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## Perception of experts about sports performance and sports organizations in India: An analytical review

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### Abstract

The present paper is devoted to have a critical review of the literature available about perception of sports experts about administration and functioning of sports Federations in India. In this paper the work which has already been done by various researches on organization, Administration, Functioning and other related issues of sports associations, federations, sports Councils and other sports clubs will also be analyzed. Moreover, the expert comments and views of renowned personalities of sports which published in various journals, newspapers and magazines etc. have also been reviewed and cited in the present paper.

Besides Infrastructure, facilities and hard work of the players the government, Sports associations and media has a great role to play as far as promotion of sports and excellence in the field of Sports is concerned. If our players are not performing well in international level sports competitions definitely there is something wrong either in our sports policy or the functioning of our sports associations.

**Keywords:** Association, federation, nepotism, training, organizations, administration, SAI, athlete, sport, game

### Introduction

The promotion and development of sports in the country is the responsibility of the Government and various Sports federations. They need to work together in coordination with each other in fact these are the two main pillars which holds the complete system of sports in the country. Every nation has its own sports system depending on the need and nature of its society it is the society that makes a system successful or unsuccessful over a period of time our society has also developed a sports system in which besides government various sports associations have also been assigned the responsibilities regarding development and promotion of their respective Sports. The government alone cannot achieve the goal of excellence in the field of Sports because there are many more pressing problems standing in front of our government which the government has to tackle on priority basis the problems like unemployment illiteracy, population growth, poverty, electricity crisis etc. need much more attention on the part of government which in response increases the responsibility of sports organizations towards promotion of sports culture in the society. In spite of having sports associations for almost all games and sports our sports achievements are not very considerable. Whether these highly important sports agencies are following their basic objectives for which these are being constituted? Whether these associations are following the guidelines being laid down by the government and are really working to promote Sports needs to be analyzed.

The present paper is devoted to have a critical review of the literature available about perception of sports experts about administration and functioning of sports Federations in India. In this paper the work which has already been done by various researchers on organization, Administration, Functioning and other related issues of sports associations, federations, sports Councils and other sports clubs will also be analyzed. Moreover, the expert comments and views of renowned personalities of sports which published in various journals, newspapers and magazines etc. have also been reviewed and cited in the present paper.

Sharma (1986) <sup>[1]</sup> in his study on Sports promoting Agencies made some suggestions for the promotion of sports and Physical Education in India.

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He reported that sports promoting Agencies like: public sector undertakings, private industries, voluntary and private sports agencies and mass media could help in improving sports standards in the country. He also emphasized the role of physical fitness in nation building.

Malik (1993) <sup>[2]</sup> highlighted the poor working of Indian Olympic Association and other state level Associations. He pointed out that directionless National Sports policy, lacking in training and coaching are the main factors behind the dismal sports performance of India at International level. He expressed surprise over the working of Sports Authority of India by commenting that “Nobody even knows what exactly the role of Sports Authority of India is”. He suggested that Self-sustaining and broad-based policy for sports and its subsequent implementation by the Ministry of Sports would be the solution to overcome the problem of poor performance by Indian Athletes in the International Sports Meets. He further stressed that the sports policy must ensure the compulsory holding of the annual sports meets in every school and college; general increase in the level of participation of sports in the student community; proper scouting of talents; Selection of athletes at state level with modern techniques; coaching camps by the best coaches available in the country and above all accountability of concerned Sports bodies for poor performance.

Wadhwaney (1993) <sup>[3]</sup> Commented on the working of Delhi District Cricket Association (DDCA) by saying that it was “Worst body in the country”. There were as many groups as the number of Directors. The main problem with DDCA was its faulty and obsolete constitution. He suggested splitting the Association into two sections cricket and club for improving the working of this Association. He also suggested that office bearers and their activities for these two sections should be demarcated. There should be proper division of funds and revenues between these two sections.

Chawla (1994) <sup>[4]</sup> highlighted the importance kila Raipur sports meet, one of the oldest Rural Melas. The meet is known as the “Mini Rural Olympics” the meet was first organized in 1993 under the control of Grewal Sports Association in order to recognize good sportsmen. Many players of eminence who took part in Olympics and other international competitions are the product of this sports Association. The Grewal Sports Association of Kila Raipur was the pioneer body in promotion of rural games but now in most of the rural areas local sports organisations are regulating rural sports activities.

