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## SPORTS INFRASTRUCTURE, CAREER OPPORTUNITIES AND INCENTIVES OF SPORTS IN INDIA

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### Abstract:

Sports are forms of usually competitive physical activity which, through casual or organized participation, aim to use, maintain or improve physical ability and skills while providing entertainment to participants. Achieving excellence in sports and broad basing them as part of its India @75 vision. Besides building training centers and academies, the Central Government and Sports Authority of India (SAI) also build and maintain stadiums and fields. Government of India instituted sports infrastructure development schemes like National Playing Fields Association of India (NPFAI), PYKKA Scheme etc., The involvement of corporate companies in sports infrastructure development in the country is mainly in the form of public-private partnerships. The role of the government in providing career opportunities, incentives and creating a safety net for players is commendable through various schemes like sports quota in government jobs and public sector undertakings (PSUs), performance-based financial assistance for education under sports quota, scheme of pension to meritorious persons, national welfare fund for sports persons, cash rewards by central and state governments, backup careers etc.,

**Keywords:** Sports, Infrastructure to Sports, Career in Sports, Incentives in Sports, Sports Quota.

### 1. Introduction:

Globally, the sports sector is estimated to be worth USD 480–620 billion and contributes about 1 to 5 percent to the GDPs of various countries. Sports sector is associated with several other industries such as education, real estate, infrastructure, tourism, manufacturing and retail. India's Draft National Sports Development Bill, 2013 which recognizes 66 kinds of sport.

In India there is potential for the business of sports. The viewership of sporting events has been steadily rising in the country and so is general awareness on fitness. This is good news for the industry, as this would foster the adoption of active lifestyle by people through various means.

India hosting international events has also increased awareness on sports in the country, and, subsequently, about their socio-economic impact. The establishing of sporting leagues in India has made sports more commercial and important.

### 2. Need for the Study:

In India, there is no comprehensive study on the sports industry. The Government of India is providing numerous opportunities to sports persons. Sports also promote social inclusiveness. Sports sector has the potential to make significant contribution to the economy. As there is no study in India with regard to the above. It is important to study the role of Government of India in promoting sports and create an awareness of opportunities and incentives in sports in India.



### **3. Meaning of Sports:**

Sports are all forms of usually competitive physical activity which, through casual or organized participation, aim to use, maintain or improve physical ability and skills while providing entertainment to participants, and in some cases spectators. Usually the contest or game is between two sides, each attempting to exceed the other. Some sports allow a tie game; others provide tie-breaking methods, to ensure one winner and one loser. A number of such two-sided contests may be arranged in a tournament producing a champion.

Sports are usually governed by a set of rules or customs, which serve to ensure fair competition, and allow consistent adjudication of the winner by judges. Winning can be determined by physical events such as scoring goals or crossing a line first.

### **4. Importance of Sports to a Nation:**

Sports can make significant socio-economic impact on a nation and its citizens. It plays an important role in ensuring physical fitness and healthy lifestyle among the citizens of a country. It unites people from diverse backgrounds, hence promoting peace and development. With the Government providing numerous opportunities to sportspersons, sports also promotes social inclusiveness. The sports sector has the potential to make significant contribution to the economy. Though there is no study in India that assesses the socio-economic impact of the sector, a study undertaken by Sport England in 2013 highlights the significant contribution that it could make to a country's society and economy.

India's economic growth potential, thanks to a large young population, is of interest to the entire world. Inculcating a healthy sporting culture among its youth to build a physically and mentally sound nation is integral in ensuring sustainable growth in the future. As per a survey conducted by Edu Sports in 2011–12 covering more than 49,000 across the country, obesity is increasing among schoolchildren in urban India with one in four in the metros and one in six in non-metros being overweight.

According to the survey, about 39 per cent children do not have correct Body Mass Index levels and about 20 per cent demonstrate signs of obesity. Nearly one in two children covered under the study have poor flexibility levels and body strength. It has been observed that fitness levels drop sharply as children grow older, highlighting the risk of an unfit generation. The survey highlights lack of structured inclusive sports curriculum as the primary reason for alarming obesity and poor health levels apart from lack of proper sports infrastructure and urban life style.

The survey supports the findings of a previous study conducted by the Government of Kerala among school children as part of its Total Physical Fitness Program. Kerala ranks high on health and education parameters in comparison to majority of the Indian states. However, the fitness standards of schoolchildren in the state were found to be low in comparison to the minimum recommended standards.

