

## LS Digital's Report Reveals How Women's Sports Are Reshaping India's Culture, Fandom And Brand Strategy

India, 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2025 - LS Digital, India's leading Digital Business Transformation company, has released its new year-end report, *The Rise of Women's Sports Marketing in India*, revealing how India's Women's Cricket World Cup victory has propelled women's sports into one of India's fastest-growing commercial categories. The report shows a decisive shift from CSR-driven visibility to a high-value, digitally powered ecosystem shaped by rising viewership, strong brand confidence, and landmark institutional reforms.

The report uses LS Digital's Quilt-based methodology, combining curated search and social data with machine-assisted discourse analysis to identify emerging themes, audience shifts and commercial patterns shaping the category.

Among the most defining insights is the rise of **Patriotic Marketing**. The report finds that **50%** of labelled conversations now position women athletes as national symbols, reflecting their growing cultural footprint. Within this, **78%** of patriotic-themed content centres on narratives of national achievement, while consumer engagement and the *local hero effect* contribute **11%** each - creating a rich emotional canvas for brands to anchor meaningful storytelling.

This cultural shift is translating into strong commercial momentum. The report references global estimates projecting the women's elite sports category at **\$2.35 billion by 2025**, supported by sponsorship in women's leagues reportedly growing **50% faster** than men's. Brand confidence is strengthening as well, with **86%** of sponsors indicating that their campaigns have met or exceeded ROI expectations. Digital behaviour is accelerating this growth - streaming now contributes **over 40% of total viewership**, while social engagement around women's sports has surged nearly **200%** over the last three years.

As visibility grows, audience dynamics are evolving. Social data shows that **57-58%** of viewership during recent women's cricket tournaments came from **men**, challenging traditional assumptions about who the category appeals to. An additional **6%** of conversations revolve around youth inspiration, reflecting how women athletes are shaping aspiration and fandom among younger audiences.

These shifts are mirrored in the athlete economy. The report notes that leading players such as **Jemimah Rodrigues** and **Smriti Mandhana** have seen endorsement values rise by **25-100%**. It also highlights **Mandhana's reported Rs. 2 crore per brand endorsement fee**, and notes that the portfolio size for top athletes can extend to **as many as 16 brand partnerships**. This momentum is driving athlete demand across categories such as **sportswear, nutrition, technology, finance and lifestyle**.

The growth trajectory is not limited to cricket. With **22%** of conversations spotlighting sports like **chess, squash, combat sports, ice hockey and winter sports**, the report captures the diversification of women's sports and the emerging whitespace for brand-led storytelling and investment.

Institutional support is further driving category maturity. The BCCI's introduction of **equal match fees** (Rs. 15 lakh per Test, Rs. 3 lakh per ODI, Rs. 1.5 lakh per T20I), the **record World Cup prize money of \$4.48 million (approx. Rs. 40 crore)**, and the **unbundling of women's cricket rights** have strengthened the sport's independent commercial identity. These moves are complemented by increasing investment in training infrastructure and grassroots development.

**Commenting on the findings, Prasad Shejale, Founder & CEO, LS Digital, said,** *"The data now unequivocally shows that commitment to women's sports delivers both resonance and ROI. We are past the point of tokenistic sponsorship; brands are seeing clear value, with strong audience engagement and measurable returns. The market is signalling the need for year-round investment in athletes, leagues, and grassroots development. Brands that move beyond event-led activation to sustained, authentic partnership will gain a significant competitive advantage in audience reach and brand differentiation in the years ahead."*

Looking ahead, the report notes that the next phase of growth will depend on how stakeholders harness this momentum through deeper fan engagement, stronger storytelling and a consistent presence across the sporting calendar. As digital consumption rises and athlete narratives strengthen, women's sports are poised to become one of India's most influential and future-ready marketing frontiers.

**About LS Digital:**

LS Digital is a leading independent Digital Business Transformation (DBT) company, integrating the expertise of specialist, innovative entities: LS Digital, Langoor, f1studioz, DataQuark and Social Panga. Our comprehensive suite of services encompasses business consulting, activation, and transformation through a robust DBT solution framework; Media, Creative & Communication, Data & Insights, Technology & Innovation, UI/UX and CX/EX. Leveraging digital as a catalyst, they enable brands to holistically develop businesses across various platforms, ensuring exceptional brand experiences in a digital-first world.

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