Shukla (1994) <sup>[5]</sup> highlighted the problems regarding the sports stadiums being used by non-sports activities which hinders the sports training practice of the players. Most of the Indoor stadiums and especially the two prominent indoor stadia of Delhi i.e. Talkatora and Indira Gandhi stadiums have become source of earning from non-sports activities but this huge earning from hiring the stadia definitely is at the cost of the practice of Badminton, Table-Tennis and wrestling players for which these stadia are actually meant.

Kaur (1994) <sup>[8]</sup> emphasized some factors which are detrimental to games and sports and suggested that non-politicizing, fair selections, psychological training, nutritious diet, good quality equipment synthetic surfaces, dedication, commitment and discipline on part of all the officials as well as the players are pre-requisites for raising the sports standard of the country at international level. He further stressed that Media must increase its coverage for other sport events also so as to bring it at par with cricket.

Singh (1994) <sup>[9]</sup> suggested that planned programmes,

scientific training, dedicated & knowledgeable coaches and disciplined sports persons on the top posts of sports organizations and federations could take the country at the top of the World in the field of sports. He further stressed that we should not expect much from the Government except infrastructure, good quality equipment, number of coaches employed, incentives to sports persons and budgetary allocations for sports.

Wadhwaney (1994) <sup>[6]</sup> in his articles commented on the working of sports authority of India. He mentioned it as the supplementary body to sports federations and Associations. The sports authority of India complicating the matters instead of providing much needed Oxygen and thrust to sports in the country. He called it as complex as the education system in the country. It is a body consisting of assortment of officers who lack in knowledge and caliber and it is more complex because of injudicious allotment of duties and functions. In his view many of the schemes floated by sports Authority of India are meaningless. He stressed on the need of sports science for the cause of sports and sports persons and refuted needless interference from bureaucrats and politicians.

Sadri (1998) <sup>[13]</sup> pinpointed in his illuminating essay that in spite of the huge expenditure by the government on sports, required results could not be achieved in any event of games and sports, mainly because of the involvement of politics in sports. Therefore, to improve the standard of sports in the country he suggested the total exclusion of politics and politicians from the sports World.

Uday Chand Pahalwan (2000) <sup>[14]</sup> the first Arjun Awardee, twelve time national champion and former Olympian wrestler while talking to the correspondent of ‘The Hindustan Times’ made startling revelations about the functioning of sports federations in the country. He said “I am breaking my long silence when I came to know that wrestling officials charges Rs.13000/- from Manju who represented India in World women wrestling championship held at Poland. The graft was continuing since our time. I was paid Canadian dollars but my signatures were obtained for American dollars. If I had resisted the issue or spoken against the issue at that time or spoken against the gross irregularity I would have been ousted from the team”. The veteran grappler said “my son Karambeer became the victim of high handedness of the federation when he had to go to Canada. He was shown defeated merely by two points and the Wrestler who was selected and sent to Canada never came back to India nor won any medal”. Uday Chand went to the extent of alleging that “women wrestler were exploited in the name of selection. The wrestling federation was fully responsible for extorting money from Manju. The federation charges for the kit from the Wrestlers while it was borne by the federation in papers. The money was taken from almost every Wrestler but only Manju had dared to speak it out”. He further said that “one setback to India in Olympics was due to the wrong sports policy in which the bureaucrats are made “bosses” of the federations. The ban should be imposed on the IAS and IPS officers to become members of the federations. He further blamed that the Major part of the budget was spent by them on unnecessary touring.

Kapoor, Sushil (2001) <sup>[15]</sup> in an article published in ‘The Tribune’ the leading newspaper of North India pointed out that why every time coach or the players be held responsible for dismal performance at International level?. “No official is held responsible for the dismal performance of Indian Sports persons. Contrary to this, captain or a coach is sacked after the defeat of the team”. He further stated that in case of

failure the National heroes are quickly turned into zeroes, while the federation officials who enjoy in the sunshine of the players go scot free. In the absence of accountability of the officials they have made very strong nexus in the respective Sports federations. To get elected as an office bearer in the State Sports Association or National Sports federation all possible methods are applied. He further revealed that the present situation is very alarming for the sports fraternity and nation. Until the top level of the Government, Sports federations, State Associations, players, parents and public will not made collective efforts to set the house in order and fix responsibility at every level, days are not far when no Indian Sports person will figure at the International scene specifically in Olympic Games, Asian Games and common wealth games.

