

# SURVEY

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# Changing Trajectory of Sports

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## Abstract

*The paradigm shift in Sports in India happened on 24th August 1971, when India won the Oval Test match against England. Since then, India has changed from a single sport to multi-sport nation. As a result, many professions have sprouted combining business and sports. In spite of this, India's sports culture is still in its nascent state. Sports remain alienated from the chain of attention, cohesion and integration. As a result, sports related education has not found a place in the curriculum of mainstream education in India. This paper discusses the model to bridge the gap amongst sports education and profession. The basic framework of the model is to adopt a tailor-made system matching India's unique culture and society through an effective sports policy and technological innovations to enthuse people towards sports profession while in turn will boost sports education and develop sports economy.*

*Keywords: Sports, Education, Economy, OTT (Over the Top), Sports Policy*

## 1.0 Introduction

What is significance of the number 50? Half of century. If century is defined as span between periods in History, then the country has experienced its impact on 6th September 2021, the day when Team India made it happen after 24th August 1971 at The Oval. This historic moment activated the rewind icon on the touch screen of memory, lucidly illustrating the paradigm shift in sports from Yesterday-Today-Tomorrow which in my viewpoint as a Thinker, has always been looked upon as Social and Progressive way of Organising Recreation for Thousands of Spectators (SPORTS).

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## 2.0 Yesterday

1971 was a turbulent time with Liberation War of Bangladesh (then East Pakistan), yielding to influx of nearly 6 million (60 lakhs) refugees into the heartland of Bengal accompanied by Naxalite movement. However, the craze of victory of India had thronged the city roads with people carrying National Flag in one hand and photograph of triumphant heroes in the other. Their sense of pride was conquering the British with Cricket for the first time in their home. Celebrations knew no bound seven during odd hours of night amidst socio-political unrest. Remember, there was no Television in India at that point of time. The one and only way for keeping track of the overseas matches was to listen to the running commentary, broadcast through "BBC Test Match Special", using the device called "Radio". It was such a time when only print media was available in the form of Leading Dailies and Periodicals. Having seen the tumultuous welcome given to the winning team on return, Times of India wrote, "Glorious to be living at this hour and to be an Indian".

Alfred Lord Tennyson said that "The old order changeth, yielding place to new". Sports has undergone sea change in India being fueled by transition from a single-sport nation to multi-sport country. The most reckonable change is that sports is no longer limited to only playing. Many professions have come up combining business and sports thereby creating stakeholders.

## 3.0 Today

According to Ghosh (2015), technological development alongside fan engagement drives have accelerated "Consumerism" in sports for racing down the highway of growth. Introduction of sporting leagues like IPL (Cricket), ISL (Football), PKL (Kabaddi) etc. have created value for all stakeholders.

*"One Day International and T-20 formats in addition to Test Match-the only format before 50 years- alongside the ongoing pandemic situation, transforming a Cricket warrior to Covid-19 warrior overnight, has made difference and matches are getting played in empty stadium notwithstanding the success of "Bio-Bubble-the New Normal Situation".*



Ghosh (2015) states that the Sponsorship, Media Right, Stadium Right, Fan Wall and Webcasting Right are five fingers of revenue arm of sports at present vis-à-vis sale of tickets and billboards in earlier days. Players are also reaping benefits of wide outreach through "viralling in social media" which assign them value for brand endorsement.

#### **4.0 Gap Areas At A Glance**

##### **4.1 Sports Culture in its Nascent State**

From the viewpoint of a Thinker, SPORTS has always been looked upon as Social and Progressive way of Organising Recreation for Thousands of Spectators. Vision of Sports has always been focused at organising recreation for spectators<sup>1</sup>. Sports, in India, albeit having emotional attachment in the collective mold of pride for nation is hardly credited with love and passion at the grass root level to be pursued as a profession. Performers in sports are worshiped as national heroes, but the lessons they had to take for such achievement are still treated as a taboo-excessively repulsive, sacred, or allowed only by certain persons. India is a country having diverse social groups with various skill sets and abundance of talents in different walks of life. Unfortunately, the social entablature is unable to hunt and nurture them for beginning the journey for achieving excellence<sup>2</sup>. Many dreams set before rise as a result of inaccessibility to and unaffordability of limited opportunities available. These are by and large attributable to socio-economic constraints and continuing with struggle for existence in the face of all pervading deprivation. Non preferential dealing with sports has denied inclusive development of sports culture uniformly throughout the country<sup>3</sup>.

