Research Article

WHY SPORTS IS NOT A CAREER OPTION

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ABSTRACT

If you study hard you will live like a king but if you play sports you will ruin your life”, a quote that have spoiled and destroyed many sport careers. The reason being sports cannot earn the bread and butter for the family that education can earn and this sorry statement kills many ambitions. We live in a country where only winning medal guarantees a stable life and that also is suspicious sometimes. So, why to invest in such a risky industry where there is no guarantee of getting returns for our toils. All these questions hinge the mind of parents while thinking of sports as a career option. The sorry state is such that though we are just a step behind China in population but are 200 steps behind it in making Sports expenditure. Our bright future in sports require crowd funding by both public and private sector to ensure availability of numerous amenities like sports infrastructure, training facilities, equipment and a stable career. This paper focuses on the economic and financial lacunae that are ruining our country’s sports performance on the international front and killing the idea of opting sport as a career, also suggestions are put forward how our government can overcome this struggling position in Sports.

INTRODUCTION

The drive to succeed, the ambition to push the limits of the possible, and the pressure to perform are all aspects of a career in Sports teaches obedience, respect, tolerance, team work, it helps in inculcating various social skills that we can learn in no other classroom. It makes a human body mentally and physically fit as proved by many researches. Even the most trusted international agency the United Nation consider sports as a tool for development and peace, and how can one forget the famous quote of Swami Vivekananda that one can be nearer to Heaven through football than through the study of the Gita. Despite all these vociferous opinion about sports the condition of this noble vocation is in a dilapidated state. Rather it should be clearly stated that sports in India is not even considered a vocation. Sports in India is not considered as a career option due to many social, psychological, political and economic reasons. Even the king of Bollywood Mr. Shahrukh khan once stated ‘Indian parents don’t see sports as a profession’

As an audience we admire Dhoni, Saina, Mary Kom and various other sports stars but as parents we want our child to become engineers, doctors, teacher but rarely aspire making them a sports player and the reason is crystal clear that in our society sports is visualized as a choice with bleak future and with less monetary benefit and not to forget we still live in a society that is very much into murmuring the same thought - Kheloge kudoge to banoge kharab. Adding to the misery is the lopsided policy of the govt. and sports agencies that hinders the progress of the sports industry. It was hence even suggested to extend the Justice Lodha Committee recommendations on BCCI to all other sports bodies to give a boost to all other games but execution and implementation failures are sound enough in India society as witnessed during Commonwealth scam.

OBJECTIVES

- To examine the reasons why sports is not considered a career option.
- To suggest sound reasons why the govt. should lay stress on promoting sports.
- To review and find measures for making sports a noble vocation.

METHODOLOGY

The topic of the research paper is Why Sports is not a career option. The nature of the topic is theoretical and elucidatory and based on empirical research. This research is based on Secondary Data collected from known and relevant sites of the Govt. of India, recognized newspapers and other useful web sources.
However, the research is gripped with certain limitations as mentioned below

- Some of the articles in the acknowledged newspapers may be biased by personal opinion of the concerned writer.
- The idea of scope and challenges has been formulated according to the opinions and advises forwarded by various known personalities who are already a part of the bigger financial circle and may have raised opinions based on their preference and convenience.
- By and large there is immense chances of many other scope relevance and even challenges been skipped from the study.

Despite all these limitations sincere efforts have been made to analyse minutely the actual intensity and motive of the topic.

Factors responsible for rejecting sports as a career option

Social Factors- Education in India is considered supreme as compared to other 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.”. This stigma in the society has brutally dethroned the sports empire. Society should visualize sport as a viable career option and not undermine its importance by considering it as merely a recreational activity.

Parents in Indian Society have some wrong perceptions about sports that dominates their thoughts like

- Sports job cannot pay as handsomely as other regular jobs can.
- Lack of job security
- Short span of sports career.
- No guarantee of a successful future.

As parents these reasons force them to put their feet down when it comes to career in sports but the fact remains that no field can guarantee job security not even bank jobs or IT sector. These fear undoubtedly are created by the ignorant attitude of the government toward the sports sector. According to consultant psychologist Niloufer Ebrahim parents are petrified to explore unconventional options for their children and hence shun the choice of their children considering them offbeat and financially unsafe.

