

Quote by Munish Vaid, Vice-president, Primus Partners

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## ICC World Cup: Where does women's cricket stand after historic win?



*While endorsement values and brand interest are sure to rise, agents and brands must work together to ensure long-term, sustainable growth for the players and the sport. (Image credit: ICC)*

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### Article Content:

The Women in Blue secured their maiden ICC Women's World Cup title on Sunday, beating South Africa by 52 runs. This is the first ODI World Cup title for the Indian women's cricket team—they had previously reached the final of the 2005 and 2017 editions—and social media was abuzz with congratulatory messages, from users as well as brands.

The outpouring of love, not just after the win but throughout the tournament, highlighted a significant shift: women athletes, once sidelined, are now taking centre stage as prime-

time endorsers. Shubhodip Pal, CEO of ITW Universe Integrated Marketing Services, told Financial Express that the ad spending for this year's World Cup has been at least 50% higher than the previous edition, indicating that advertisers are seeing real value in partnering with women's cricket, especially with rising viewership numbers. JioHotstar reported 4.8 million peak concurrent viewers during the India vs Australia semi-final of the ICC Women's Cricket World Cup 2025—an all-time high for women's international cricket in India. Steady rise in brand value Less than 24 hours after India lifted the trophy, it was announced that captain Harmanpreet Kaur, who took the decisive catch that sealed India's victory, had been roped in as brand ambassador for real estate developer Omaxe. One of the most prominent faces in Indian women's cricket, Kaur also endorses Puma, HDFC Life, Boost, CEAT Tyres, Asian Paints, Jaipur Rugs and a few other brands. Experts have predicted that batter Jemimah Rodrigues, whose endorsement catalogue includes brands such as Red Bull, Hyundai, Gillette, Dream11 and boat, could see a 100% surge in her endorsement value. **Munish Vaid, vice-president, Primus Partners, told Financial Express, that the batter could be looking at individual deals in the Rs 50 lakh range annually.**

Reports by The Economic Times suggest that while top women cricketers such as Kaur, Rodrigues, Smriti Mandhana, Deepti Sharma and Shafali Verma, have seen their endorsement fees jump between 25% and 100% since the win, emerging players could also double their endorsement roster, signing five to six brands in the Rs 40–50 lakh range. With a steady rise in brand investment toward women's cricket, especially post-WPL (Women's Premier League), could Sunday's ICC win be the start of a new brand story for women's cricket in India? Or are brands just capitalising on the moment until the cheers die down? Those in the industry share their perspectives.

### **Harshil Karia, founder, Schbang**

This is indeed the moment in the sun for the Indian women's team. The win on Sunday has marked a cultural inflection point and brands will be flocking. The high viewership (over 60 million viewers in the first 13 matches) and the shift in how audiences engage not just with the match, but with the players themselves make this a very attractive moment. Some brands will jump in to capitalise on the immediate buzz. But the real opportunity—the strategic smart move—is long-term partnerships: aligning with this new wave of women cricketers as the faces of a broader cultural shift, not just ambassadors for a product.

The meaningful outcome will be when brands lock in multi-year commitments, recognising that these athletes are now central to the narrative, not peripheral. People are also loving the human side of the cricketers. For the first time, you're seeing social media genuinely buzzing not just about women's cricket as a category, but about the cricketers as individuals—their personalities, their emotions, their stories. And that's fantastic. So far, Smriti Mandhana has been the primary face in advertising—but now

we're going to see a lot more faces, a lot more representation, and a lot more consistency in brand partnerships.

**Karan Yadav, chief commercial officer, JSW Sports:**

The Indian women's team's ICC World Cup win is more than just a sporting achievement; it's proof of how far the game has come, and how much potential still lies ahead when talent is backed consistently. For the first time, we're seeing the kind of attention, emotion, and pride around women's cricket that can genuinely change its commercial trajectory. The real opportunity now lies in turning this moment into something lasting. Brands have a big role to play—not just through endorsements, but also by investing in academies, grassroots programs, and high-performance setups that give young girls the right platform. With the right partnerships and long-term vision, women's cricket in India can become one of the most exciting growth stories in global sport.

**Harikrishnan Pillai, CEO and co-founder, TheSmallBigIdea:**

The Indian women's World Cup victory is a pivotal moment in Indian cricket, much like Kapil Dev's 1983 win for the men's team. While endorsement values and brand interest are sure to rise, it would be unrealistic to expect things to change overnight. Agents and brands must work together to ensure long-term, sustainable growth for the players and the sport. We've seen in many sports that early heroes often fade when momentum isn't maintained, sometimes faster than the celebrations end. There will likely be a short-term windfall for a few players, especially those who are articulate, have strong screen presence, and can connect emotionally with audiences. Their brand value could increase by 30–40%, but it's unrealistic to expect the same level of interest across the board. The real change will come if these players continue to perform consistently in other tournaments, particularly the WPL. Their agents should also focus on helping them integrate into meaningful social conversations, not just commercial endorsements. It's worth noting that the surge in audience engagement came after the semi-final win, especially since it had dropped after the early losses. This shift in sentiment is a powerful signal. If nurtured well, it could mark the beginning of a long-term cultural and commercial transformation for women's cricket in India.

**Ramakrishnan R, co-founder, Baseline Ventures:**

Will this win generate 2x brand deals for women players? I think, similar to how brand endorsements play out for the men's team, there will be a maximum of two to four players who will always take the cake, so to speak, when it comes to commercial deals. In women's cricket, cricketers like Smriti, Jemimah and Harmanpreet could see better deals compared to the rest of the team. What we can expect is better on-field earnings across the entire team. When it comes to commercial deals, we might start to see a separate commercial proposal for women's cricket. Even until this World Cup, most sponsors were on board for both men's and women's cricket. That might change. Right

now, we're seeing a lot of moment marketing. It's too early to tell how many long-term brand partnerships could emerge or how many of these athletes will actually go on to become marketable athletes. The latter would require sustained viewership across series, not just the World Cup. Jigar Rambhia, head, Fuse India I've always said that women's cricket is one ICC trophy away from establishing its own identity and breaking away from the shadows of men's cricket. This victory delivers that in emphatic fashion. This is a watershed moment for women's cricket, built on resilience, pride, and excellence; themes every brand aspires to align with. Far from being a one-off, it will mark a defining inflection point for the sport. We're likely to see brands across categories pursue sustained partnerships as both players and the team gain commercial strength and cultural relevance. Furthermore, this is also expected to boost the Women's Premier League (WPL)'s appeal to sponsors, as the team's strong performance raises the league's visibility and momentum. The nature of this victory—overcoming past heartbreaks to clinch a maiden title on home soil—is set to make the players even more marketable, enhancing their appeal to brands and sponsors alike.

**Umakanta Panigrahi, managing director, valuation services, Kroll:**

While the women's team has been gaining popularity, such an incredible win is expected to boost their fan following and number of endorsements, and subsequently, their brand value. Icons such as Shafali Verma, Smriti Mandhana, Harmanpreet Kaur, Jemimah Rodrigues are poised to witness a 20–30% rise in individual brand value. Cricket has been largely dominated by the men's team, but the women's cricket team has been gaining popularity, and brands are leveraging this through both short-term and long-term endorsements. For example, star player Smriti Mandhana has signed a multi-year endorsement deal with Puma and has been endorsing Herballife since 2023. Accelerated by their remarkable win in the ODI World Cup, we can expect more women cricketers to sign long-term partnerships with various brands.