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BUSINESS CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES OF ONLINE MARKETING IN SPORTS GOODS INDUSTRY IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

From last decade sports in India have been emerging enormously. People in India are now more inclined towards fitness and have been taking up different activities to improve their health condition. Sports equipment's play an important part in the industry as it improves the athlete performance. There has always been a scope of improvement with the help of technology to design equipment's in lighter, stronger and efficient form to make it more suitable for the athlete. Online industry has taken an edge in all the major business in the world and more than 40% of the Indian population relies on ecommerce in consumer and Industrial markets. India is known as the young nation as fifty percentage populations is below 35 years of age group. Sports equipment's have entered the ecommerce in past few years in Indian market and now there are many dedicated websites dealing in this area. The growth of sport equipment industry is substantial in last one decade in India but the penetration of e-sales channel is in infant stage in almost all urban and rural markets. This paper basically aims to measure business viability of online sports equipment in Indian markets. This primary research presents the findings derived from comprehensive survey of 500 potential respondents with their qualitative and quantitative views. This paper also aims to understand views of athlete and sports people about their experience and perception about online retail options in Indian markets. The findings mainly focus on consumer perception about online portals, credibility and services of online portals in this segments and future strategies for better expansion of online sales channels for e-commerce portals.

KEY WORDS: Indian Sports Equipment Industry, E-Commerce Portal, ISCM (Integrated Supply Chain Management)

INTRODUCTION

India is the second highest populated country in the world with the population of around 132.42 crores. India's population mainly consist of youth and has the highest percentage of youth. 28% of the population i.e. from the age of 18-24 is youth and majorly rely on online communication or the online market. From a decade the internet is on a boom in the nation as major businesses have taken over the online network for their buying and selling activity.

Internet in India began with the launch of Educational Research Network (ERNET) in 1989. First public internet service was launched in India by State owed Videsh Sanchar Nigam Limited (VSNL) in 1995. As of July 2016, 29.5% of countries total population were internet users.

India is home to a diverse population, not only playing cricket but many different sports across the country. Football is a mainstream don in a few of the Indian states. The nation has won eight Olympic gold awards in field hockey. Kabaddi, an indigenous game, is prevalent in provincial India, and India has won all the Kabaddi World Cups to date. A few amusements started in India including snooker, chess, and other territorial diversions. India has won awards in badminton, kabaddi, hockey and numerous different games and teaches. Be that as it may, cricket is the most prevalent game in India.

India facilitated the Asian Games in New Delhi in 1951 and 1982. The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports was at first set up as the Department of Sports in 1982 at the season of the association of the IX Asian Games in New Delhi. Its name was changed to the Department of Youth Affairs and Sports amid the festival of the International Youth Year in 1985. India has additionally facilitated or co-facilitated a few universal donning occasions, including the 1987 and 1996 Cricket World Cup, the 2003 Afro-Asian Games, the 2010 Hockey World Cup, and the 2010 Commonwealth Games. Real universal wearing occasions yearly held in India incorporate the Chennai Open (now known as the Maharashtra Open), Mumbai Marathon, Delhi Half Marathon, Davis Cup and the Indian Masters. The nation co-facilitated 1987, 1996, 2011 Cricket World Cup and the main Indian Grand Prix in 2011.

India has won extremely restricted Olympic awards, in spite of a populace surpassing one billion, around half the number of population younger than 25. Various clarifications have been offered for the shortage, including neediness, ailing health, across the board vegetarianism, dismissed foundation, the absence of sponsorship, the robbery of cash and gear, political debasement, institutional disorder, social fixed status, the power of cricket, and other social elements.

The global sports business is expected to be the worth of \$480-620 million. However, its different in India as the sport still needs to be recognized in the economic sector of India, this is mainly due to the fact that there has just been very little research on the industry potential, opportunities available and the size of the industry. This industry includes many different segments of sports tourism, sports goods, sports garments, and sports management and sponsorship and it may even contribute to 1 t 5 percent of the country's GDP.

New initiatives such as the setting up of Indian Premier League (Cricket), Hockey India League, Indian Badminton League, Pro Kabaddi League, and Indian Super League (Football) are undeniably changing the

face and the identity of Indian sports. The sports industry has indeed grown expansively — from Rs. 43.7 billion in 2013 to Rs. 48 billion (\$713 million) in 2015 — mainly due to the advent of new sporting leagues. India now has moved forward from a single sports nation to a multi-sport country and is witnessing a boom that will help the sports commerce in the years to come.

