. The IPL is an extremely popular event. Everyone looks forward to it; it's the equivalent of the Superbowl. IPL started with a plan to follow the most stringent measures which would ensure player safety and of course for the audience it would be viewed on the screen in the security of their homes. Had the current covid wave not happened it was a good plan and would have been a success considering the circumstances at the time of planning it. However, considering that players tested positive and the safety of everyone on ground producers, camera and the hundreds of people on field was at stake suspending it was the only responsible thing to do. While we stare at

Should the tournament even have started, in terms of the prevailing health crisis in the country?

Everything comes down to commerce, there is an industry attached to live sports, lively hoods. It is not new for sports to continue. NBA, Formula 1, Super bowl, UEFA Champions league, English premiere league, Laliga Spain, etc have taken place during covid times. The IPL has attracted more than its deserved attention because of the fact that it continued despite the covid spike, however I would look at it objectively as a commerce activity, so did factories and other lively hoods till they came to a halt due to the Covid spike, when they planned and started the situation was very different. It is extremely unfortunate that the escalation of the Covid crisis has impacted us in India and all of us in such a terrible manner. Like many other commercial activities it was necessary to put a stop to IPL in order to protect people and lives. I do not feel that it should never have been planned but I do feel it could have been planned conservatively with low risk options, for example less travel, single location etc.

Will the suspension dampen sponsorship opportunities in the country for similar events in the near future?

It is a heart-breaking situation. Health is precious. It will possibly dampen the sponsorship opportunities in the country, considering the health crisis which is going on. On the other hand we also understand that we will be dealing with Covid for at least the next 2 years, it is not going away in the near future we can only pray and hope that it will never again be as devastating as it is now. In the future sponsors and sports will find a way to be resilient and come back with a hybrid or slightly different model.

How can such postponement be avoided?

Unlike, last time when it was played in UAE last year, Covid-19 infections were far2 low as compared to in India now. The games were played in 3 venues – in Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Sharjah – and there was no air travel involved, unlike this time. Safeguarding Bubble security in Indian cities where Cricket is the game of Do & Die situation and Cricketers are treated as Superstars is completely different. This time also we would have taken a chance a considered UAE as the destination for IPL.

Also Read: [Jaishankar defends India's election rallies and mass gatherings amid second wave of COVID-19](#)

Has this in any way impacted India's image?

No, I do not believe it has or will have any impact on India's Image. Our concern should be purely for the health of the players and the other people impacted during IPL.

Australia has also criminalized the return of its citizens from India due to the Indian strain of COVID-19. And now the IPL players have tested positive. How could this have been better handled?

It is a situational fallout. There is nothing that anyone could have done, none of us saw the escalated spike of Covid coming. I understand that BCCI is planning the arrangements to send the Australian & NL players to the Maldives



or Sri Lanka and spend their quarantine there before going to their home countries.

