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Sports psychology association of India: An overview

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Abstract

Sport psychology is a proficiency that uses psychological knowledge and skills to address optimal performance and well-being of athletes, developmental and social aspects of sports participation, and systemic issues associated with sports settings and organizations. In other words, sport psychology is an interdisciplinary science that draws on knowledge from many related fields including biomechanics, physiology, kinesiology and psychology. It involves the study of how psychological factors affect performance and how participation in sport and exercise affect psychological and physical factors. Sports Psychology Association of India (SPAI) aims to increase athletic performance by instilling mental toughness and minimizing the psychological effects of poor performance. SPAI, a government recognized association registered under the registered act of society, is striving to contribute towards developing grassroot of Indian sports sciences and create a culture conducive to strive in the present high demand scenario. SPAI believes that if sports psychology in India is to develop further, top priority must be given to the establishment of degree courses and programmes at academic institutions. This would result in the first generation of Indian scientists, specifically trained in the field of sports psychology. SPAI's achievements include- Number of participants: 650; Latest conference was concluded at Mumbai, BPCA Wadala at 29 Dec 2017; Large demand for initiative towards organization of more such conferences by various cities of the country like Puducherry, Shimla, Nagpur; and Continuous contribution towards publishing the latest research works and contributions in sports development through sports psychology and provide platform to the sports psychologist to spread their skills and knowledge to sports development in India. SPAI's present initiatives include- SPAI awards: Best research paper, lifetime award, young scientist award; and Master's Degree in Sports Psychology. SPAI's future initiatives include- Certificate course in sports psychology; Providing scientific support to athletes for enhancement of sports; and Athlete counseling to players of various sports and demographic region.

Keywords: Sport Psychology, Sports Psychology Association of India (SPAI)

Introduction

Sports Psychology Association of India (SPAI) is a non-profit, apolitical, non-religious voluntary organization of well-focused, open-minded and professionally competent academics, researchers and practitioners of sport psychology from as diverse fields of interaction, knowledge and application as physical education, psychology, sport science, sports coaching, exercise, medicine, management, etc., having keen interest in generating, sharing and disseminating knowledge about sports activity and exercise behavior through experiential, experimental, rational and scientific approaches for the benefit of sportspersons, coaches and sports administrators. SPAI is a registered body under the Society's Act XXI of 1860 at with the Registrar of Firms and Societies, Punjab, Chandigarh. Founded on 23rd February, 1985 on the sacred soil of Laxmibai National College of Physical Education (now a University), Gwalior under the patronage of Prof. N.N. Mall (the then Dean) on the initiative of Ms. Avinash Sidhu, M.L. Kamlesh, Rajinder Singh, Agyajit Singh. and others. The SPAI aims to promote advancement of exercise and sport psychology facilitate communication among members through scientific meetings and disseminate the latest information on the subject among individuals, institutions and organizations involved in activity and sport performance. The broad objectives of the Association listed in its constitution are as under:

- To promote advancement of the knowledge in the field of sports psychology
- To facilitate communication and arrange scientific meetings and conferences among the individuals actively engaged in teaching and/or pursuing research in psychology having direct relationship with and implication in physical activity and sports

- To make it possible to gather and communicate to the members and selected institutions/organizations latest information on the subject, and related concerns
- To admit to its fold members from such diverse fields as physical education, psychology, sports, medicine and other allied disciplines, and create a well-knit society of individuals devoted to a common cause, and strengthen it

The SPAI has several feathers to its cap since its inception:

- During 1980s, it facilitated the visits of a galaxy of world leaders in sport psychology (Hans Schellenberger, Robert Singer, Bryant Crafty, Gerd Conzag, Peter Clarke, Mike Hughes, Keith Davids and others) which helped the members develop closer ties with the worldwide and pave the way for sustained academic and research interaction.
- The SPAI had been instrumental in facilitating the annual meeting of the managing council of the International Society of Sport Psychology in India in 1987 (LNCPE, Gwalior) chaired by Robert Singer and 1999 (SAI, South Centre, Bangalore) headed by Gershon Tenenbaum. The 2-day workshop organized by ISSP stalwarts on the later occasion was coordinated by the senior members of the SPAI. A large number of members potentially benefitted from these two interactive assemblies.
- The SPAI played a key role in the formation of Asian South-Pacific Association of Sport Psychology during the 1988-Seoul Olympic Scientific Congress. Jitendra Mohan and M.L. Kamlesh from India held the positions of vice-president and national representative on the ASPASP for two terms,
- Jitendra Mohan had had the privilege of being on the Managing Council of ISSP for two terms of four years each in succession.
- The scientific interaction among the SPAI members in the form of national conference has almost been regular since the very beginning except for two-three occasions when the process was interrupted due to reasons beyond control. As a result, a phenomenal rise is perceptible in the writing of dissertations at Ph.D., M.Phil., and master's degree level, and publication of books and journals on the subject of sport psychology.
- In pursuance of the constitutional provisions, there has been a regular, smooth and uncontested change of guards in the Association unlike in other professional bodies of the kind.
- With the untiring efforts of the members, sport psychology has come to be recognized as a sub-domain

of psychology in the mainstream postgraduate courses in psychology and physical education.