Sports equipment means that the equipment needed to participate in the particular sport. This may include everything. These are divided into two major categories:

Game Equipment includes balls, flying discs, goal post, nets, racquets, rods and tackle, sticks, bats, clubs, wickets, bases and etc.

Player Equipment includes footwear, protective equipment, training equipment, training equipment and etc. Online sports equipment industry in India has come into existence over past 10 years. This has changed the sports industry in India as things are more feasible and consumers are able to get the idea of the product sitting at home. The sports industry is growing from a decade and the leagues are helping in shaping the sports industry.

India being the country of the maximum percentage of youth has a definite advantage of increasing sports participation year by year. People might not take the sport as a profession but would definitely take as a recreational activity. This has gradually increased the sale of sports equipment. Nowadays each sport has a specific port wear so this means the specialization of sportswear has also come into the picture. There are few companies that specialize in a particular sport like Wilson for Lawn Tennis, Butterfly for Lawn Tennis. The international brand like NIKE, REEBOK, etc. started investing in India as they thought that it would be easy to capture the new market. In today's world, these multinational brands have captured the maximum market.

But in India people still, prefer feeling the product they wish to buy rather than buying it online. The orthodox thinking is changing now and people are now moving to online shopping. To give an extra advantage to the customer's companies are now providing products that are only sold online, so this may incline the customers to online shopping. Year-round discounts are available to the customer on digital media than on the in-store purchase. Example: Decathlon being an MNC has around 25+ stores in India but there are few products that are only available online.

There are few websites like sports365, tennis hub, Amazon and etc. that provide products online and provide door to door service.

SCOPE

- To study and measure market potential of sports goods industry on online platform.
- Corporate supply chain strategies for offline and online market.
- Consumer preference in shaping sports goods offline and online.
- *Impact of social and mass media on consumer buying behavior.*

OBJECTIVE

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RESEARCH DESIGN

The research is divided into two parts: -

- Explanatory research and extensive literature review research are done.
- Cross sectional convenient sampling design was used for data collection.

Primary Study

The aim of this study was to analyses the opportunities and challenges of the online sports goods industry. For this primary study was conducted as the consumers were given to fill the questionnaire, in order to understand their perspective.

Sampling

For Readers and Viewers -

- o Sample Size: 191 respondents
- o Sample Age Group: No barrier
- o Sampling Method: Random Sampling
- o Research Design: Qualitative and Quantitative
- o Research Method: Primary and Secondary

LITERATURE REVIEW

a. India Sports Equipment Industry Outlook to FY'2018 - Surging Popularity of Badminton and Volleyball to Spur Growth'

It gives a thorough investigation of the market size of the Indian games industry. The report additionally involves the piece of the overall industry of driving organizations in general games equipment's, cricket bats, hockey sticks, tennis racquets, footballs and an aggressive scene of significant residential players in sports hardware advertise in India. It additionally gives the significant patterns and improvements in the business in India. An investigation without bounds of the Sports hardware's Market in India is given based on the income of the market over next five years.

The fortune of games hardware industry is profoundly subject to elements, for example, populace development, the execution of Indian players in the global occasions and presentation of games alliances in India.

Maturing familiarity with urban and center and high-pay populace about wellness has supported the games hardware showcase in India. The multinational association have an in-house exercise center or support their staff for wellness exercises. India has been facilitating some global games occasions, for example, Commonwealth, cricket competitions and others, which has helped the interest for sports gear's and has expanded games mindfulness in India. Subsequently, the Indian government is currently concentrating on sports advancement, preparing and foundation and fares of wearing products in India.

b. Sports Equipment and Accessories Market: Global Opportunity Analysis and Industry Forecast 2017-2023

Games have seen an expanded investment in the course of recent years as individuals are presently taking up sports or recreational activities in lieu of developing wellbeing mindfulness and stress administration.

Games have picked up significance both as an inactive and dynamic wellspring of diversion. Buyers are dynamically going through additional on sportswear with an expansive offer of the cost constituting of competitor garments and extras. The game in the 21st century is a market brimming with extremes. With business sectors all through the world winding up progressively more focused, statistical surveying is presently on the fundamental motivation of advertising the game's products and adornments.

