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Role of government in developing sporting culture in India

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Abstract

Today sport emerges as an important component of socio-economic development of a country. The active participation in sports improves community health and productivity, reduces medical expenses, imbibes discipline in character and enhances social cohesion. The execution of a mega sporting event helps in developing infrastructure, generating employment, securing inflow of foreign capital and thus contributes significantly to the economic development of a country. Therefore, it can be said that the impact of sports on the society is multi-dimensional. The government plays a crucial role in promoting sports in a country. The government and governmental organizations constitute the public sector of the sports industry, which is responsible in making sports policies, allocating grants for developing infrastructure, nurturing talents, promote sports industry and designing specialized programmes for overall development of sports. The objective of this article is to discuss critically the role of government in promoting sports in India.

Keywords: socio-economic development, sporting event, government, sports industry

Introduction

Today sport emerges as an important component of socio-economic development of a country. The active participation in sports improves community health and productivity, reduces medical expenses, imbibes discipline in character and enhances social cohesion. The execution of a mega sporting event helps in developing infrastructure, generating employment, securing inflow of foreign capital and thus contributes significantly to the economic development of a country. Therefore, it can be said that the impact of sports on the society is multi-dimensional. The government plays a crucial role in promoting sports in a country. The government and governmental organizations constitute the public sector of the sports industry, which is responsible in making sports policies, allocating grants for developing infrastructure, nurturing talents and designing specialized programmes for overall development of sports. The objective of this article is to discuss critically the role of government in promoting sports in India. The year 1982 was significant in the history of sports in India. In that year, India organized the Asian Games for the first time. Prior to that, not much emphasis had been given to sports in public policies. The following table represents the gradual increase in fund allocation for sports since the sixth Five Year Plan:

Table 1: Despite a significant increase in the fund allocation, it is pertinent to mention that not more than 1% of budgetary allocation has been directed to sports in India

Five Year Plan	Duration	Allocation for Sports (INR million)
6 th	1980-1985	270
7 th	1985-1989	2,070
8 th	1992-1997	2,100
9 th	1997-2002	4,730
10 th	2002-2007	11,450
11 th	2007-2012	46,360

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The Panchayat Yuva Krida Aur Khel Abhiyan (PYKKA) had been introduced to inculcate sports culture at the grass-root level by encouraging the youth of village and district levels to

participate in sports. To achieve this objective, Rs. 1500 crore had been approved by the Planning Commission of India in the eleventh Five Year Plan and Rs. 92 crore and Rs. 160 crore had already been allocated for 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 respectively.

Despite these efforts, the performance of Indian athletes at the international level is not very convincing. Therefore, a few steps may be recommended to make these initiatives more comprehensive. First, the allocation of funds, as the percentage of budget, should be increased to broad-base sports in the country. Second, sports should be made as an integral part of the education system to inculcate sports culture from the school level. Third, the effectiveness of the developmental projects should be evaluated periodically. Fourth, uniformity should be maintained in sports specific activities of various states of India to provide equal participation opportunity to its citizens. Finally, a structure of good governance should be incorporated to make the system transparent and accountable.

To revive sports culture, the government should revisit the sporting framework of India. Otherwise, the immense potential of the country in sports can never be realized. It can be expected that the government will play a proactive role in promoting sports in India to establish the country as a sporting nation.

Conclusion

As we see sports have traveled 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.

Best facilities are required for producing a best sportsman. The Govt. should come forward to build good avenues for the development of sports and games in our country. The funds allotted to the sports ministry in various States and the Union Government is always merge. The Governments do not feel it necessary or important to provide adequate funds for sports. Even the funds allotted are seldom spent properly. The Sports Authorities in many states are mere ornamental organizations. They should be filled with people who have adequate knowledge of sports and interest to promote sports.

In a fast-developing country like India, there is a dire need to encourage non-traditional businesses which have a great potential to flourish and contribute to the country's GDP. Contrary to popular belief, such sectors don't receive the much-needed opportunity which they deserve in order to develop and grow into a full-fledged industry.

As we move into the futuristic age, the Indian government should be on the forefront to create a healthy environment for such businesses to thrive. Sports, a massive and potentially profitable sector deserves the space and support from the government just like any other traditional industry.

Here are five actions that the Indian government must take to promote sports in India.

Recognizing sports as an industry

In a fast-growing economy like India, there is a tremendous potential for the sports sector to develop and achieve the status of an industry. Previously, the sports sector was considered a loss-making venture but with the boom of multi-

sporting events and leagues that is soon to change. India, now hosts the Indian Premier League (cricket), Hockey India League, Indian Super League (football), Pro Kabaddi League and Indian Badminton League, all of which have aided in the growth of the sports sector.

As the sporting scenario in India is evolving, we are witnessing an ever-growing demand for sports entrepreneurship. This is the right moment to venture into the sports sector, where there is ample room to flourish. We, as a country, must award sports an industry status, given the fact that, now, India is not just recognized through cricket but also through other sports such as tennis, badminton, hockey, athletics and much more.

Once, sports is recognized as an industry, it can generate a large number of employment opportunities in the form of the apparel and equipment sector, sports medicine, sports tourism and other sport-related sectors.

Promoting industry-based sports education programmes

As the sports sector is well on its path to attain industry status, there has been a sudden demand for industry-based sports education programmes. We see a spurt in sport management programmes, sports medicines, sports tourism and affiliated sectors. This is a sign for the Indian government to take effective methods to promote programmes that cater to the industry-based sports education.

Increase funds and tax holidays for sports-based firms

In order to attract young and visionary entrepreneurs to the sports sector, the Indian government must increase funding and offer tax holidays for sports-based firms. This move will serve as an impetus in the growth of an industry which has a global presence. India has a great potential for sports entrepreneurship, thanks to the existing huge market but the lack of government initiatives have hindered the growth of this potential sector. We need to create sectors like SEZ for sport-specific companies which will aid the growth of the sports sector.

Assistance for R&D in the sports sector

The Indian government must invest in technological advances such as sports analytics to assist in coaching professional athletes. It must also provide wearable, sensors, and nutrition as per the requirement of the sport and the sportsperson.

Also, the government must invest in professional coaching which will increase the quality of guidance given to the Indian sportsperson. There is also a need to bring in performance apparel and equipment of international standard for our athletes. Lastly, partnerships with tech companies and progressive governments will attract the best talent in the sports arena.

Provide land and invest in sports infrastructure through PPP model

A Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model works best for building sports infrastructure. Also, a long-term land lease will help to get adequate land to build such facilities. India being the second most populated country in the world has the ability to churn out athletes who can put us on the global map in terms of sports, other than cricket. We've already seen the rising stars in India putting on splendid performances, but the facilities provided to such brilliant performers are far from good. A perfect blend of private and public partnerships is the solution to the troubles India faces when it comes to providing world-class sports infrastructure to its budding athletes.

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