- In the mid-70s a few enthusiasts from physical education and psychology founded the Indian Association of Sports Psychology during a national seminar at Hyderabad. The newly formed society organized a national meeting and also published the first issue of the Journal of Sports Psychology, but the absence of continuing financial support and not-too-sound organizational setup rendered the association defunct.^[1]

History

The first governing council was headed by Prof. Jitendra Mohan with M.L. Kamlesh as secretary general and H.A. Khan as finance secretary. Today, the organization is headed by Prof. N.S. Mann with Dilip K. Dureha in the driving seat. The SPAI has linkages with International Society of Sport Psychology, and Asian South-Pacific Association of Sport Psychology, and proceeds on the way to progress in close co-operation with national sports associations, universities, Sports Authority of India, National Institute of Sports, and such as other institutions and organizations as would love to benefit from expert advice and service this body can render. Beginning with an ominous strength of 13, SPAI has grown in stature both vertically and horizontally. Today, it is proud to have a cadre-strength of approximately 500 members from various shades of research, application and literary interests across the country. Several members of the Association have earned international recognition for their valuable contribution to the phenomenal growth of sport psychology as an athlete-and-coach friendly area of interaction.

Revival Of Spai And Its Governing Council

The revival came on 23rd February 1985 on the occasion of the first national conference of the embryonic Indian Association of Sports Scientists and Physical Educationists. Under the patronage of N.N. Mall, then the Dean of Laxmibai National College of Physical Education (now LNIPE, Deemed University), M.L. Kamlesh (Punjab Government College of Physical Education, Patiala), Avinash Sidhu (LNCPE, Gwalior), Rajinder Singh (LNCPE, Gwalior), Agyajit Singh (Punjabi University, Patiala), and others played key-role in reviving the national society. The society was renamed Sports Psychology Association of India with its first Governing Council as given here-in-under:

Designation	Name	Institutional Affiliation
President	Jitendra Mohan	Department of Psychology, Punjab University, Chandigarh
Hony. Secretary	M.L. Kamlesh	Punjab Government College of Physical Education, Patiala
Jt. Secretary	Avinash Sidhu	Laxmibai National College of Physical Education, Gwalior
Finance Secretary	H.A. Khan	Faculty of Sports Sciences, Netaji Subhas National Institute of Sports, Patiala
Executive Members	Agyajit Singh	Department of Education, Punjabi University, Patiala
	Gurbux Singh	Department of Physical Education, Panjab University, Chandigarh
	S. Srivastan	Department of Physical Education, GND University, Amritsar
	N.S. Mann	Department of Physical Education, Panjab University, Chandigarh
	Joginder Mukherji	Department of Psychology, Punjab University, Chandigarh
	Rajinder Singh	Laxmibai National College of Physical Education, Gwalior
	G.D. Fortgalland	NIS South Centre, Bangalore

Objectives of the SPAI

A conglomerate of physical educators, psychologists, sports coaches, sports medicine personnel, doctors, sports administrators and others, the Sports Psychology Association

of India has the following major objectives:

- To promote the advancement of knowledge in the field of sports psychology
- To facilitate communication and arrange scientific

meetings and conferences among the individuals actively engaged in teaching and/or pursuing research in psychology having a direct relationship *with* and implication *in* physical activity and sports

- To make it possible to gather and communicate with the members and selected institutions/organizations latest information on the subject, and related concerns
- To admit to its fold members from such diverse fields as physical education, psychology, sports, medicine, and other allied disciplines, and create a well-knit society of individuals devoted to a common cause, and strengthen it

Major features of the SPAI

1. The SPAI is a *voluntary* organization of the well-focused and self-less individuals having an open mind and professional approach towards generation, proliferation, and application of the knowledge of psychology as related to all kinds of sport and physical activity – both in their competitive and recreational nuances.
2. The Organization is *registered* under the Society's Act XXI of 1860 at with the Registrar of Firms and Societies, Punjab, Chandigarh.
3. Any individual having good academic credentials and a clear vision of the subject of psychology is welcome to join the SPAI and he/she can aspire to be at the helm of affairs in the organization without distinction of caste, creed, language, or institutional affiliation.
4. The SPAI is a non-profit organization and no financial

gains are attached to any of the positions held by its members.

5. The SPAI has linkages with the International Society of Sport Psychology, and Asian South-Pacific Association of Sport Psychology on the one hand, and national sports federations, and such organizations as the Sports Authority of India, National Institute of Sports, and others on the other.