The worldwide games hardware and adornment advertise is developing vigorously and is portrayed by the fast selection of more up to date advances and receptiveness to evolving patterns. The business is flourishing monstrously on web-based business, which is a prevalent retail medium these days that likewise offers purchasers the advantage to analyze all the accessible brands of games gear. It is a one-stop search for all games accessories and hardware, which thusly improves the versatility in the worldwide game's gear advertise.

Games gear and adornments advertise are exceptionally focused inferable from numerous built up to showcase players in retail, internet business, sports stores and discount and numerous new businesses joining much of the time. It additionally faces negative rivalry with sham donning hardware and adornments with less expensive low-quality variations.

Amid the figure time frame, the expanding feeling of wellbeing awareness among the buyers is relied upon to invigorate the interest for athletic gear. Furthermore, the rising pattern to take after the unmistakable games players will drive the adornment business.

c. 'Global Sports Equipment Market 2016-2020'

The sporting goods market in the United States is a billion-dollar industry. Sporting goods store deals in the United States alone amount to more than 45 billion U.S. dollars annually. This includes many different product types such as athletic footwear; exercise equipment's, licensed sports merchandise athletic apparel but does not include recreational transportation items such as bicycles, pleasure boats, RVs, and snowmobiles.

One of the main sales channels for sporting goods in the U.S. is handled by sporting goods stores like Dick's Sporting Goods, Bass Pro Shop, Cabala's or The Sports Authority. In the United States, the sporting goods stores sell mostly exceed 46 million U.S. dollar. One of the most popular sporting goods retailers is Dick's Sporting Goods, in the recent survey did by Statistic about 20% respondents said that they purchase sports apparels, sports shoes and sports equipment's or gears from there. Walmart is one of the biggest sporting goods retailers had 9.8 billion U.S. Dollar as the sporting goods sale in 2015.

Scarborough also reports that in 2016, almost 95 million people in the U.S. bought athletic shoes. The average selling price for athletic footwear stood at around 61 U.S. dollars in 2016. The leading companies in the footwear segment are Nike and Adidas with revenues of 19.9 and 10.7 billion U.S. dollars respectively in 2016.

Nike and Adidas are also the leading sporting goods manufacturers worldwide in terms of revenue. Other major sporting goods manufacturers with at least 1.5 billion U.S. dollars in revenue are VF Corp., Puma, Asics, Jarden, New Balance, Amer Sports and Under Armour.

d. Bright perspectives of China's sporting goods industry: kids, millennial's and elder people are most promising customers

As of late China's brandishing merchandise industry has demonstrated unforeseen outcomes, anticipated to reach \$ 30.6 billion out of 2017 growing 9.8% every year. The Chinese government is taking measures to advance social games and increment ingestion of brandishing merchandise and ventures, as the objective is very aggressive – by 2020 the business income should achieve 3 trillion RMB (460 billion US dollars). Government endeavors and support are by all account not the only drivers of this market. Enthusiasm for sports, expanding the number of games aficionados and better salary will drive the market much further.

Chinese millennial, matured 18 to 35 (around 380 million of individuals) are the most encouraging purchasers, while resigned individuals (guys more seasoned than 55 y.o. Furthermore, females more seasoned 50 y.o.) and kids in the vicinity of 5 and 18 years of age are the gatherings of people with shrouded potential as far as brandishing products utilization. Chinese purchasers still incline toward outside brands, however, have high trusts in novel highlights and usefulness of the items. Industry specialists are sure about the future points of view of China's donning products industry, which gives loads of chances to both outside and nearby organizations. In light of our discoveries, running is as yet the most famous game in China, trailed by badminton and b-ball. While financial specialists are keen on wellness, soccer, e-games, outside and extraordinary games, battle games, cycling and square moving

e. Sports Goods Foundation of India: A Case Study of a Solution Based NGO

The Indian sports goods industry is renowned in the entire world, with a size of about US\$ 127.76 million in 2012-13, and the sports goods are mostly exported to U.K., U.S., and Australia. The Sports Goods Export Promotion Council (SGEPC), a Government of India sponsored organization is working for the promotion of India's exports of sports goods. Jalandhar is considered as the sports industrial center and is the leading exporter of sports goods in Asia. Sports companies from Jalandhar have reputed buyers like Nike, Adidas, and associations like FIFA. Mid 1990-onwards, the sports goods manufacturing industry had a critical time as the industry was found to employ child labor for the manufacturing of inflatable balls. During the 1998 football World Cup, media coverage of child labor usage in football manufacture led to a prohibition of the