In 2010–11, only ~16 per cent of the state's children from classes 5 to 10 met the minimum recommended standards on all health-related physical fitness test items. The results of the Government of Kerala survey highlight that the overall fitness levels of schoolchildren across the country is dismal. Therefore, sports not only a pride among a nation's citizens, but they also facilitate social and economic development of a nation. This can be achieved by building a sporting culture in the country.

### **5. Government of India's Objectives of Sports:**

Achieving excellence in sports and broad basing them as part of its India @75 vision. CII's India@75 vision as a means of building strong sporting culture aims to attain the following objectives:

1. Achieving excellence in sports – Win 20 gold medals at Olympics 2020.



2. Broad-basing of sports in India - Create sports infrastructure accessible to common people in tier 2/3 cities; appoint coaches in infrastructural facilities and provide them with equipment; provide 10,000 children in rural areas with scholarships to pursue sports.

## **6.1. Role of the Government in Providing Infrastructure to Sports:**

Besides building training centers and academies, the Central Government and Sports Authority of India (SAI) also build and maintain stadiums and fields. As part of the Asian Games 1982 and the CWG 2010, India constructed several stadiums, facilities or infrastructure developed for hosting international games that would not only serve as a legacy for the host country's citizens but would also provide opportunities for urban development. The creation of legacy assets is usually in line with the long-term sports and development strategy of the host nation/ city. The Indian Government believed that building quality athletics infrastructure, showcasing India's excellence in international-level non-cricketing competitions and motivating a young population to pursue sports professionally would be the lasting legacy of hosting the CWG 2010 and other future international sports events.

Some of the key benefits of building such assets are:

- i. Upgraded facilities can be used by national sports organizations for high performance training.
- ii. Assets built in universities can be used after the events by students and local community members, thereby enhancing community sports participation. It generates demand for an employee base trained in technical, managerial and other games-related aspects.
- iii. It facilitates restoration of surrounding lands and promotes green urban development.
- iv. It is important that legacy planning is done in advance while hosting international games, to monetize assets for the following reasons:
  - v. The large investment in infrastructure/ stadium development and renovation is difficult to recover during the short period of the games.
  - vi. To generate revenue after the sporting events for positive economic impact, as part of building a legacy of hosting games and to develop sports and surrounding communities.

India's legacy planning for CWG 2010 assets was limited and, therefore, it has not been able to generate sufficient income so far.

Following are some schemes instituted by the Government for infrastructure development:

## **6.2. Scheme of Assistance to Urban Sports Infrastructure Development:**

To improve the entire sports ecosystem, the scheme of assistance to Urban Sports Infrastructure Development was introduced in 2010–11 to develop infrastructure such as synthetic playing surfaces and to address other important issues such as player and coach training and development.

The scheme provides financial assistance to schools/colleges/universities/academies for developing sports infrastructure, which can potentially operate as SAI's extension centers. The National Playing Fields Association of India and the state-level playing fields association get assistance under this scheme.

## **6.3. National Playing Fields Association of India (NPFAI):**

This scheme was established in February 2009 by Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports (MYAS), under the Government of India. MYAS aims to spread awareness on fitness and encourage Indian children to play sports by building more playing fields and spaces in the country. MYAS has instructed state Governments to establish playing fields associations at the state level as well, so that it can sanction funds to these states for the development of playing grounds and parks.



#### 6.4. PYKKA Scheme:

Established in 2008–09, the scheme aims to develop sports infrastructure at the grass root level throughout India by providing assistance to its network of village panchayats and blocks panchayats in 10 years. It is estimated that the scheme has covered only 22 percent of village panchayats in India in five years since its inception. The PYKKA scheme, instituted by the MYAS, requires state Governments to establish a PYKKA cell under their respective Governments' Department of Sports to receive requisite financial assistance from the Central Government. Approximately 66 per cent of the panchayats approved under the PYKKA scheme have developed playfields in their respective areas.

#### 6.5. Role of the Corporate Sector in Infrastructure Development:

The involvement of companies in sports infrastructure development in the country is mainly in the form of public-private partnerships (PPP). Some examples of PPP for infrastructure development include:

- i. The Naya Raipur Development Authority is building a sports city in Naya Raipur, which would have facilities like tennis, aquatic and an indoor stadium along the PPP model<sup>28</sup>. The private player is expected to build the facility and hand it to the authority. Some amount of this land is earmarked for a residential complex, which could cross-subsidize the sports facilities.
- ii. Jindal Steel Works (JSW) has collaborated with SAI as part of its CSR initiative to oversee the upgrading and maintenance of infrastructure at SAI's regional training centre in Hisar. The latter is expected to monitor the training and selection of players.