##### **4.2 Sports Remain Alienated From Chain of Attention, Cohesion and Integration**

Sen (2015) notes that India's culture and caste traditions have played a role historically since social stratification meant different castes tended not to play together. Caste ridden society of India has accentuated socio-economic inequalities, gender discrimination and many other evils that played a huge role in denying access to sports. For Kshatriyas or the warrior royal class, sports served as a necessity and a pastime. Some sports such as archery and those involving horse riding, chariot racing and polo were restricted to their class. Sen (2015) observes that people of the country focus their



attention only on entertainment segment as a mark of enjoyment for taking a 'Sigh of Relief' from the mundane happenings around them every now and then. They also get enchanted by basking in the glory of "Nationhood" as "Amrit Aheshas". Providing such selective attention to sports acts as an inhibitor to developing sustainable bondage with cohesive initiatives of people and, therefore, cannot empower its ride on the highway of growth by including people, thereby giving rise to the myth that sports in India is something like 'Engine without Accelerator'. It is disheartening to note that sports environment in India is far from cohesive bond glued with interest of common people. Thus, the chain of Attention, Cohesion and Integration is markedly invisible in sports.

Sports Education is yet to be allotted a confirmed berth yet in the Curriculum of Mainstream Education<sup>4</sup>. It remains in the waiting list, even in the year of celebrating 75th Anniversary of Independence as "Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsab". Indian parents do not encourage children to choose sports as a viable career path even though there are plenty of learnings from sports viz., Fitness, Perseverance, Tenacity, Teamwork, Leadership and zeal to excel. For the majority of Indian parents, education is synonymous with proficiency in English, Science and Mathematics, but not Health, Fitness and Sports - which are labelled 'extra-curricular' or 'co-curricular'.

Sports make up a global language understood across castes, creeds and races. Therefore, when the Brazilian football team scores, even a fan in Kolkata celebrates. United Nations has, therefore, identified sports as an important enabler for sustainable development. The International Day of Sport for Development and Peace on 6th April presents an opportunity to recognise the role that sport and physical activity plays in communities and in people's lives across the world.

## **5.0 Bridging The Gap**

### **5.1 To Pay Focused Attention on Developing Sports Culture**

Haskell (2016) said that India should adopt a tailor-made system matching its unique culture and society to enthuse people towards a sports profession. Greater participation and encouragement from communities, corporates and the government will facilitate access to sports in India. He had also stated that the role of government in the development of sports is threefold.



**First**, governments must allocate land and resources to develop sports facilities.

**Second**, government must create an environment that will allow the grassroot programmes that are sprouting across India to flourish. Some of these programmes will ultimately evolve into organised leagues.

**Third**, all schools must support the initiatives taken by the government and allocate sufficient time and resources to physical fitness and sports activities.

Kapil Dev, the captain of Indian cricket team that won the World Cup in 1983, feels that "Sports develop a person's strength and endurance. They also provide real-life values that are not taught in the classroom. The education one acquires in a sports area provides social skills to deal with diverse people, failure, and values such as coping with failure, favouritism and bias while retaining one's integrity, which can carry one very far in life. Sports also keep the body and, as a result, the mind in a healthy state, which aids learning".

In a situation where infrastructure is expanding, the next course is to integrate sports with mainstream of education for improving the quality of coaching, fitness and wellbeing, scouting, organising, and officiating<sup>4</sup>. Coaching in different grades needs Courses like UEFA Coaching Licenses and Diploma, Fitness and Wellbeing need courses like Sports Medicine, Sports Psychology and Physiology, Sports Biomechanics etc. Scouting, Organising and Officiating are connected with Sports Management which equips professionals with the skills and knowledge necessary to support sport marketing agencies, intercollegiate athletic departments, professional sports organisations, sports equipment manufacturers and many more operations throughout the vast sports industry.

## 5.2 Developing Sports Economy

Ghosh (2015) observes that sports economy is the application of microeconomic tools (behaviour of individuals, households, and companies) in the business of sports and understanding of macroeconomic factors (structure, performance and implications of fiscal policy, reasons for inflation or unemployment, the implications of government borrowing and economic growth) affecting entertainment industry in general and Sports Business in



particular. The entire gamut of Sports Economy contains Governance, Infrastructure Development, Talent Scouting and Training, Electricity, Manufacturer and Retailer of Equipment, Clothing, Medical Support, To and Fro Transportation Facilities, Accommodation, Employment Opportunity, Revenue for Government, Income of Players, Tourism, Sponsorship, Live Streaming/Telecast/Webcast, Viewership and Consumerism.

