Irony of Indian Sports

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Abstract

India is known as a fast forthcoming country which always has an enthusiasm for sports. In all dynasties; Chess, swordsmanship, wrestling, horse races, archery etc were very much popular. We have a long tradition in sports but internationally we are nowhere. So the researcher decided to study the 'Irony of Indian Sports.' In this study the history of Indian sports was explained in three parts; Ancient and Medieval period, British Colonial period and Post-Independence. The objectives of this study were to study the history of sports in India and to find out the reasons of India's failure in sports. This study was carried out using survey method. Internet articles, News paper cuttings, discussion with few sports persons, Coaches, Physical Directors and Physical Training Instructors were the sources of information. The researcher found few reasons of India's failure in sports. Why does India, despite a population of over one billion, have so few medallists? It is important to note that Indian athletes are not lazy; they are dedicated and hard workers. The Indian cricket and field hockey teams are among the world's finest teams.

However recently, the government and many other sporting organizations have taken massive steps to sort out India's sporting untidiness. The grassroots initiative has provided opportunities for young kids to platform their talent at a school and college level. It also has awarded scholarships to talented kids to ignite their passion towards the sport. Within the next decade, India plans to become the new super-power of sport arena.

Keywords: Irony, medallists, failure, grassroots, etc

Introduction:

India is world's second-largest population and it is ninth largest economy overall. It's the biggest democracy and one of the oldest nations in history. India is known as a fast forthcoming country which always has an enthusiasm for sports. Chess, swordsmanship, wrestling, horse races, archery etc were played science a long time in India. In all dynasties; such events were very much popular. Many times the raja maharajas use to conduct competitions to select a life partner for their daughters through such events called 'swyamvara.' If we want to study India's record of sports then we have to study it in three parts.

History of sports in India:

Ancient and Medieval period:

The history of sports in India started in the Vedic era. Physical culture in ancient India was full of religious rights. The mantra in the Atharvaveda says, "Duty is in my right hand and the fruits of victory in my left." In terms of an ideal, these words hold the same sentiments as the traditional Olympic Oath: "For the Honour of my Country and the Glory of Sport."[1] Games like chess and snakes and ladders originated

from the ancient Indian games *chaturanga* and *gyan chauper*, respectively; these were later transmitted to foreign countries, where they were further restructured.[2][3] During the period of the Mughal Empire, a form of wrestling known as *pehlwani* developed, by combining *malla-yuddha* with Persian *varzesh-e bastani.*[4]

British Colonial period:

The Indian Hockey team at the 1936 Berlin Olympics, later defeated Germany by 8–1 in the final. During the colonial period, British India had participated in six Olympic Games, especially winning medals in field hockey. Snooker originated in the late 19th century by British Army officers who were deployed in India.[5] Modern polo was originated in India in the 19th century in Manipur. The game was known as 'Sagol Kangjei', 'Kanjai-bazee', or 'Pulu'. The name "polo" is changed later. In 1833, first polo club was established in Silchar, Assam. Calcutta Polo Club, which was established in 1862.[6][7][8] is still in existence. Dorabji Tata, with the support of Dr. A.G. Noehren, then director of YMCA, established the Indian Olympic Association in 1927.[9]

Post-Independence:

India hosted the Asian Games in New Delhi in 1951 and 1982. Then Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports was firstly set up as the Department of Sports in 1982 for the organisation of the Games. Later the name was changed to the Department of Youth Affairs & Sports during celebration of the International Youth Year in 1985.[10] India has also hosted international sporting events, including the 1987, 1996 and 2011 Cricket World Cups, the 2003 Afro-Asian Games, the 2010 Hockey World Cup, and the 2010 Commonwealth Games and SAAF Games also. Major international sporting events like Pune marathon, Mumbai marathon, Chennai Open, IPL, IHL, IVL, PRO Kabaddi are annually organized by India. The country hosted the first Indian Grand Prix in 2011.[11]

Objective:

To study the history of sports in India.

To find out the reasons of India's failure in sports.

Method:

This study is carried out using survey method. Internet articles, News paper cuttings, discussion with few sports persons, Coaches, Physical Directors and Physical Training Instructors were the sources of information.

Reasons of India's failure in sports:

India's population is 1.3 Billion but it's a real shame that we can't produce good athletes? I don't want to dishonour my country as I am a proud Indian but it's a fact that India has won only 28 medals in the entire Olympic history of it. 9 Gold, 7 Silver and 12 Bronze. We all know that our country has plenty of talent still we can't compete with a country like USA, Russia or China. I feel it's a big shame for us. I came up with few reasons for India's failure as follows.

Role of Government:

The Department of Sports under the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports carries the responsibility for sport in India; the department runs by a Secretary to the Government of India, while the ministry is headed usually by a Minister of State.[12] . It is clear that all the policies regarding sports are decided by the politicians and this department. That's why government is the biggest reason for India's failure. The government didn't support athletes as per their needs. Our neighbour China wins near about 100 medals in every Olympics because their Government sponsored them all the kits, accessories, equipments which they need for practice as well as the tournaments and jobs too. Why can't we have this type of government in India? It's an all-time unanswered question in our India.