Sharma, Ramu (2001) <sup>[16]</sup> in an article published in 'The Tribune' expressed his concern about the role being played by the Sports federations to promote sports. He stressed that most of the office bearers of these sports federations are very powerful and influential people and they have nothing to do with betterment of Sports in India. Infact, these people keep sticking to the high posts in the sports federations for decades due to money and muscle power at their disposal. These people are not interested in promotion of sports but are promoting themselves through Sports. He further suggested that the Sports federations should be made accountable and only the professional and competent sports persons should be given the responsibility to run the sports federations then only we can expect some results in International level competitions.

Ghose (2003) <sup>[17]</sup> while interviewing Karnam Malleswari, the international weight lifter who represented India in many International competitions and won a Gold medal in Istanbul World Women championship and a bronze medal in Sydney Olympics in 2000, emphasized that we need much more active participation of our sports Associations and federations to promote sports. Sometimes finance becomes a big problem for the players because except Cricket and Tennis most of the Associations and federations are financially poor and lack in their planning at every level. She was of the view that Associations and federations must strengthen their roots with long term planning and vision to improve the standard of sport. She further stressed that sports Associations could play a big role in finding sponsors for the players she urged that the office bearers of the state sports Associations should encourage big business houses to come forward and help the sport.

Nandal Sumer (2004) <sup>[18]</sup> commented on the role of clubs in promotion of games and sports in Haryana. He appreciated the financial assistance of Rs. 10000/- by the chief minister of Haryana to all those sports clubs of Haryana which are registered and affiliated by Haryana Sports Department to promote clubs activities. He emphasized that this type of financial assistance to local sports bodies could be instrumental in promotion of sports at grass root level.

K. Rajan (2004) <sup>[19]</sup> while narrating the weaknesses of Indian sport in his onsite 'Chakravayun of backwardness of Indian Sports' described that financial non-viability, improper and wasteful expenditure made by the sport's governing bodies is one of the major reason of poor standard of Indian sports. He also stressed that lack of vision on the part of sports bodies, kept our stadia empty, tournaments unsponsored, coaches demotivated and grounds with poor strength of athletes. Due to the absence of financial skill and marketing strategy these sports bodies become supplicants before the Government for

allocation of funds to meet their daily needs. He further stated that these sports bodies failed in providing proper training, equipment, competitions, infrastructure, finance and sponsors to the players.

Ghai, A. (2007) <sup>[20]</sup> Jyotsana the International pugilist the only girl of the state of Haryana who won the Gold Medal in 3<sup>rd</sup> Asian Women Boxing Championship at Taiwan and a Bronze in the World Women Boxing Championship in 2005 expressed her views while interacting with the representatives of Tribune News Service after receiving the Bhim Award in a function organized in Haryana Raj Bhawan "undoubtedly the State Government has come up with good sports policy but still there is much more to do. The government should introduce more cash awards and sponsorships along with lucrative jobs to attract talented players from poor families and people in general towards sports. The similar views were expressed by Dinesh Kumar (Volleyball), Naveen Kumar (Wrestling), Rajvinder Kaur (Hockey) and Krishna Punia (Athletics), the other four recipients of Bhim Award 2006 in the same function. They said that by providing government jobs, more cash awards, sponsorships and better sports facilities the sports standard in the state could be raised.

P. Dhanraj (2007) <sup>[21]</sup> the former captain and the great forward player of Indian Hockey team while interacting with the UNI correspondent stressed that Media has a great role in the promotion of sports. In fact it is the media only that made Cricket so popular all over the World and all other sports so tiny in comparison to cricket. He stressed that it is the moral responsibility of the media to see all games and sports with one eye and being the national game the Hockey should be given due coverage to make the game popular. He further stressed that the selection of the players is not good in our country which is responsible for destroying the sports at grass-root level. If the selection procedure and selection of the players be made fair on merit no doubt that good time may return.

Rahman (2007) <sup>[22]</sup> an IANS correspondent while interacting with Ajit Pal Singh an Olympian and the former captain of the Indian Hockey team revealed that the movies like "Chak De India" had the potential to give a new lease of life to hockey in India. The Olympian said "I am sure that more movies like 'Chek De India' can attract more youngsters to hockey. When I was young, cricket and hockey had an equal following but today cricket has clearly surpassed hockey". He further revealed that, the place where the players are made and passions are lit is school. There are many schools that have good hockey teams but they never stick together to play on at a later stage. He emphasized that the conception that hockey is not as glamorous, doesn't attract sponsors and doesn't offer as much money as cricket, should be removed and only then the youngsters will take this game more seriously.

