

Challenges for Indian Sports at Olympic Level

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ABSTRACT

Sports in India is very popular in from ancient times. India has produced many talented players in many sports. Some of the popular players of India are Sachin Tendulkar, Saina Nehwal, Mahesh Bhupati, Leander Pace etc. India is a very big country. The most bad part of India is that here, majority of the people are poor or come from middle families who can't afford the cost of training needed for playing sports.

There is also a fact that Indian people are not much aware about the sports or considered it as time pass rather than a professional game. Also, most of the Indian families give preference to study of their children in spite of sports. The current article highlights the challenges of India at Olymic level.

KEYWORDS:

Sports, Politics, Player

INTRODUCTION

In India, it is also noticed that the politics in sports is so much that a talented player whose financially background is not so good; is not picked up for the national or state level team. On the other hand, selectors give the preference to less skilled players having better financially background. This is the big problem in India.

In some cases, it is also found that the selectors chose those players at state or national level who they know well. So politics in sports is the big factor of not getting good players at International level.

It is also observed that in India, the most of the selectors who are given the responsibility of chosing state or national level players; are not from the sports background. This is very serious thing to have as a sporting player can only judge the capability of a player and promote him/her at state or national level.



With the increase in the awareness of government in sport, the tendency of sporting players to be selectors has evolved which is very beneficial for every game as these kinds of selectors can easily recognize the talent and upgrade them.

These days, the private firms have started showing interest in sporting leagues. Different leagues of games are organized and it creates opportunities for those local players who don't get a chance to perform at state or national level. These kinds of leagues have surely so effective for these kinds of players who could not be selected at state or national level due to politics in sports.

At every Olympic Games, rivals China and Russia walk away with multiple gold medals. For fans in India—one of the world's most populous nations and fastest growing economies—the event is an exercise in despair.

India has managed just one gold medal since 1980, when shooter Abhinav Bindra became the

first individual to win gold for his country at the 10 meter air rifle event in 2008. The country's previous gold medals, eight between 1928-1980, were all in field hockey.

CHALLENGES FOR INDIAN SPORTS

To put India's historic performance in context, Michael Phelps has won as many medals on his own as Team India has managed since 1900.

Granted, the 2016 Games are still on-going. So far, badminton star P.V. Sindhu has won the silver medal at the women's singles competition on Friday. Thursday saw Sakshi Malik take bronze at the 58kg women's wrestling category, India's first medal at Rio.

Hopes were high running into the Rio Olympics after the country snagged six medals in London in 2012 and sent its largest ever contingent to this year's event. The shallow medals haul has, therefore, sparked debate on the likely reasons.

The nation boasts immense human diversity, with limbs and muscles of all sizes, so race or genetic characteristics aren't a valid explanation, said Anirudh Krishna, professor at Duke University, and co-author of a 2008 paper called 'Why do some countries win more Olympic medals?'

High poverty levels aren't a sufficient reason either, seeing as other countries with low levels of per-capita income, such as Kenya and Jamaica, consistently fare better, he added.

"India does not have a sports culture," explained Boria Majumdar, a leading Indian sports scholar who's authored numerous books on the topic. Indian athletes who have achieved international success are exceptions rather than products of the country's sports system, he said.

"Unless there is a synergized sports culture you will never win a string of medals. A fundamental overhaul is needed and urgently so."

Indeed, education tends to be the highest priority for the average Indian household instead of

extra-curricular activities such as sports. A popular Hindi saying roughly translates to "if you study hard you will live like a king but if you play sports you will ruin your life."

Indians, over the decades, have been mostly pre-occupied climbing the socio-economic ladder. Consequently, the pool of talent created at the local community, school and university levels, leaves much to be desired both in terms of size and quality.

Scarce public investible resources have eluded sports. This is further compounded by misallocation, lack of transparency, poor asset management and an absence of a framework for measuring impact of public spending. This is unlikely to change, despite the government's best intentions.

There are scholarships and endowments for athletes that guarantee a basic minimum standard of living, but this system is fraught with bureaucratic red tape, political interference, conflicts of interest and corruption.



In 2012, the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) was suspended from the International Olympic Committee (IOC) for electing leaders with pending criminal charges, forcing Indian athletes to compete at the Sochi Winter Games under the IOC flag instead of the Indian banner.

There are many things that go into achieving success in Olympics. One of the most important is the quality of training. We can't cut corners there. You have to work really, really hard. The Olympics come once in four years, but for the athlete it is about every single day in terms of pushing himself to the limit. Without that you can't achieve anything.

To succeed in any sport, to have a long career, you have to be persistent. There will be more failures than victories, unless you are Usain Bolt. But you should never give up, keep putting the best foot forward all the time and keep trying.

DISCUSSION

We need a long term vision to achieve what we aspire for. We must try and create a synergy between what the country aspires for and what it creates. There have been a lot of positive changes. It's wrong to say everything has gone wrong.

Firstly, we had 118 athletes, our largest ever Olympic contingent. It's not that you get an air ticket to Rio and compete there. You have to be at a world level to get there. We must acknowledge that we have made an improvement. Having reached that level itself is an achievement. Of course, we want to win more medals.

We should be working for 2024 already. Producing an Olympic champion requires seven-eight years. And we have to nurture and support talent for a sustained period — from the grassroots, one step at a time, to the top. That requires time, experts from various fields, which is not just about performance in skill, it is about physical preparation, mental preparation,

recovery, planning the athlete's programme... Everything requires experts, it has to be holistic. Perhaps in the last couple of years we have given better facilities to our athletes. But the vision has been short-term. Say for Rio, in the last two-three years, our athletes have got support. But perhaps that is not enough. What is happening now is we do not have systems in place at home and athletes have to travel overseas. I think badminton is the only exception. We need to create all those facilities within our country. At the moment we don't have the best coaches, best sports scientists, best physiotherapists in India. Once that happens, the grassroots will be able to access these things. Only then can we expect medals in multiple digits, or whatever we aspire for.

CONCLUSION

India has numerous challenges. We are a developing country, we have poverty. So we have to define whether Olympics are a higher

priority. But if we want our athletes to win, we need long-term investment. It's complicated.

Government support has improved. I won't say it's ideal, but it is definitely a step forward. In the last five-six months, there is huge amount of activity. But five-six months are not going to get you there. You need that same will, that same desire, same energy for years.

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