inflatable balls exported from India and Pakistan, and major clients like Nike, Adidas, Puma, and FIFA cancelled the orders of footballs. To get rid of the issue of child labor from the sports goods industry, the exporters of sports goods willingly came together and founded the Sports Goods Foundation of India (SGFI) with the involvement of 25 sports goods manufacturing companies. SGFI emerged as a solution-based NGO, which is addressing the problems of the industry successfully. Various projects under SGFI are aimed to develop a self-imposed and reliable system to prevent child labor from the entire sports goods industry. SGFI took initiatives to withdraw children from hazardous working conditions in the football stitching industry by providing them with the necessary education, skill training, health care, and social protection services.

f. Why Sporting Goods retailers are struggling.

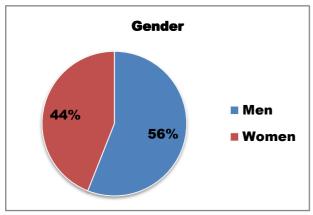
There has been a huge growth of US sportswear market, sporting goods retailers are struggling as there has been a regular change in purchasing habits, and moreover, now the sportswear companies are focusing on the direct channel, and many new players are entering the player.

Sportswear in the US has reached over US\$100 billion in 2016. Over the last couple of years, sportswear has benefited from the growing interest in overall health and wellness, as consumers increasingly choose to wear sports clothing and footwear for everyday activities. Additionally, the continued casualization of dress codes deepens the extensive adoption of sportswear in consumers' regimes.

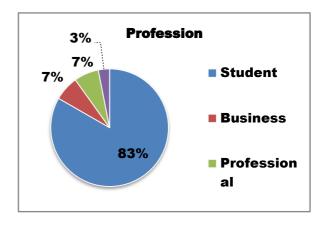
US market is seeing a major shift from in-store purchases to digital purchase. The market witnessed the increase of the value of the retail market for 40% from the year 2011-2016 and online industry witnessed the growth by 159%. A major reason that the consumers are becoming more comfortable with digital devices to browse and make purchases online. Seeing this behavior company are now more investing in internet retailing and making websites more costumers centric. This has also decreased the traffic in store and sales have gradually come down and this makes retailers to offer heavy discounts to the customers in the store.

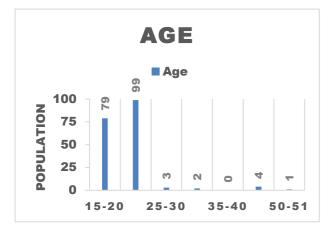
g. Online Sports Retailing - Comprehensive Market Study with focus on key drivers and trends

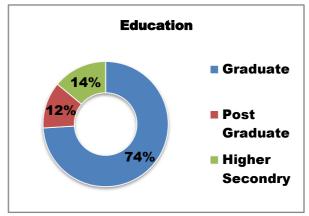
Online games retailing market comprises of various questions and riggings utilized as a part of any wearing exercises. This incorporates sports clothing, sports defensive gear, sports hardware, and games footwear. The market's income produces from the offers of different games attire, sports footwear, sports defensive hardware, and games gear for ball sports, experience sports, golf, wellness, and others. With the expanding interest for eco-accommodating games gear and the solid nearness of online networking, the market will probably post a positive development rate amid the figure time frame.



Enter Players incorporated into the exploration examine are Academy Sports + Outdoors, Amazon.com, Alibaba.com, DICK's Sporting Goods, Walmart, Adidas, ASICS, Columbia Sportswear, MIZUNO, Nike, PUMA and Under Armor.





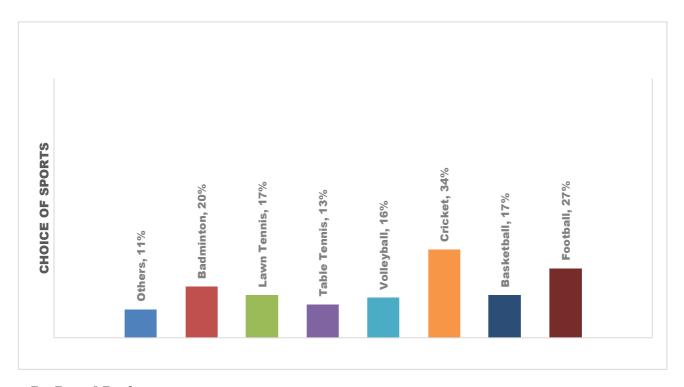


Survey Result

Survey was evenly distributed. Age group of 20-25 having maximum college going students filled the responses. This has been aimed to be a youth-oriented research.