ASSOCHAM-PwC Knowledge Paper (2019) shows that the Indian sports story is going through significant changes. The leagues are going international and the biggest media and corporate groups are backing sports. It is right time to introduce competitive sporting events at National and State Level for schools, colleges and universities which will undoubtedly help to promote sports in an inclusive manner.

Children, who participate in sports as part of their school curriculum, grow up to be more physically fit. It transforms them into more communicative and outgoing persons who are stronger and more competitive. As a result, their confidence is boosted and they are exposed to new people and situations in life. It also instills a sense of hard effort in children from an early age.

While on the subject, it is worth mentioning that performance of Northeastern States of India is significant in the arena of Asiad, Commonwealth and Olympic in both Individual and Team Events. To name a few, boxers like Mary Kom, Dingko Singh and Anju Devi all hail from Manipur, archer Bombayla Devi Laishram is also from Manipur. Women footballer from Manipur Ngangom Bala Devi, ace-sprinter from Assam Hima Das, Olympian gymnast from Tripura Dipa Karmakar and many more<sup>5</sup>. Talent is abundant, but what is required is the right approach keeping the competitive advantage in fitness, strength, stamina and approach prevailing in this part of the country.

## 6.0 An Interesting Finding

It is observed interestingly that Big Countries appearing in the merit list of shares in global gross domestic product (GDP) (Fig-1)<sup>6</sup> are observed at the top tier of Medal Tally (Table-1)<sup>6</sup>. This clearly points out that higher share in global GDP also records High National GDP which enables



them to invest more in creating sports infrastructure and facilities, sports science and management education which in turn creates a sports culture that drives organic growth, systematic progress and ultimately succeeds in promoting sports sector as a GDP Multiplier. This cycle starts from making expenditure towards development of sports and ends with glaring result of value addition by winning medals from the most coveted global competitive platform that boosts image and capabilities of a country. India has also won 7 Medals by bagging the first-ever gold medal in athletics for India in the Olympics. Not only that, out of 7 medals won by India, 5 are from Athletics while Hockey and Badminton are the other two.

Another very useful information gathered is that with present rate of growth, India needs another 50 years or more to reach present level of per capita income of developed countries (Fig-2)<sup>6</sup>. Let us take this initiative on the eve of 75th Anniversary of our Independence so that something Big can be achieved during celebration of 125th Anniversary.