There is also a hegemonic domination of boys on the fields ignoring the presence of females and hence displaying the clear-cut gender disparity on the fields. A very stating fact that proves this discrimination is that till the 19th century participation of women in sports was discouraged and banned and it was in the 20th century that physical education for women was introduced at both school and college level.

The sports field also suffer from regional bias in the country where most of the development in the infrastructure is taking place in the urban sector and rural areas are lacking even basic sports facilities. These social and regional inequalities have a negative impact on Indian sport.

Parents feel sports act as a hindrance to studies, however the fact that was revealed by a study made by UN in 2003 reveals that spending more time on playground increases ability to learn and retain information.

The Unconditional Bias

In India Cricket is made synonymous to sport reducing the charisma of other sports and fading the scope of pursuing a career in any other sport except cricket

Another mismanagement created by the society is overwrought dedication to the evergreen sport cricket that pushes other sports in the darkness of anonymity. Studies have pointed out that where other sports are struggling hard to make their presence felt, cricket is busy accumulating enough money from numerous sponsors. Hence indisputably becoming villain for other games. Cricket stars are considered elegant elites whereas other sports stars are struggling to make their presence felt in the society. BCCI was reported to be the richest cricket board in the world in 2013 with an annual profit of almost US $ 50 million. IPL became the hit runner since its establishment in 2008 and its brand value was pegged at about US $ 7.2 billion. In 2014 reducing all the exorbitant craze for the rest of the perishing games. If we talk about TRP games there are nine other professional sporting leagues but none of them are able to generate as much of the TRP like cricket.

The other bad player for this disruptive situation of sports is the Media. P. Gopich and once highlighted a very true situation of the players in India by bringing forth his own personal experience and it’s really distressing to hear this. ‘”I am well known in Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia, but not in my own country.”This is not the story of an individual player but many young budding players who are ignored under the excuse of not being considered a breaking news material. For this dire situation Indian Media is the whole sole culprit. Where only winning medals can assure you a space in the extensively occupied news bulletins.

All these misallocated phenomenon of the society is immensely responsible in making the sports industry look less stable and more risky to the audience and hence reducing the passion to pursue sports which is nothing but another gamble where the probability of success is less as compared to failure except if you are opting for the glamourous chick Cricket and there itself the gamble never dies. Among ten players playing in the same stadium its only one that after Ranji selections comes in the limelight and sustains it.

This data reflects a total bias of the audience toward watching IPL and hence reducing the charisma of other sports. So the probable chances can be Tendulkar, Virat, Dhoni taking rebirth
but you cannot expect Milkha, Sushil and Sania among others to born again and give their services to the nation.

**Political and Economic Reasons**

The budget 2019 dedicated a pinch of space for sports specifying that to popularise sports at all levels, National Sports Education Board for development of sportspersons to be set up under the ‘Khelo India’. But the question remains how this idea will become a reality, what will be the fund allocation to make this idea a reality because even today our country lacks a comprehensive sports bill.

In 2013-17 approximately Rs 2437 crore was disbursed by the U. K government to 20 disciplines focusing primarily on winning medals at RioOlympics. Indian Government in the same period disbursed a comparatively meagre amount of Rs 740 crore and that was spread thin over 67 national sports federation and bodies. This difference in allotment highlights the optimism and pessimism regarding future in sports in U.K and India respectively. In the union budget 2017-18 GOI allocated Rs 1943 to the sports sector which is nowhere close to Rs 9000 crore spent annually by the UK govt. and Rs 7000 crore by Australian Govt. on sports.

In 2012, Olympic success in Britain gave a record boost in the number of people playing sport. According to figures number of adults playing any sport once a week increased by 750,000 in a year. This has a direct correlation with the impactful spending made by the U.K government and it’s a crystal-clear phenomenon there’s no such overwhelming records visible in case of India and the reason is woefully lack of spending.

According to newspaper China Daily, Chinese government spends Rs 3 lakh crore on sports that turns out to be roughly Rs 6.1 per capita per day. On its counterpart the former sports minister Mr. Rajyavardhan S. Rathore stated in the parliament that the Department of Sports spent Rs 1393.21 crore in 2017-18 that accounts to approximately 3 paisa per capita per day on sports.

A study has revealed that out of 31 states and union territories only 18 have contributed toward international medals. This again points out the inequality and differentiated outlook towards sports within the country itself.

