

# Sports as a Profession in India - Opportunities & Challenges

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**Abstract:** India is home to a diverse population playing many different kinds of sports across the country. Government of India formulated a National Policy on Education in 1986 under the Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. According to this policy, learning procedure includes sports and physical education as important parts. India hosted the Asian Games in New Delhi in 1951 and 1982. The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports was initially set up as the Department of Sports in 1982 at the time of organisation of the IX Asian Games in New Delhi. Its name was changed to the Department of Youth Affairs & Sports during celebration of the International Youth Year in 1985. Political responsibility for sport in India is with the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, which is headed by a cabinet minister and managed by National Sport Federations (Department of sports, 2010). To promote various kinds of sports activities in our country, Government of India and various regional sports organizations have established various kinds of sports schemes from time to time. The Sports Authority of India (SAI) Sports Authority of India was set up by the Government of India on 16 March, 1984 as a registered society primarily to look after the sports infrastructure created for the IX Asian Games. Three kinds of schemes are implemented by the Sports Authority of India the main objective of which is to develop and promote various sports events throughout the country. Some of the important schemes implemented at present are as follow: (i) Centre of Excellence: under this scheme, talented players who fall in the age group of 16 to 21 years are selected for scientific training. (ii) Junior Level Schemes: Children between the age group of 14-21 are selected for scientific training purposes. The National Sports Development Fund (NSDF) was instituted by the Central Government with a view to mobilize resources from the Government as well as nongovernmental sources for promotion of sports and games in the country. (Department of sports, 2010) Not only this, for encouraging people to participate in sports activities, various organizations and institutions are also established by government or by non-government agencies where they can get coaching or training of different kinds of activities but a lot is to be done yet in this regard. There is undue pressure on the students on the academic front. Majority of the children in India are discouraged from taking up sports as a career due to uncertainties involved in it. In the light of recent achievements, people are also getting attracted toward games due to many incentives offered on various stages in the form of cash prizes, and reservation in jobs under sports quota etc.

**Keywords:** sports and physical education, sports schemes, training, sports quota, sports achievements

## 1. Introduction

The present study explores the awareness and dedication of the students keen to pursue sports and its related fields as a career. In the recent times, Indian sportspersons have made remarkable achievements in the sports. The present survey was confined to secondary school students of Delhi affiliated to Central Board of Secondary Education, New Delhi only. The survey was conducted on a sample of senior secondary school students active in sports.

The objective of the survey was

- (i) To create awareness about the various government policies and organizations in the sports sector.
- (ii) To explore the opportunities and challenges of sports persons in India.
- (iii) To encourage students to follow their passion in sports.

## 2. Methodology

A review was done on the sports policy of our country and a small survey was conducted on a sample of 50 school students. A sport in India (Survey Form) was designed for collection of data. It consisted of 11 Questions (Multiple choice types) and 1 Question (short descriptive).

## 3. Analysis and Discussion

Descriptive statistical techniques like tally and pie-charts were used to study the responses of the students. The analysis of the responses revealed that in a random sample of 50 students, 37 responded that they pursued some sport /game on a regular basis. It is encouraging to see that students are showing a keen interest in sports. The students should be encouraged to follow their passion in sports. 16 students responded that they pursued some sport /game on a regular basis at the stadium/ professional arena, 15 played in school playgrounds, 14 played in the park and 5 students responded that they played at home. The analysis shows that the students are aware of the infrastructure required in the sports and are reaching out to the facilities available in their school and stadiums. The survey also revealed that 26 students took professional coaching for their game and 24 respondents said that they did not take any professional coaching for their game. Although, there is not much difference in the number of students but we can infer that there is a large population of students who do not avail of any professional coaching for their game. It could be due to various reasons such as affordability, opportunity, availability etc.

The data reveals that a very less number of students spend on expensive coaching and training. Professional sports coaching come at a premium. Further analysis of the responses reveals that in a random sample of 50 students, 48 responded that they did not receive any sports scholarship / sponsorship for their game and 2 respondents

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said that they received sports scholarship / sponsorship professional for pursuing their game. The data reveals that very few students receive financial assistance to pursue their game /sport. The responses of the students to the query whether they think that they can successfully take up a sports career in India 46 students responded that they that they did not perceive to successfully take up a sports career in India whereas 4 students were hopeful of successfully taking up a sports career in India. It is heartening to see that the youth are seeing the glimmer of hope although a lot needs to be done to bring sports as a promising career for the youth.

The responses of the students to the query about what should be done to promote sports among youth in India revealed that 10 students responded that family support was crucial to successfully take up a sports career in India because culturally the parents push their children into academics to ensure a secure job. Whereas 12 students wished to have world class facilities for successfully taking up a sports career in India.14 students responded that sponsorships and government aid was vital for achieving world fame and recognition in sports. 14 students responded that job security was key to more youth taking up sports as their profession since competing career of the sports persons is very short-lived. It is heartening to see that the youth are seeing the glimmer of hope although a lot needs to be done to bring sports as a promising career for the youth.

#### 4. Discussion of the Results

The findings of the study reveal that the young sportspersons are pursuing sports with passion. They are aware of the infrastructural facilities and investments required to compete at the global level. They look forward to support from their family and the government to pursue their passion in sports and bring laurels to India. Proper guidance, research, world class infrastructure, training, job security are the core areas to be strengthened to create and nurture sportspersons par excellence.

#### 5. Educational Implications

The study elucidates educational implications for the various stakeholders. The government has to play an active role in nurturing sports and providing the world class infrastructure to improve the competitiveness and shining at the global platform. The educationists and the parents also have to play an effective role in all round development of the children. The schools should provide the facilities and also encourage the children to pursue sports. Sports should not be considered secondary to academics. Sports should be a way of life and if the individual has the talent and will to pursue sports as a career or profession he/she should be provided the opportunity to follow their passion.

#### 6. Conclusion

As we see sports have travelled a long journey on the way of their upliftment in the Indian society. Government and

Non-Government agencies have worked a lot for the broad basing of sports in the country, but a lot is to be done yet in this regard. People are also getting attracted toward games due to many incentives offered on various stages in the form of cash prizes, and reservation in jobs under sports quota etc. It is a good omen for the country that we are receiving positive results in all the sports especially in athletics. With such sincere efforts on the part of both government and public, we can hope that Indian Tri - colour will soar high because of sports achievements.

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