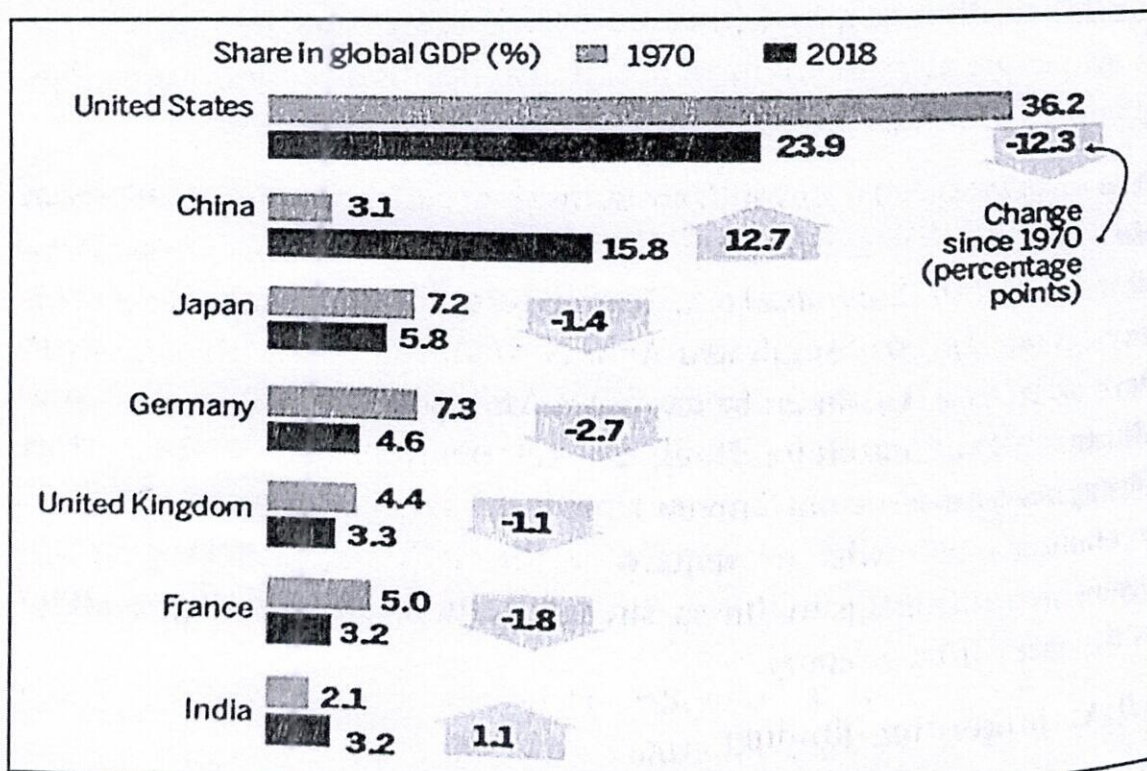


Figure-1: Countries share in global GDP



Table -1: Medals Tally of Tokyo Olympic 2020

Country	Total	Gold	Silver	Bronze
United States	113	39	41	33
China	88	38	32	18
Japan	58	27	14	17
Germany	37	10	11	16
Great Britain	65	22	21	22
France	33	10	12	11
India	7	1	2	4

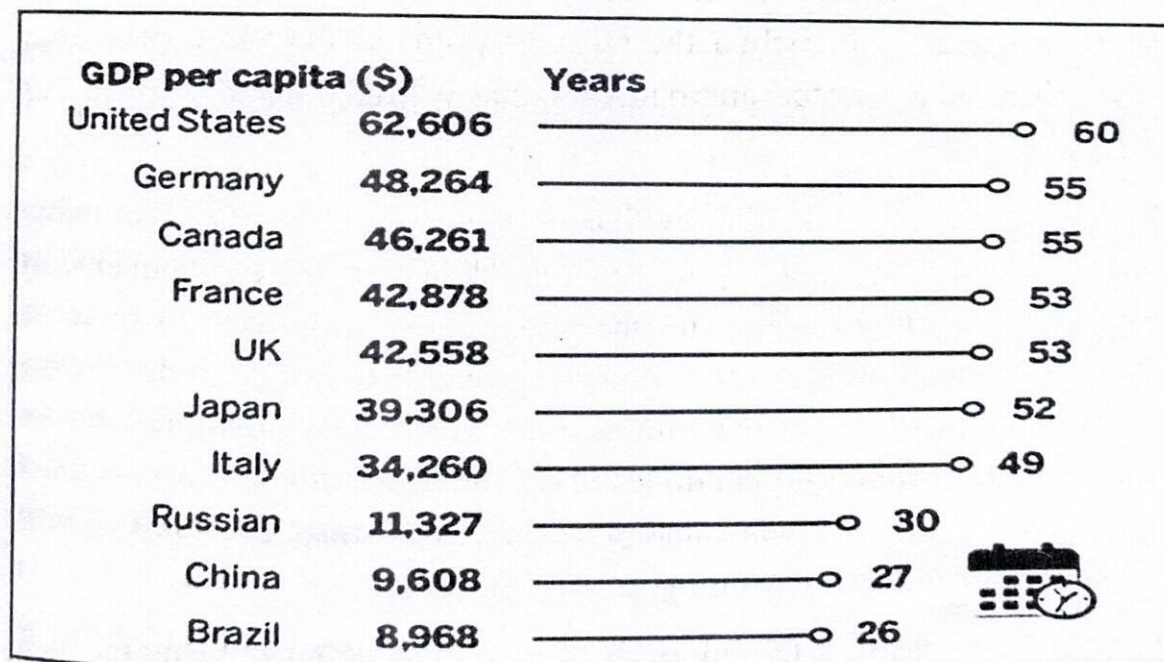


Figure - 2: Number of years India will take to reach current per capita income level of these countries if it grows by 7%

### 7.0 The Silver Lining

In Olympic 2020, India has not only won 7 Medals (Gold-1, Silver-2, Bronze-4) with an increase of 5 in the tally, but at the same time has



uplifted the Rank from 67 to 49 over previous appearance in 2016. The most heartening points to be noted are that India has won first ever

- (a) Olympic Gold in Men's Javelin Throw in Athletics-Track and Field (Neeraj Chopra),
- (b) Olympic Silver in Women's Weightlifting (Saikhom Mirabai Chanu),
- (c) Two Consecutive Olympic Medals for individual events - Women's Singles in Badminton by an Indian Women (P V Sindhu)-Silver in 2016 followed by Bronze in 2020
- (d) Aditi Ashok in Women's Golf and Deepak Punia in Men's Freestyle Wrestling, both placed fourth in final rankings
- (e) The Indian Women's Hockey Team narrowly missed a medal, but this team reflects the spirit and has proven its mettle having sent out a stern and strong message that they are ready to rewrite history.