According to revised estimates of expenditure made by the GOI (2012-13) out of the total sum of Rs 14,30,825 crore a minimal amount of Rs 1,005.60 crores that makes up to 0.07%(approx.) of the total budget was administered to the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports. The disturbing part is that even a lion share of this amount is spent only on construction and maintenance of sports facilities and in the payment of bulky salaries of foreign coaches but what is actually reaching the player for their personal motivation and growth remains a concern and this alien attitude reduces passion for sports in the country. Sport till now has not been a priority sector in India is evident from the meagre budget allocation of 0.14% in the country’s 2013-2014 budget.

Another grave concern is the lack of impetus given to sports in the school’s curriculum. At some places where attention is diverted towards it, focus is rather only on tailoring individual athletes/sportsperson which can be considered good for winning international medals but this proves as a failure in developing a sports culture. The focus should rather shift to boost creative usage of sports in combating social problems and promoting holistic development of individuals.

There is another fabric of sports that indomitably hampers the interest of a player from pursuing a career in sports and that is bad politics and jack policies. Promotion of sports activity thus needs to be independent of political influence and preferably should be garnered under the aegis of retired sports personalities and eminent citizens of the society who can actually understand the psychology and aspirations of any budding player and do justice to his career.

Scholarships and endowments fixed for the athletes to ensure them minimum standard of living is entrapped with bureaucratic red tape, political interference and financial corruption of other sorts denying the players to receive their due.

Implementation Failures are again the biggest pathbreakers in harnessing sport jobs.

**Some points were highlighted in the current sports Bill like**

- Encouraging PPP model for infrastructure development and talent grooming
- Developing India as a manufacturing hub for sports equipment
- Job Security and incentives to sportspersons.

However, none of this idea seems to become a reality because if this would have been a reality a research on nullifying sports as a career option would never been evolved as an idea.

Even career ending injuries become the cause of quitting sports for which again there is no rescue to ensure stable career to an athlete if he encounters such a draconian situation bringing an end to his career.

All these political and economic lacunae point out the prominent reasons that hinders the path of Indians opting sports as a career.

**Why Government Should Promote Sports**

As 50% of the Indian population is below 25 years of age there is great prospect in developing India as a sports superpower. India has an abundant resource of sportspersons blessed with natural talent, but these resources remain untapped.

**Economic Benefits**

It can directly give a boost to the economy as study highlights that in 2010 Global Sports Revenue accounted for US $121.4bn which jumped with an CAGR of 3.7% to US $145.3 bn in 2015.

The revenue that can be generated by organising International tournaments can definitely boost a country’s economy. In North America and EMEA (Europe, Middle East and Africa) gate revenues are contributing the largest in total revenue collection. In the coming future gate receipts can boost even Indian sporting revenue picture. New additional capacities and upgrading existing facilities can definitely increase country’s gate revenue to boost the economic picture.

Increased funding, scholarships, job security will definitely improve our international medal tally and individual sports
performance as studies reveal there is direct correlation between more financial security and improved sports performance which is even visible on the Cricket Ground.

**Title Sponsors in India**

- **Airtel**
  - First F1 Indian Grand Prix
  - Sponsorship amount: Rs 34 crore

- **IMG Reliance**
  - Indian Football
  - Sponsorship amount: Rs 700 crore

**Social Benefits**

Sports can give an indomitable contribution even in reducing crime. As has been highlighted by National Crime Records Bureau report 2013 there were a record of 27,936 juveniles engaged in committing cognizable offense. Studies suggest that sports can act as a feasible tool to rehabilitate juveniles and divert them from anti-social and criminal activities. An organisation named The Football Link aims at improving moral, ethical and social values among 8000 youth and children in Delhi through sports which was essential as there were record 1,144 juveniles engaged in cognizable offense in the national capital according to reports of NCRB 2012.

Sports can even counterpoise social exclusion faced by people suffering from one or more kind of disability and by the poor population. According to studies social capital generation can counter social exclusion (Hylton 2011) and sports has the potential to become a social capital and thus counter exclusion. Sports can even become a leading light in establishing gender equality in a country where violence against women is unbridled and women are mostly considered inferior to men. India’s pride MC Mary kom is working in this field by organising only women self-defence and boxing camp to enhance their mental and physical well-being and helping them to fight the violence and fear that they encounter in the society.

**Health Related Benefits**

Participation in sports and other physical activities promotes a healthy life style, helps in fighting with the problem of rising obesity and even impart life skills on youth. Hence policymakers all over the world are formulating policies to promote sports culture and thus improve health and well-being of the nation.