A. Choice of Sports

Majority of the respondents choose Cricket, Football, Basketball, Lawn Tennis and Volleyball. Cricket being the highest in the survey list followed by the other sports.



B. Brand Preference

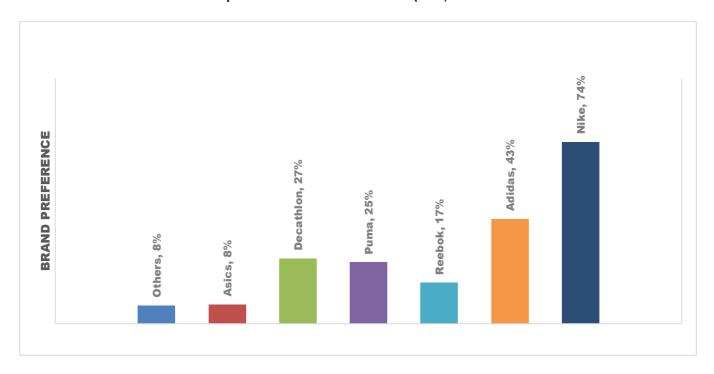
People usually prefer high end brands like Nike, Adidas, Decathlon, Puma, Reebok, and etc. These brands also specialize in few sports as people still think the branded products are the best product.

Nike:- It is American multinational corporation that engaged in designing, development, manufacturing, marketing and sale of **footwear**, **apparels**, **equipment's**, **accessories and services**. There is more focus is on the retail store in India and lower on the digital platform.

Adidas:- It is a multinational corporation with the largest manufacturer of sportswear in the world after Nike, and basically deals with the **designing and manufacturing of shoes, clothing and accessories.**

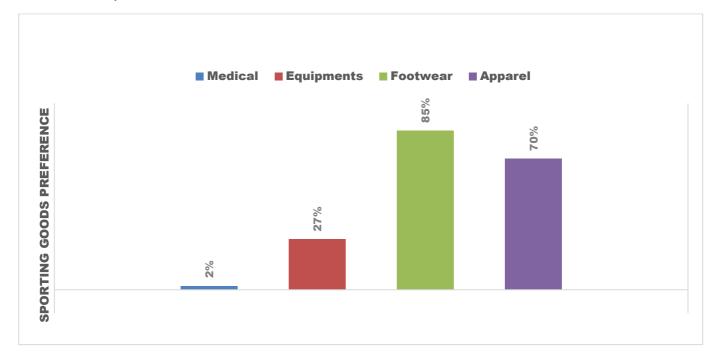
Decathlon: - They are largest goods retailers in the world. They provide a wide range of sporting goods and also have 20 brands under the name of decathlon. There are more products available on the online platform than in the retail stores.

Puma:- It is multinational company that manufactures athletic and casual footwear, apparels, and accessories and it being the third largest manufacturer in the world.



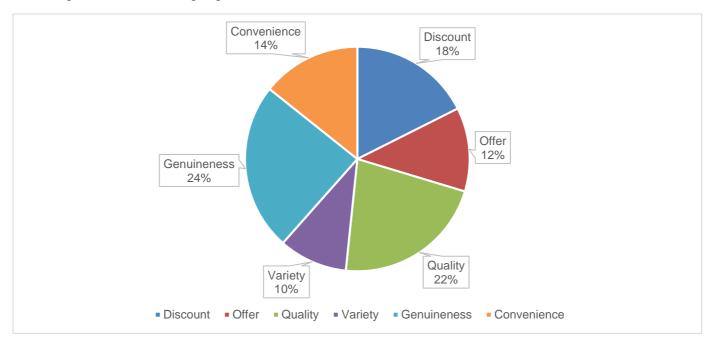
C. Sporting Goods preference

It has been observed that people prefer buying footwear the most followed by apparels and equipment's. This means that respondents are more careful on what footwear to wear at the time of fitness and take up fitness as a serious activity.



D. Factors behind online shopping

Respondents have given their preference behind online shopping. The popular sale terminologies like Discount, Quality, offers, variety, genuineness, convenience have been asked to be scored in the scale of 1 to 5(1 being lowest and 5 being highest).

