

Consequences of Involvement of Politics in Sports

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ABSTRACT

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 choosing 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. The current article highlights the role of politics in Indian sports.

KEYWORDS:

Sports, Politics, Player

INTRODUCTION

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.

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.

Sports used to be simple. Go to games. Play games. Have fun. Be entertained. Now it's so much more. Every level of sports — from your local youth leagues straight up to the pros — has become big business that generates big money and big influence. In the justice system, sports figures are, perhaps more than ever, at the center of major criminal investigations because they

once felt invincible, but are no more. On the field, the sports world produces heroes that are discussed around the dinner table, in nearly every part of our country, with a searing fervor otherwise saved for debating politics or religion. In the Olympic world, sports help give nations credibility and also can spark international conflict. For good and bad, the sports world is bigger and more powerful than ever, with athletes wielding more and more influence over our culture and our politics.

SPORTS AND POLITICS

Apart from the rich culture and diverse arts presence, India has tremendous experience in different sporting activities such as athletics, cricket, shooting, hockey, chess, badminton, boxing, golf, *kabaddi*, wrestling, swimming etc. Besides this the country has respectable traditional sports such as boat racing, *kushti*, *gilli-danda* and others. But the most popular sport in the country is cricket. This sport is played at all age groups starting from the

grassroots right up to the international level. The game has given rise to popular personalities such as Sachin Tendulkar, Kapil Dev, Mahendra Singh Dhoni, Irfan Pathan, Rahul Dravid, Virender Sehwag, Sunil Gavaskar, Dilip Vengsarkar, Yuvraj Singh, Virat Kohli etc. Apart from the players the sport has given rise to the popularity of coaches and even commentators. Cricket players are given a lot of attention by the media and advertising companies. India wins one match against Pakistan or Australia and there goes the line of cash prizes and cheque's being showered on them by ministers and state governments. Even in terms of incentives, the other sportsmen and women lag far behind the cricketers.

Hockey is our National sport, but has lost importance in the past few years; it even failed to qualify for the Beijing Olympics. In the London Olympics 2012 the Indian hockey team came out last losing all its matches. Not only hockey, but tennis, football, golf, badminton all

shares the same pathetic condition. Neither are the sponsors interested in financing them, nor does the government raise enough funds.

The Hockey team receives a meagre sum for every goal that they score, whereas those given to the cricketers do not require a mention. Even football has lost its importance to a great extent except for Goa and West Bengal; no other states are interested in football. In short, no sport in India except cricket is well managed. Indian sports are trapped in politics. New controversies arise almost every week.

The most recent embarrassment to Indian sport is the suspension due to the fact that officials tainted by corruption charges win influential positions. For example Lalit Bhanot, who spent 11 months in prison after allegations of corruption following the 2010 games, was elected as Secretary General of the Indian Olympic Association. If the ban is not overturned, India will be banned from competing in any Olympic events, including the

2014 Winter Olympics and, more worrisome from India's perspective, the 2016 summer Olympics in Rio.

It is really shocking to see politicians and ex-bureaucrats holding positions as Chairman and Committee members for several decades most of them having no clue about the sport in general. With the government of India pumping several crore rupees into the various sports bodies for promoting sports and encouraging the sportsmen, these sports bodies have become fertile ground for the politicians and ex-bureaucrats to make money. What is even more disturbing is that even after the stinging observations made by the international Olympic association, the office bearers are still holding on to the positions and have not thought it necessary to quit the job.

Dynasties seem to rule Indian sport. There are many examples that show how politicians and their families run committees as if it's a family get together. Parminder Singh Dhindsa of the

Akali Dal is president of the Cycling Federation of India and the son of Sukhdev Singh Dhindsa is currently president of the Punjab Olympic Association. The Chautala brothers Abhay Singh and Ajay Singh have heralded an era of total politicization of the sports federations. Between them, the two brothers control the Indian Amateur Boxing Federation and the table tennis federation of India.

In 2008, Kamakhya Prasad Singh Deo stepped down as president of the Rowing Federation of India. He was replaced as president by his cousin, CP Singh Deo. When CP Singh Deo ended his term, he was succeeded by his wife Rajlaxmi Singh Deo.

Similarly is the case of N Ramachandran, vice-president of the Indian Triathlon Federation (his wife is the president). He is also president of the Tamil Nadu Cycling Association, World Squash Federation, the Tamil Nadu Squash Rackets Association and the vice-president of the Tamil Nadu Olympic Association.

DISCUSSION

Sport's is one area where India lags behind even some of the poorest nations in the world despite a huge pool of talented sportsperson. At the junior levels, our boys and girls can compete with the best in the world in almost every sport. However when it comes to the senior levels, where the actual capabilities of our sportsperson are tested, we fail miserably. Even though, huge amount is spent on training and grooming of the players we still have not been able to achieve the desired results.

The prime reason for poor performances is corruption & political interference. Due to this many time a good player is left out. The government and the Respective athletic boards are the main culprit for letting down India. Most of them are corrupt, lack professionalism and very biased. However the fundamental problem lies in the absence of a sporting culture in India. Sports in India are considered a secondary and supplementary activity. This explains to a large

extent, the apathy on the part of the government machinery towards sports. The corporate indifference too stems from the fact that they are not sure that the sponsorship money will be efficiently used in promoting the game and the welfare of the players. Those who suffer due to such sordid conditions are the athletes, who have the talent and desire to compete and excel themselves in the international arena but they need to be given proper grooming and training which they have been denied.

The ugly conditions in the sports bodies have been repeatedly revealed by several stories such as the coaches misbehaving with women athletes, selecting people in the team based on favoritism and bribes etc. People in India have been watching helplessly and with sadness, while the sports authorities have been behaving as if they are not accountable to anybody and neither the government nor anyone else can touch them.

Rather than just being a form of recreation, sport has become a matter of national pride and is both socially and economically important to the development of the country. However, in spite of the growth of sports in the country, there has not been any significant improvement in the management of sporting activities, with poor sports governance persisting at every level of administration. One of the main reasons for this has been increased political interference in sports governance in the country.

India, with a pool of talented sportspersons, hasn't really been able to make a mark on the international stage. Despite the government spending a substantial amount of money in developing sports infrastructure and training methods, the country still needs proper administration and governance to uplift the standards. Although India possesses a diverse sporting culture ranging from traditional sports such as Kabaddi to colonized sports such as Cricket, it continues to be considered a lagging

force mainly due to the high levels of corruption and discrimination in sports.

CONCLUSION

Sports federations and associations in India function in a very political manner having office bearers as politicians or businessmen. Most of the sporting federations in the country, including the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) are politically dominated organisations that build a compelling ground for a law which drives for the transparent administration of sports in the country.

The federations need to be headed by experienced sports personalities who can understand the technicalities of the sport rather than by people who are money minded and corrupt. One of the glaring examples of the deplorable state of sports management and governance is seen when sportspersons return from major international tournaments without having won medals.

An immediate retaliation is seen in the manner in which the credibility and integrity of the sportsperson is questioned. This could be attributed to the fact that a sportsperson's loss is blamed on him rather than on the administrators. Given the manner in which politics has pervaded every sphere of life in India, it was inevitable for sports to not remain oblivious from political influence.

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