Jain (2007) <sup>[23]</sup> a senior IPS Officer had written in an article in a national newspaper that we are celebrating 'Sports Day' on the Birthday of great Major Dhayan Chand for the last 20 years but over such a long period we failed in formulation of an effective sports policy. He said that there was no dearth of talent in the country the need was to identify it and nourish it properly. If we really want that our teams would not return empty handed from international meets then we have to make a solid sports policy not only for the development of sports and sportsmen but for the pride of the nation. He further stressed the need of infrastructure development in small villages and towns for the promotion of sports. If we want to secure the future of sports in India, we have to make tremendous change in complete sports system. First of all the sports federations should be freed from the hands of selfish

politicians and then we have to find out Dronacharyas who could train not only the so called Arjunas but could train thousands of Eklavyas of this country.

Kumar, N. (2007) <sup>[24]</sup> the Chief Minister of Bihar feels that 'Politics in sports is not a fair game' and he is against the infiltration of politics into the sports arena. Speaking in a state sports Award function in Patna he said that the need of the hour was to generate sportsman's spirit in society by promoting sports and not playing politics in sports. He said that he is against politicians dabbling in the politics of sports Associations, there are politicians who are attempting infiltration so that their names remain in circulation even during their lean days in politics. He emphasized the need of Government jobs for sports persons who win medals while representing the State in National and International events. He promised that government will increase the sports quota in the Government services, in the state.

Swarup, H. (2007) <sup>[25]</sup> in a profile of Manavjit Singh Sandhu, an International shooter who won an Individual Gold and team silver in the 2006 World Championship in Zagreb, Croatia and recipient of Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award expressed that in his opinion, shooting is becoming the number one sport in our country as the shooters are doing well and the country can bank upon them. But sadly enough except in major cities, facilities and equipments required for the game are not available in any other places like small towns. The need is to extend the facilities in other areas also so that the country can get quality shooters. The union ministry of sports should provide more funds to grooming youngsters and to develop more infrastructure. At the moment the country has limited infrastructure, the shooting ranges have come up in Hyderabad only, while only a few new ranges are being built up in Chennai, Jaipur and Chandigarh. He also maintained that sports Associations at state and district levels should organise good quality exhibition matches/ tournaments to promote the game at grass root level. The talent is available at grass root level the really important thing is to explore it and it could be made possible only through the sincere and dedicated efforts of the local sports bodies.

Singh, Pargat (2008) <sup>[26]</sup> an Olympian and the former captain of Indian Hockey team in a briefing to Tribune News Service held the Indian Hockey Federation top brass responsible for India's failure to qualify for the Olympics. He said that "it was high time the IHF top bosses took responsibility and stepped down from their post. It was not surprising that Indian Hockey team failed to qualify for the Olympics as it was expected due to the performance of Indian Hockey Federation". He asked the government to immediately take control of IHF to save the national game. Pargat demanded the resignation of all the office-bearers of IHF. He said that, "now the whole team of IHF should immediately resign and some authority which is serious to uplift the game and can bring sponsors for the game should take control of the federation". He suggests that for the improvement of Hockey and for better preparation of the players domestic circuit should be strengthened. Any country, which has a strong domestic circuit, performs well in International Tournaments.

Ghai, A. (2008) <sup>[27]</sup> Amarjit, K.P. the former Ranji player from Haryana while interacting with representative of the 'Tribune News Service' express their grievances regarding the declining standard of cricket in the state. He pointed out that Haryana has provided two venues Panchkula and Gurgaon for holding the third addition of Indian Cricket League (ICL) but the startling fact is that there are 137 players including 51 foreign players are participating but there is not even a single player of the state playing in the league. Even in BCCI's own Indian Premier League (IPL) only one player of Haryana could make his presence. The former Ranji player said, "Undoubtedly the standard of the game has gone

down in the state. Earlier, many talented players from Chandigarh preferred to play from Haryana which included top level cricketers like Kapil Dev, Yograj Singh, Ashok Malhotra and Chetan Sharma but now the talent of the city likes to play from Punjab. The simple reason is that the Punjab has better development programme as well as infrastructure to offer the cricketers". When Ranbir Singh Mahendra the General Secretary of the Haryana Cricket Association was contacted to comment on the issue he said that it is due to BCCI politics that our cricketers suffered in Indian premier League (IPL) but on Indian cricket League (ICL) he declined to comment.

Gill, M.S. (2008) <sup>[28-30]</sup> the sports minister of the country in a work shop organized by Athletics Federation of India (AFI) said that "there was a need to have younger blood in the technical and also at the management level". The sports minister choose a more subtle way to drive the message by calling for more accountability in sports federations and stressing the need to allow younger people to take leadership positions. He said that the Olympic movement and the sports federations have an important role to play in bringing India to the top on Olympic ladder. The office bearers of the federations have to make sure that the money is used cleanly and there is accountability. Moreover, he stressed the need of younger people in the federations for handling management and technical aspects swiftly and efficiently.

