



Category: Indian Govt & Society's attitude towards sports



SPORT SECTOR IN INDIA: A REVIEW

EZRA V. SEKHAR^{*1}, P.M.PADMALATHA²

¹Lecturer in Botany, A.C. College, Guntur,

²Lecturer in Mathematics, JMJ College for women, Tenali.

*ezravsekhar@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

Globally, the sports sector is estimated to be worth USD 480–620 billion¹ and contributes about 1–5 per cent to the GDPs² of various countries. In India, sport is yet to be recognized as a sector and there is no comprehensive study on the industry's estimated size in the country. Sports can make significant socioeconomic 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. The sports sector has the potential to make significant contribution to the economy. A study undertaken by Sport England³ in 2013 highlights the significant contribution that it could make to a country's society and economy. The potential of sport in bringing about a positive social change is evident from initiatives such as the 'FIFA Football for Hope' movement. 'Sport the Bridge' is another such initiative that lays emphasis on sport pedagogies to promote social inclusion among street children in Ethiopia. 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 overweight⁴. 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 lifestyle.

Performance of India in sports

The survey supports the findings of a previous study conducted by the Government of Kerala among schoolchildren as part of its Total Physical Fitness Program⁵. 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 class five to 10 met the minimum recommended standards on all health-related physical fitness test items. Therefore, sports not only instil 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. That's why Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) has adopted the Government of India's objectives of 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:

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



• **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. This may help identify potential improvement or focus areas, and bring the country closer to achieving its goals for the sector.

Performance at international events

The country's performance has not been up to the mark at various Olympic Games. India's medal tally has witnessed marginal improvement in the past few Olympics Games, with the 2012 games being the best so far for the country. India's Olympic medal tally has increased from zero in 1988 and 1992 to one each in the 1996, 2000 and 2004 Olympics. This was followed by three medals in 2008 (including the first Olympic gold medal for India) and six medals at the London Olympics 2012⁶. However, India lags far behind countries such as Australia, China, Japan, South Korea, Russia, the U.S. and some smaller countries such as Ethiopia and Cuba. India's Olympic Games 2012 performance can be judged on the following parameters, where the country won only:

- 3.3 medals per USD 1 trillion of GDP versus 10.5 of China, 40.2 of Russia, 162.3 of Ethiopia, 217.4 of Cuba and 808.5 of Jamaica.
- 0.005 medals per 1 million people (population) versus 0.331 of China, 0.564 of Russia, 0.076 of Ethiopia, 1.331 of Cuba and 4.425 of Jamaica.

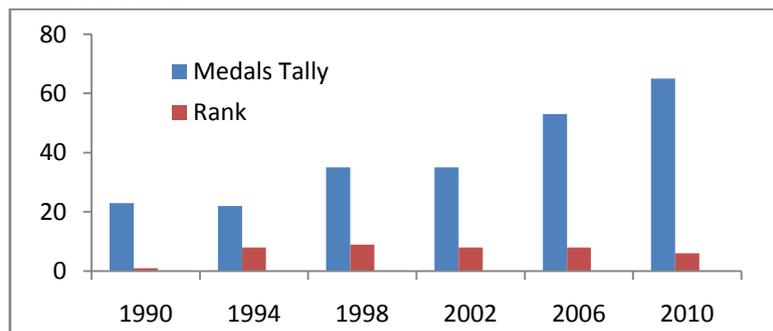


Figure 1.1: India medal tally and rank in Commonwealth Games since 1990

India has traditionally performed better in the Commonwealth Games and Asian Games than the Olympics and it has managed to rank among the top nations.

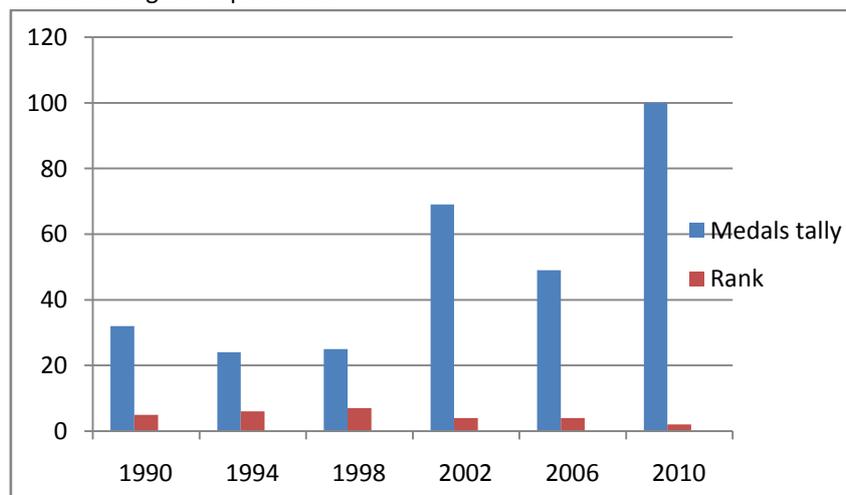


Figure 1.2: India medal tally and rank in the Asian Games since 1990.