It sends a strong signal that the overall sports scenario in both individual and team events has reached the take-off point in the same manner as cricket received a quantum jump after India's winning the ICC World Cup Cricket in 1983.

The above provides clinching evidence in support of the fact that things have started moving in the right direction. However, there is undoubtedly more room for improvement in the government's approach to sports in India. It needs to involve a rigorous programme dedicated to developing a relatively small group of children into world class Olympic athletes. These children should be handpicked by the government at a very early age and given training, mental and physical conditioning and nutrition with a single-minded goal of winning at the Olympics.

In India, Northeast is a storehouse of talent and potential and with the right push, the region can do wonders. The wide range of opportunities the region offers include talent that can propel not only the region but the country to the next level of sports. The first-ever sports school in the northeast-Assam Rifles Public School (Sports)- including the synthetic football ground at Sports Authority of India (SAI) training centre in Shillong, Meghalaya has been established in 2021. Figure-1 clearly states that there has been a trend reversal in India's share in Global GDP. Out of 7 Global



Majors, India and China are the only two countries which have posted an Upward Trend between 1970 and 2018. This is the result of sowing seeds, though with many limitations, towards integrating sports with education to strengthen the sports culture which is nourishing sports economy and reaping benefits for India.

### 8.0 Future Road Map

CII and KPMG's Sports Business Report (2016) opined that a comprehensive and effective sports policy needs to be put in place to facilitate the nurturing of young talent in sports irrespective of the type of sports, in their early teens, if not younger - an age group of which India has aplenty.

Over The Top (OTT) revolution has enforced a paradigm shift from age old broadcasting to webcasting. GenY's interests are gaining momentum today in sports where social media has revamped the mode of watching through Apps. like Hotstar, Sonyliv, Youtube, Facebook, Twitter through smart phone and laptop connected to internet via Wi-Fi/4G/5G network.

Robotic guides, crowd control directed by artificial intelligence and immersive virtual reality are among the technologies, enabled by the internet of things, set to excite fans at Tokyo's 2020 Olympics besides "emotion" being challenged by "e-motion" with e-mobility, Ultrasonic Internet Speed to facilitate smart ticketing and crowd analytics, multiple viewpoints within stadium, ensuring safety and security, watching 360 degree replays etc. which clubbed together has been given the name " Smart Stadium". Smart Stadiums have the potential to bring fans back to the sporting venue to revive the unique social fan experience. The Smart Stadium opportunity will be worth more than 18 billion USD in 2025 from 10.1 billion USD in 2021.

With rise of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and other disruptive technologies related to Industry 4.0, it's high time to empower our education system with Education 4.0 for producing innovation. We need to brainstorm on how to prioritise both Academic and Professional Research on Science and Management of Sports in India, which in the long run will not only inculcate a sports culture but will also change the environment towards a sports economy with a strong back-up of structured curriculum in sports from primary to research level.



## 9.0 Conclusion

With economic prosperity, rising income levels and increasing awareness amongst the populace, sports and sporting events would find increasing favour with the Indian populace not just as a test of skill and strength, but also as an entertainment and recreational event. A natural consequence of such increase in sporting activity would be the influx of business interests and capital to such events and athletes by way of sponsorship, leading to an increase in incomes of sporting bodies and a rise in prize purses, appearance fees for the sportspersons involved. Sponsorships shall provide avenue for brands to reach out to potential customers and clients. The monetisation of such viewer interest is often essential for the continued existence of such sporting events.

The success of the IPL has led to a proliferation of interest in the creation of professional sporting leagues and annual events in other sports as well.

With cricket alone being such a prolific contributor to GDP, there are ample opportunities for improvement by addressing other sporting events with focused attention for inclusion with the mainstream of economic activity for generating numerous employment opportunities in the form of managing staff, ground keepers, players, coaches, technical staff, broadcasting team members etc. and has emerged as the largest sports event worldwide. Increased expenditure, from revenue earned by Government as tax from sporting events, towards sports infrastructure development with state-of-the-art facilities can assure a ripple effect on economic development.

Let us take a pledge to ensure actions for revival of both efficiency of innovation and implementation, necessary for racing on fast track of growth in the era of New Paradigm showing Taller and Longer Trajectory together, else our future is all set to come across "Slow and U Turning Track".

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