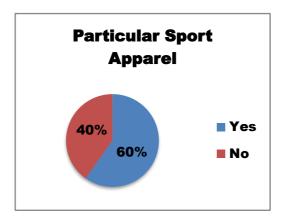


Result shows that **discount** is preferred more by the respondents as it is more on the higher side i.e. from 3-5. **Quality** is more on the neutral side as maximum respondents have marked it at 3. **Offers** are more on the higher side as the maximum respondents have rated it from 3-5. **Variety** is again on the higher side as according to the respondents, they feel that there are more variety of products available online. **Genuineness** is more on the neutral side as maximum respondents have rated it on the scale of 3. **Convenience** is rated more on the higher side as the respondents feel that online shopping is more convenient.

E. Use of Sports specific apparel in India

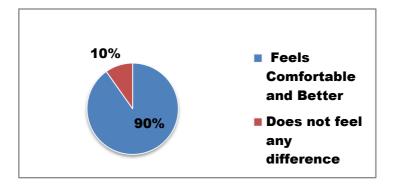
Result is 60:40. People don't significantly feel the need of specific apparel for a particular sport activity i.e. it can be said that in India athlete don't wear sports specific apparels, whereas in other country people prefer

wearing particular sports apparel for specific activity. As with the growing importance of sports in the country there would be gradual shift in the preference of specific sports apparel.



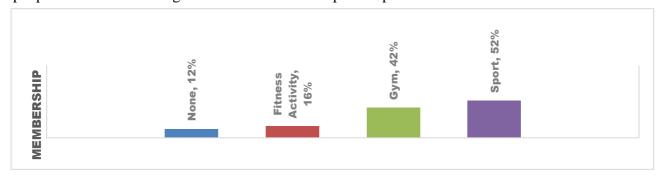
F. Difference in wearing a particular sportswear while playing

According to survey it was seen that majority of them feel comfortable in wearing a particular sportswear while playing or doing dome fitness activity. It shows the ratio of 90:10. This means that the sports industry is growing immensely and people are feeling the importance of sports in their life.



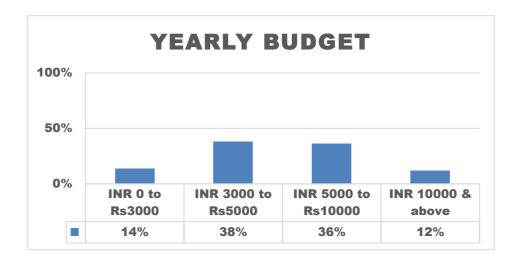
G. Member of sport/gym/ fitness activity

Out of all the respondents, the majority people were part of some or the other fitness activity. This also means that people have started taking fitness as one of the important parts of their life.



H. Yearly budget for online shopping of sports goods and equipment's?

Result shows INR 3000-5000 and 5000-10000 are the average yearly budget range. Looking at the survey we can predict that people are energetically participating in fitness activity and keeping a decent yearly budget for the same.



CONCLUSION

According to demographic profile it was seen that the data has been evenly distributed and majority of people fall under the age group of 20-25 so we can also say that its youth-oriented research. Majority of respondents are students, followed by business and professionals.

India being a country of varied population and a place where people worship cricket. The maximum respondents choose cricket, followed by football, badminton, basketball. As the sports professionals are increasing, there is a gradually increase in sports equipment's and apparels too. This in turn adds to the growth of overall sports industry. There has been a rise in popularity of other sports other than cricket, like football, badminton, basketball.

Nike, Reebok, Puma, Adidas being multinational companies has captured the overall sports sector of India. These manufacturing companies also specialize in some or the other sport. This gives them the edge over manufacturing companies. It was seen that Nike was the most preferred companies followed by Adidas, Decathlon, Puma, Reebok. The major reason that Nike dominates the market is because it is associated to big names like Jordon, Ronaldo, Tiger Woods. These people make the brand look bigger and consumers tend to buy the product that their favorite athlete wears. Another major point is that companies make advertisements that the viewer can't forget.

Sporting goods includes everything from footwear to apparels to equipment's to medical care and etc. According to survey majority of the respondents choose footwear over equipment's as footwear's are the mostly commonly used sporting good for fitness and more over now it's not only limited to fitness but also a part of fashion industry. There has been in a significant growth in the market of sports apparels as people feel that it's more comfortable to perform a fitness activity wearing sports apparels than the regular cloths.

