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## MCDONALD'S IN INDIA: THE BATTLE FOR CONTROL

### INTRODUCTION

It was a pleasant morning in March, 2019 in New Delhi. The Managing Director of Connaught Plaza Restaurants Private Limited (CPRL), Vikram Bakshi, was scanning through the latest sales reports sitting in his office at Connaught Place in central Delhi. A real estate magnet and a hall of famer of The Federation of Hotel & Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI), who also served several boards like Cinemax India Limited, PVR Limited, Cineline India Limited, in an illustrious career spanning decades, Bakshi was quietly recalling moments of the days-gone-by. CPRL, a franchisee of McDonald's, through McDonald's India Private Limited (MIPL), was operating in North and East India (Delhi, Kolkata, Gwalior, and Lucknow).<sup>1</sup> CPRL was a 50:50 joint venture<sup>2</sup> between Bakshi and MIPL, a subsidiary of McDonald's.<sup>3</sup> Gradually, the burger started to acquire its place in the Indian palate without burning a hole in the pockets of an average Indian customer. McDonald's became a household name among middle class Indians, especially among youths, in no time. On August 21, 2017, however, Bakshi and his pet CPRL were in jeopardy as the franchise agreement with the multinational giant had been terminated abruptly citing "*default in payment of royalties by CPRL,*"<sup>4</sup> thereby putting the career of 6,500 employees across the 169 restaurants of CPRL at stake.<sup>5</sup>