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Men in Blue are 'entertainment ka boss'

Cricket bags more than 80% of revenue in sports

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Popularity of emerging tennis star Somdev Devverman may have touched a new high after his recent Davis Cup exploits, and veterans Leander Paes and Baichung Bhutia may still be revered by their fans, but when it comes to ruling the advertisers' mind, cricketers are miles ahead of their counterparts in other sports. 'Men in Blue' are the blue-eyed boys of advertisers and cricket bags the major chunk of advertising revenue

that pours in sports.

Essel Group's sports business head Atul Pande said, "Cricket still controls the advertising revenue in India. The game corners around 80 per cent of ad revenue, despite the fact that Indians in other sports are also doing well of late." Last month, Indian team entered the Davis Cup world group after a gap of 11 years, while Bhutia inspired the Indian soccer team to win the prestigious Nehru Cup for second time in the last three years.

Abhishek Verma of Neo Sports, who was in city on Monday, observed that cricket takes the lion's share of the money - around 90 per cent - involved in Indian sports. "Indians follow other

sports. In fact, they have started following other sports more keenly now, but cricket is still the most saleable sport. The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) earns a mind-boggling amount of money from the sponsors and advertisers," said Verma.

Even the television ratings raise the bar when Indian cricket team is playing an international match. "Whenever Indian cricketers are in action, the ratings touch the sky. The TRPs of cricket matches sometimes surpass that of popular daily soaps on TV," said Verma, whose company spent \$610 millions to bag the rights of international cricket matches to be played in the sub-continent for the next five years.