Last 10 years, India has seen a rapid increase in the use of internet. Youths are all inclined towards internet as it plays a major role in the life of a human being. There has been a shift in the buying behavior of the customer as people are now relying more on digital media. According to survey it was seen that discount, variety and convenience were on the higher scale in the survey as respondents feel that there is more discount, larger variety of product and convenience (home delivery, return of product) available for customers.

Online shopping in India is on a boom as people are ready to spend more amount of money as compared to the past. People were ready to spend Rs5000 yearly on sporting goods so this means that people have actively started participating in fitness activity and keeping some aside for the same and this is due to growing importance of it.

RECOMMENDATION

- Sports goods companies should go come out with more perks or offers that could benefit the customers. They could come up with reward points that could be redeemed at any point that the customer wants. This could increase the sale of products and give an added advantage to the customer's too.
- To increase the sale of goods online, companies should increase the variety of products to be sold online that in the retail stores as this could attract the customers. This in turn can increase the profit margin for the companies and the companies could lower down their retail outlet.
- Start giving excellent customer service, this could enhance their sale and give a plus point in comparison to the retail outlets. If a customer buys a tennis racquet and after few months the gutting breaks, so by providing home to home delivery and getting it repaired could give customers an added advantage.
- Companies should develop their websites that are customer friendly and easy to use, as customers today want everything to be handed. Every classification of your items ought to have its own point of arrival that separates the product offering and makes it simple for clients to discover what they're searching for.
- Knowing who your clients are and catching up with them fittingly is critical. Most organizations don't genuinely know their clients, and neglect to track which are visit buyers and which are one-time purchasers, alongside different bits of knowledge identified with buy conduct. Existing clients shouldn't all be promoted to in precisely the same. Promoting strategies ought to be utilized that reflect singular acquiring designs in light of chronicled nearby practices. On the off chance that you have

- faithful clients that make buys more consistently than the normal client does, serve them with exceptional advancements or select offers.
- This is a standout amongst the most financially savvy approaches to get some exposure for your new donning merchandise store. Ensure you have an essential site and Facebook page up and running, at that point spend a couple of minutes online to find prominent neighborhood sites, e-zines and Facebook gatherings. Contact each blog proprietor or Facebook assemble overseer specifically and get some information about their strategies with respect to new business advancement. Tell them about your item choice, and that you offer portion instalment designs. Give them peruses a rebate and think of some as paid publicizing in the event that it bodes well. Aspic and span shop that acknowledges portion instalments makes great grub for crisp stories and gathering talks.

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QUESTIONNAIRE

Business Challenges and Opportunities of Online Market in Sports Goods Industry in India

(This survey has been conducted to know the consumer behavior of online sports industry.)

Questions	Options
Gender	✓ Male
	✓ Female
Age	
Education	✓ Higher Secondary
	✓ Graduate
	✓ Post Graduate
	✓ Ph.D.
	✓ Doctorate
Profession	✓ Student
	✓ Business
	✓ Freelancer
	✓ Professionals
What sports do you play	✓ Football
	✓ Basketball
	✓ Cricket
	✓ Volleyball
	✓ Kabaddi
	✓ Table Tennis
	✓ Lawn Tennis
	✓ Other
What brand do you prefer	✓ Nike
	✓ Adidas
	✓ Asics
	✓ Reebok
	✓ Puma
	✓ Decathlon
	✓ Other:
What sporting Goods do you usually buy	✓ Apparels
	✓ Footwear
	✓ Medical
	✓ Equipment
	✓ Other:
Reason for shopping online	1 2 3 4 5
1 is the least and 5 is the highest.	Discount

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	Quality Offer Variety Genuineness Convince
Do you have a specific sport apparel for a particular activity? *	✓ Yes ✓ No
Do you feel a difference in wearing a particular sportswear while playing?	✓ Yes, feels comfortable and better✓ No, doesn't feel a difference
Are you a member of any of the following?	✓ Sport ✓ Gym ✓ Health Club ✓ Other:
According to you what should be the yearly budget for online shopping of sports goods and equipment's? *	 ✓ Rs0 to Rs3000 ✓ Rs3000 to Rs5000 ✓ Rs5000 to Rs10000 ✓ Rs10000 to above