India has performed well in certain non-Olympic sports like cricket, chess, snooker and billiards.



Table 1: Achievements of India in certain non-Olympic sports

Cricket	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Winner of Cricket World Cup in 1983 and 2011 • Winner of World Twenty20 in 2007 and 2013 ICC Champions Trophy
Chess	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Viswanathan Anand has won the World Chess Championship five times (2k, 07, 08, 10 & 2012) • Indian women's chess team finished fourth in the Chess Olympiad at Istanbul in 2012. • Indians won eight medals at Maribor, Slovenia, in the World Youth Chess Championship 2012, including three gold medals • Parimarjan Negi won the Asian Continental Championship 2012 at Vietnam
Snooker and Billiards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the last 20 years, India has won the World Championship five times • Pankaj Advani has 8 world titles under his belt. He also won the gold medal for the English Billiards Singles at the Asian Games. He won the World Billiards Championship 2009 and 2012 • Anuja Thakur won the WLBSA ladies world billiards championship in 2005 and Chitra Magimairaj won the Australian Open Women in 2008 • India has performed well at the Asian Games since 1982, winning a gold medal in each of the games.

<http://www.olympic.ind.in/images/AGMedalTally.pdf> accessed on 15 January 2014

An analysis of India's performance at various international events also highlights the contribution of a few states in India's success.

1. Performance at the 2008 and 2012 Olympics:

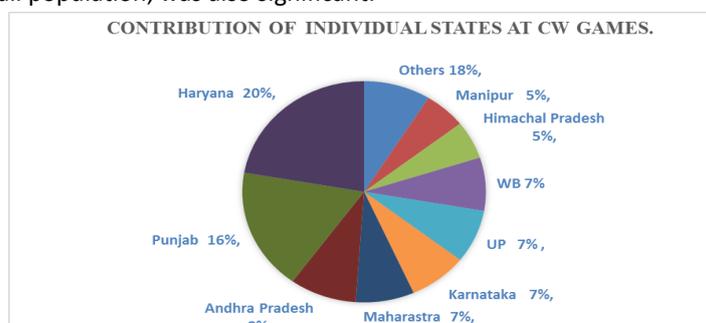
India has won nine medals in total in the last two summer Olympics. If we categorize athletes on the basis of states where they received a majority of their training or spent a substantial portion of their youth, then two medals can be attributed to Haryana (Vijender Singh and Yogeshwar Dutt), two to Andhra Pradesh (Saina Nehwal and Gagan Narang), two to Delhi (Sushil Kumar) and one medal each to Punjab (Abhinav Bindra), Himachal Pradesh (Vijay Kumar) and Manipur (Mary Kom).

3. Asian Games 2010

Out of the total 65 medals won by India at the Asian Games 2010, 20 were won by sportspersons from Haryana. Sportspersons from Manipur, Kerala, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra also performed well. This holds true for domestic games as well, with a few states accounting for a significant share of the total medals.

2. Commonwealth Games 2010

India showcased its best performance so far at the Commonwealth Games (CWG) 2010 with an overall medal tally of 101 medals. Haryana's performance was significantly better than other states. Punjab, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh were other states that performed well. The contribution of Manipur, considering it has a small population, was also significant.



Source: <http://blogs.wsj.com/indiarealtime/2010/10/15/indias-cwg-medal-winners-men/> accessed on 18 November 2013,



Figure 1.3: Number of gold, silver and bronze medals won by top 15 states respectively at the National Games 2011

Source: <http://www.34thnationalgamesjharkhand.in/> accessed on 15 January 2014

Performance of states in the National Games

The National Games 2011 were held in Jharkhand. Figure 1.5 demonstrates that Manipur and Haryana were the best performing states on the basis of the number of gold medal wins. The absence of large states like Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Gujarat and Rajasthan from the top 15 states could mean that these states are not doing enough to cultivate their sporting talent.