**Other Health related benefits of sports**

However, these steps taken by individuals and organisations should become the prerogative of the government if we want to see more people engaging in sports.

**Suggestionsto Make Sports A Noble Vocation**

A competitive sports environment not only brings about discipline but also helps in developing the country socially, politically and economically.

- Parents must do an in-depth research on potential of unconventional jobs before shunning their child choices.
- India has an abundant resource of sportspersons blessed with natural talent, but these resources remain untapped
- Focus on Sports in India requires deliberation on multiple parameters like
  - inculcating sports as an academic subject
  - Filling shortage of trained manpower and specialists, that will help in generating employment in this sector
  - Providing world class skill,
  - Developing sports infrastructure
  - Sports medicine and injury management to reduce the fear of among players.
  - What is of paramount importance is building a sports culture in the country

- To grab the benefits by this escalating sector, it should be raised from an entertainment and amusement category to a full-fledged industry status.
- Gate revenues should be used to develop specifically the sports sector and to provide scholarships to players ensuring them to stay motivated.
- Government should promote organisations and foundations like NAZ, Magic Bus, Football Link who are using sports as a key for holistic development. These organisations are making a career in sports a reality by developing means to provide livelihood and reducing the education gap through sports.
Government should increase the pace of implementing the UNICEF Physical Education Card methodology under its Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. This methodology may teach children about the essence of inclusiveness, the idea of teamwork and will help in reducing the gap in the overall education among children.

Development of sports infrastructure in urban areas should be linked with the development of sports facility in adjoining rural areas to curb centralisation of facilities. Talent scouts should be assigned the task of identifying and spotting talents to encourage sports culture even in the remotest areas.

The functions of institutions such as SAI, IOA can be easily understood but in a country where according to the constitutional provisions sports and physical education are state subjects the role of other stakeholders like Rural NGOs and Panchayati Raj institutions in building a sports environment should be perfectly carved out.

Corporate houses through appropriate fiscal measures should promote sports tourism and even encourage innovative resource mobilization efforts for sports. This was even highlighted in the National Sports Policy 2001 however its successful implementation except in cricket is still in midst of dilemma.

Enhancing investment in sports infrastructure through PPP and revamping successfully the Khelo India Programme.

Successfully implementing the current sports Bill. Ensuring financial help to players who encounter sports injuries.

Making renowned international players the national observers for developing various sports in the country and to highlight GOI has started this agenda by employing 12 players as national observers this should exceed and reach to a stature benefitting more and more players

CONCLUSION

India is a land where the country takes proud in organising its own type of Rural Olympics.

A country which cherishes even today the reputed designations allotted to Major Dhyan Chand, to the Flying Sikh Sir Milkha Singh, where the idea of women empowerment arises from the remotest of areas be it the udan Pari Ms. P.T Usha, be it magnificent Mary but among all these phenomenal achievements and many others we as a country with time have destroyed our sports culture. It’s time to rejuvenate the cult of trapping talents from rural areas. Its time to make the countrymen realize that even sports is a noble vocation if pursued with dedication and respect. Here, the role of the government is crucial to impart confidence among the youth that there is immense scope in making career in sports just like making career in engineering, administrative, medical fields etc. A fact that cannot be undermined is the poor quality of sports infrastructure where a need of independent agency working to implement an honest sports bill is indispensable. Its time when the public as well as the private sector should contribute in lifting the sports industry from its dilapidated state.

Studies have proved the contribution that sports can make in developing the society socially, morally, economically and even psychologically and hence to make future look bright in this arena requires sincere and honest efforts by govt. agencies. Sports should be made corruption free and there should be an end of red tapism and excessive political interference. What is the need of the hour is the policies for the sports area should be made by a players with international repute rather than by corrupt bureaucrats and politicians. A country with the highest demographic dividend can do wonders if assured of a career in sports., as we have in front of us examples of many small countries like Jamaica, cuba, Bahrain where a little financial support is doing wonders. Countries like China, US, Australia, Korea, have separate sports agencies looking after the financial security and job guarantee for players and the result is crystal clear, they are dominating in almost all international tournaments. Financial support and Job security can do wonders in India and can boost even the medal tally at the International sports meet and will even ensure even podium finish. Its high time to make the youth realize that Sports is a noble vocation and there is immense scope in pursuing sports as a career option.

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