Film actor Mr. Salman Khan was the Olympic goodwill ambassador for Rio Olympic; it shows that Indian government doesn't value our former athletes. Many international medallists are facing hunger due to unemployment. Plenty of national medallists don't get proper training, diet and equipments to perform well at international level. Our country appoints former players of other countries as our national coach instead of our own former players. No adoption policies for extra ordinary sportspersons.

Career Option:

We all know that in our country, there is very less guarantee to get a job after graduation or post graduation. It is a strong belief in our country that if you can't get job after graduation then how you can get a job after participating in sports or becoming an athlete? There is less career option available in India for sportspersons. We get many international medallists facing hunger due to unemployment. So why would someone go in the field where career choice is very less? This shows how much our Government values our sportspersons. Situation is changing but very slowly. Only 5% seats from total seats are reserved for extra ordinary sportspersons.

Parent's Belief:

Indian parents don't encourage their children to participate in any sports. They are very possessive towards their children. They only want to see their child progressing in studies and nothing else. Many parents in India don't support their child if they want to make a career in sports or any other field than the education. They think; if their child doesn't study well then his/her life will be destroyed. They think sports are a waste of time; it's not a part of a career. If such thinking continued; how will we get great players in India?

Fewer Infrastructures:

We have very less good infrastructure for our sportspersons at the national level where as we don't have it at all in the grass root level. Schools and colleges lack basic infrastructure that can encourage sports, so even if someone has a natural talent in a particular sport, it gets trodden at the school level itself. How can we expect our sportspersons win medals for the nation at the Olympics which don't even provide good infrastructure to them? This country is lacking in infrastructure in each and every sport and game. If we see the cricket stadiums in our country they are world-class grounds but we don't have a sufficient poly grass hockey court which is our national game. If we can spend money on Cricket then why can't we have world class infrastructure for other sports? We collect education cess in India;

then why not sports infra cess? Government issues tax free Infra Bonds; then why not Sports Infra Bonds?

Politics in Sports:

In India, politics is involved in every game directly or indirectly. Well-known politicians are heading national federations. They don't have any type of sports back ground. This politics actually clinch the chance to win medals at international level. They see an opportunity to grab the money or votes in sports federations. Selectors select the players which the federation authorities like or which fulfil their interests and talented athlete don't get the chance which they deserve. At the end they give up their dream to win medals at Olympics or other international championships. It happened due to Politics in sports.

Less Exposure:

Indian athlete lacks in exposure, they don't get chances to participate at international level as well as at national level also. They mostly play only the nearby competitions in India. They are not use to the facilities which are provided at international level. They take part directly into Olympics or international level for which they are not comfortable. Acclimatisation, food habits, scientific equipments are very essential for success. With less exposure, they don't perform well during such tournaments.

Last minute Nervousness:

Last minute nervousness in mega events like Olympic is a curse for Indian players. We know how Milkha Singh and PT Usha nearly missed their medals in Olympics. Many times we have seen Indian hockey team accepted last minute goal at international level matches. Our Archery team was world champion in 2012 but no medal during Olympics. This is a dark fact of Indian sports.

Poverty and population:

Poverty and population are curse for India; that's why we cannot produce good sportspersons. It is very difficult for many Indian families to provide good food and quality training to their children. They don't have that much income for their child to chase a career in sports. Consequently, a lot of hidden talent goes undiscovered or inadequately nurtured to compete at the international level.

Corruption:

Corruption infects all major Indian sports like a virus. Most of the federations have two groups conducting separate competitions. The governing boards of the sports federations are under the control of politicians and bureaucrats who have little or no interest and knowledge of the specific requirements and anticipated problems in that sport. They are interested in the money and number of votes they get from the federation.

Other Reasons:

If you take any news paper or magazine; sports news is the last page preference everywhere. If we see the union budget of our country or any state budget in our country; you will see that financial provision for sports is the last priority. All school and colleges give very less part of their budget for

sports. Forget the story above and check your own family budget; you will understand the things very clearly. A number of instances of sportspersons testing positive for doping just before an international event show a totally unprofessional approach.

Conclusion:

We have seen the facts and the reasons for failure of Indian sportspersons. But the million dollar question is - Why does India, despite a population of over one billion, have so few medallists? It is important to note that Indian athletes are not lazy; they are dedicated and hard workers. The Indian cricket and field hockey teams are among the world's finest teams.

However recently, the government and many other sporting organizations have taken massive steps to sort out India's sporting untidiness. The grassroots initiative has provided opportunities for young kids to platform their talent at a school and college level. It also has awarded scholarships to talented kids to ignite their passion towards the sport. Within the next decade, India plans to become the new super-power of sport arena.

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