Learning from the leading states

Athletes from Haryana and Manipur have been making significant contribution to India's performance at recent global events such as the Olympics, Commonwealth Games and Asian Games. The two states are also among the top performing states in the last few editions of the National Games of India.

Case study – Haryana⁷

Even though the state has less than 2 per cent of India's land and population, its contribution to national sports has been higher than other states. The credit for Haryana's success can largely be attributed to Government policies in the past few decades. The state's sports policy was launched in 2006 and has been regularly revisited and updated — there has been an increase in the incentives for sportsmen and several initiatives have been launched. Three important aspects of the state Government's policy are:

1. Talent spotting and grooming: The Government has launched the '*Play 4 India*' initiative with an aim to enable young boys and girls to realize their athletic potential and subsequently hone their skills by providing support. Under this initiative, a Sports and Physical Aptitude Test (SPAT) is conducted in all schools across the state to identify high potential athletes in the 8–14 age group. About 5,000 children - with boys and girls in equal numbers - are identified, and a sport is allocated to them based on seven physical parameters such as strength, flexibility and the reaction time of various body parts. These students are then supported financially and provided with training, proper diet and health checkups. A yearly appraisal assesses the progress and further assistance is provided based on this assessment.

2. Infrastructure: To support development of sports, the state has built the following infrastructure:

- 46 schools to train athletes, including provision of free hostel, games kit and food.
- 71 stadiums at block level with fulltime coaches, managed by district authorities, schools and parents.
- Sports complex in every district
- A sports library and a centre for conducting research in sports medicine
- Centres of Excellence for sports like boxing in Bhiwani and wrestling in Rohtak and Sonapat

3. Incentives: The Govt. provides several incentives to winners and other stakeholders in sports:

- *Winners and participants of various sporting events:* Financial incentives, government jobs and reservation in admission to professional institutions are awarded to the winners in various international events. For example, gold medal winner in the Olympics/Paralympic Games 2016 would be awarded INR 5 crore.



- *Coaches and their places of origin:* The State Government rewards the villages of medal-winning sportspersons. For example, the panchayat of a village of a gold medal winner, in an international event, gets INR 2 lakh for the overall development of the village.

Strategy for India@75 Vision

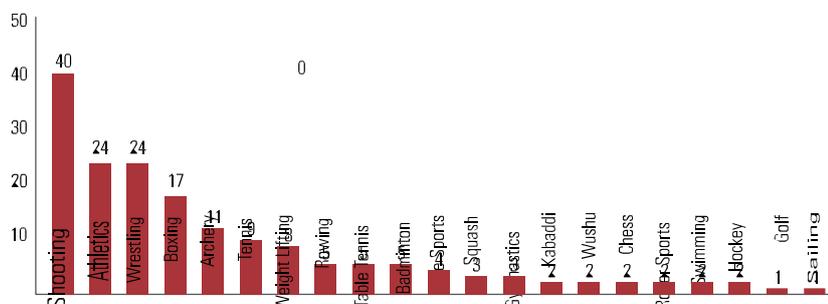


Figure 1.4: Cumulative medal tally of India in Olympics 2012, CWG 2010 and Asian Games 2010.

Source: www.olympics.org accessed on 15 January 2014

While the Sports Development Bill 2013 recognizes 66 sports - and many more sports are played across India – a developing nation with limited number of resources and only a few champions cannot afford to focus on all sports. Therefore, to achieve its targets, it is imperative for the country to identify a few sports in which it has succeeded in the past and use its resources on these sports in the medium term.

Figure 1.4 represents India has won the maximum number of medals in shooting, followed by athletics, wrestling, boxing, archery and tennis..

India's last two Olympic performances and Figure 1.4 demonstrate that the country's strength areas primarily include shooting, wrestling and boxing. This is followed by archery and tennis. Considering the recent performance of the country's shuttlers at international tournaments, badminton appears to be a promising sport for India as well. While India has proved itself in shooting, wrestling and boxing, it is important to reflect upon the medal-winning potential of these sports at the Olympic Games. More than half of U.S.'s 104 medals were won in aquatics and athletics, which have the highest medal-winning potential. Similarly, Britain won a majority of its medals in cycling, rowing and athletics. China wins most of its medals in aquatics, badminton, gymnastics, shooting and weightlifting.

For India to achieve its sports objectives, and to be considered one of the leading sporting nations, it needs to build further upon its strength areas as well as work towards creating a talent pool in medal-intensive sports such as aquatics, athletics, cycling, gymnastics and weightlifting.

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