Krishnamurthy (2008) <sup>[31]</sup> the Joint Secretary of the Indian Hockey Federation (IHF) criticized the undemocratic functioning of the President and Secretary of the Federation. He said that undemocratic functioning had led to alleged involvement of K. Jyoti Kumaran the secretary of IHF in a bribery case. The official alleged that the IHF has not been conducting itself as a sports body and there was no democratic set up K.P.S. Gill and Jyoti Kumaran controlled everything and other office bearers kept under dark in almost all the matters, be it the selection of the team or any other matter relating to the functioning of the federation so no wonder, the image of the game was lowered before the people. He further added that as long as the dictatorship and lack of transparency in the administration continues it will have a snowballing effect on the federation and hockey fraternity in the country. Unless, the Indian Hockey Federation was made accountable and streamlined it will be impossible to expect an improvement in its functioning style.

Kamaljeet Sandhu; The first Indian women athlete who won an Asian Games Gold in track and field event feels that sports system in the country has decayed. "Look at the Indian Olympic Association, sitting on a Dunlop cushion, watching from a distance the performance of Indian athletes. True, that there are some international sports persons of yester years in Indian Olympic Association, but they are too busy fighting their own survival battles. The Indian Olympic Association mandarins have little time to monitor the progress of sports. Look at the case of thrower Ajit Bhaduria. What has the Amateur Athletic Federation of India (AAFI) done for his family? Where is the sportsmen's welfare fund?"

Professor Gursewak Singh; a veteran sports organizer and member of the "Sports for all" commission of the International Olympic committee, blamed the system for its inefficiency. He said that the school games Federation of India is defunct. When a player starts in college or university, he is too old to make any impression. If our sportspersons are incompetent, why to blame the Indian Olympic Association. The National Sports Federations have best of the facilities, including foreign coaches, diet, allowance and good training-cum-competition programme. Even the Sports Authority of India cannot be faulted on this account. In spite of the financial crunch, it provided best of the facilities to at least our national teams. He suggested that if the Olympic debacle

is not to be repeated, the resistance should come from within the sports fraternity.

Pargat Singh; the only player who led India in two consecutive Olympics said that "All National Sports Federations are brimming with bureaucrats and politicians who have wittingly or unwittingly drifted the Indian sports ship towards a disaster. How many of the National sports Federations are headed by sports persons? All bodies are being run by non-technical and non-professional people who are bereft of any knowledge". He suggested that to promote sports, we must expand our base and bring in only those to sports administration who have knowledge, time and dedication.

Sukhvir Singh Grewal; the former International player and coach of the Indian Hockey team said that problem lies in our sports administration both the state and the State Sports Associations have not been discharging their duties effectively. The State is supposed to provide infrastructure for training and the Associations are supposed to organize competitions to hunt the talent. Unfortunately while the state has taken upon itself the role of organizing championships and the Associations are getting into infrastructure building. Punjab, once sports arms of the country has virtually defunct District Olympic Associations. He stressed that the Punjab Hockey Association and the District Hockey Associations are not discharging their responsibilities expected from them. He further suggested that unless we have a pyramid model of sports huge base with the fine performers getting to the top, we cannot succeed.

Gurdish Pal Singh; a former International Hockey player and National Hockey selector said, "I wonder whether we are progressing or degenerating in Sports. We have improved infrastructure and training facilities but results are nowhere". Participation base is shrinking. Play fields in schools and colleges remain unutilized. There is much more money and sponsorship in sports than what it was ever before, but we are no more a power in Asian Games. We have gone down in track and field. Wrestling and Football..... I mean in all sports. The malaise is deep rooted". He further suggested that unless we have a mass base and entrust the responsibility of sports administration to right and dedicated people, sports in the country cannot make any progress.

### Conclusion

After having thorough analysis of views of International players and sports experts it was resolved that office bearers of most of the sports associations and federations are not taking keen interest in the development and promotion of sports and sports persons. In fact politician's bureaucrats and some other non-professional influential people are using the platforms of these highly important sports organizations for their vested interest. Moreover, if we leave behind some exceptions it was an established fact that nepotism favoritism and corruption is prevailing in the day today affairs and functioning of almost all the sports organizations and as a result of which the performance level of Indian athletes in almost all international level competitions was not as per the aspirations of people and as it was expected from them.

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