#### 7. Role of the Government in Providing Career Opportunities, Incentives and Creating a Safety Net for Players:

Government initiatives for the creation of a safety net for players include the following:

##### 7.1. Sports Quota in Government Jobs and Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs):

According to rules established by the Government of India meritorious sportspersons who have represented organizations/states/the country at international, national, state or university-level games or national games for schools with requisite qualifications are eligible for recruitment under the sports quota in various Government departments or PSUs, withstanding total candidates through reservation do not exceed 50 percent.

Recruitment of sportspersons against the sports quota is done for Group C and D posts and cannot be done for Group A and B posts under direct (no qualifying examination) recruitment.

**7.2.** To motivate players to continue performing well, the Government has decided to provide sports persons winning a medal(s), at international competitions, an out of- turn promotion, with a maximum of three such promotions. Similarly, state Governments also have the provision of sports quota in Government jobs

**7.3.** Various state Governments provide about 2 percent sports quota in Government jobs. Haryana, which provides 3 per cent sports quota, is an example of a state that boasts of a well established incentives structure. Moreover, the sports ministry recently announced direct recruitment of all Olympic participants as SAI coaches, equivalent to Group B officers.

**7.4. Performance-Based Financial Assistance for Education Under Sports Quota:** Elite sportspersons who are medal winners at national games or participants of recognized international games/championships are provided with financial assistance by the University Grants Commission (UGC) for undergraduate and graduate university courses

**7.5. Scheme Of Pension to Meritorious Persons:** This scheme allows monthly pensions to medal winners at the Olympic Games, Asian Games, Commonwealth Games, World Championships and Para-Olympic Games in



the range of INR 3,000– 10,000, when they turn 30, or later if their sports career is active<sup>52</sup>. However, there is no central pension scheme for medal winners at the National Games.

Since sports is a state subject, some states like Gujarat have launched pension schemes for people who have participated in national-level games as well.

#### **7.4. National Welfare Fund for Sports Persons:**

This fund provides financial assistance to former sportspersons living in indigent conditions, to players for medical treatments and the former players who are now disabled. It also provides financial assistance to budding sports persons in need. The Indian Parliament recently discussed the possibility of formulating a policy on pensions for former sportspersons who have been successful in national-level games.

#### **7.5. Role of Private Sector:**

The Indian sports sector is at a stage where it requires thrust from both Government and the private sector for realization of its true potential. Some of the ways in which the private sector is helping provide performance incentives and career opportunities to sports persons in the country are as follows:

##### **7.5.i. Sports Consulting Firms:**

Sports' consulting primarily includes consulting for sports clubs, player management and player representation. The latter two help players make choices and connect them with appropriate resources suited to their career requirements and post-retirement plans. However, increasing such practices could only be possible with the advent of leagues for sports and the implementation of a proper framework on player management practice by respective national/international federations.

##### **7.6. ii. Non-Profit Organizations Supporting Athlete Development:**

Presence of organizations such as OGQ and Mittal Champions Trust, which raise funds from corporate players and individuals to support training requirements of athletes, is motivating. Such companies could increase the chances of winning medals and, thereby, monetary rewards on winning in international games.

#### **7.7. Other Factors Aiding the Creation of Safety Net For Players:**

##### **i. Cash Rewards by Central and State Governments:**

Players who won medals or perform well in international competitions such as Olympic Games and Commonwealth Games will be benefited in the form of rewards from various state Governments, Central Government and companies. Such awards could not only act as incentives but they also help secure players' future.

##### **ii. Backup Careers:**

These are opportunities provided by the Government and the private sector to retain players in the sports ecosystem even after retirement from active sports. The sports ministry's decision on direct recruitment of all Olympic participants as coaches is aimed at providing financial security to players. Players could also consider backup options in the fields of sports management/marketing and sports consulting in the future if the trend of league-based sports in India gains acceptance widely. Similarly, to fulfill the demand of coaches in line with the Government's vision, pursuing courses in sports education, psychology and nutrition can also be potential backup options. Sports persons may also get training to become analysts, commentators and journalists.

#### **Conclusion:**

Sports can make significant socio-economic impact on a nation and its citizens. The Government of India is providing numerous opportunities to sports persons. Government of India is playing key role in providing infrastructure to sports. The role of the government in providing career opportunities, incentives to creating a safety net for players is commendable.

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