Land-Mark achievements of the SPAI

From an initial strength of 13, the rank and file of the SPAI have steadily grown to more than 350 today. The developmental perspective of the Society has expanded longitudinally and horizontally signifying quantitative as well as qualitative improvement in the areas of research, scientific interaction, and extension services:

- Since its inception, the SPAI has made attempts to assert itself on the academic and sport environment in the country, and even abroad. It has made its presence felt at the international forums with the active participation of its members in research and developmental activities.
- Despite a variety of constraints, the SPAI has continued to move on the path of progress by successfully organizing its regular national meets year after year with active support from highly reputed institutions and organizations as shown below:

National Conference of Sports Psychology through the Years

Number	Dates	Venue & Organizers
I	11-13 January, 1986	Laxmibai National College of Physical Education, Gwalior
II	15-17 November, 1986	Netaji Subhas National Institute of Sports, Patiala
III	09-11 December, 1987	Laxmibai National College of Physical Education, Gwalior
IV	31 January – 02 February, 1989	Department of Physical Education, Gujrat University, Ahmedabad
V	23-25 February, 1990	Department of Psychology, Kashi Vidyapeeth, Varanasi
VI	25-27 February, 1991	Sports Psychology Association of India, New Delhi
VII	28-30 December, 1992	Laxmibai National College of Physical Education, Thiruvananthapuram
VIII	21-23 March, 1993	Department of Psychology, Kumaun University, Almora
IX	06-08 May, 1994	Department of Physical Education, Nagarjuna University, Guntur (A.P.)
X	29-31 March, 1997	Department of Physical Education Thiagarajar College, Madurai
XI	06-08 March, 1998	University College of Technology, Osmania University, Hyderabad.
XII	28-30 December, 1999	Laxmibai National College of Physical Education, Thiruvananthapuram
XIII	17-19 December, 2000	Department of Physical Education, Gurukul Kangri University, Haridwar
XIV	27-27 December, 2001	Department of Psychology, Mahatma Gandhi Kashi Vidyapeeth, Varanasi
XV	06-08 October, 2002	Department of Psychology, Kumaun University, Almora
XVI	28-30 December, 2003	Department of Psychology, Chaudhary Charan Singh University, Meerut
XVII	26-28 November, 2004	Department of Psychology, University of Jammu, Jammu
XVIII	27-29 January, 2006	Department of Psychology and Sports Board, J.N.V. University, Jodhpur
XIX	18-20 January, 2007	Nizam Institute of Engineering & Technology, and Department of Psychology, Osmania University, Hyderabad.

- Financially supported by the University Grants Commission, Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Indian Council of Social Science Research, Department of Science and Technology, universities concerned, and their institutions, a good number of SPAI members have done honour to the SPAI and the country by participating in the international conferences, executive committee meetings of the international bodies, even sometimes at their expenses.
- Using personal influence, the SPAI leadership has been successful in playing host to such stalwarts of sport psychology as Prof. Robert N. Singer (Florida, USA), Prof. Bryant J. Cratty (UCLA, USA), Prof. Gerd Conzang (Leipzig, Germany), Dr. Hans Schellenberger (German

Democratic Republic), Mr. Peter T. Clarke (Scotland), Dr. Mike Hughes and Dr. Keith Davids (both from England) and others in India on various occasions to develop closer ties with the world outside India and smoothen the way for the development of sport psychology in the country.

- The SPAI was instrumental in motivating first LNCPE, Gwalior and then NSNIS, South Centre, Bangalore to facilitate the annual meeting of ISSP Managing Council in 1987 and 1999, respectively. During the III National Conference of Sports Psychology at LNCPE, Gwalior, the ISSP Managing Council was headed by Prof. Robert N. Singer and in July 1999, Gershon Tenenbaum was in the forefront. A few members of the ISSP team also visited

NIS, Patiala, and Chandigarh and made presentations there. The two-day workshop organized on the latter occasion was coordinated by senior luminaries of the SPAI. A large number of SPAI members benefited from the presentations made by elite sports psychologists from various countries.

- Regular scientific interaction among the members has, over the years, opened new vistas of information and technology about the methodological procedures, and use of statistical techniques in designing psychological studies. As a result, the manifold increase could be witnessed in the dissertations, theses, research papers, books, and publications involving psychological principles as applied to physical activity and sport.
- The SPAI played a key role in the founding of the Asian South-Pacific Association of Sport Psychology during the 1988-Seoul Olympic Scientific Congress. Jitendra Mohan and M.L. Kamlesh from India held the positions of vice-president and national representative on the ASPASP for two

terms.

- Ever since its inception, the SPAI has enjoyed societal membership of the International Society of Sport Psychology, on the strength of which Jitendra Mohan has had the privilege to serve on its Managing Council for eight years. This facilitated the members of the SPAI to be admitted to several privileges and concessions allowed to the ISSP members during international conferences and other academic and scientific programmes.
- The Sports Psychology Association of India brings out a News-letter highlighting its achievements and those of its members from time to time. Besides serving as a communication channel, the News-letter keeps the members updated about the activities of the society.

Every four years, the change of guards is brought about with utmost openness and unanimity. This gives an edge to the SPAI over all other organizations of the kind to put up a better account of its doings. The key officials of the SPAI through the years are shown in the following tables:

President

Sl. No.	Name and Institutional Affiliation	Term of Office
1.	Dr. Jitendra Mohan, Department of Psychology, Punjab University, Chandigarh	February, 1985 - March, 1993
2.	Dr. M.L Kamlesh, Laxmibai National College of Physical Education, Thiruvananthapuram	April 1993 – March, 2002
3.	Dr. Anand Kumar Srivastava, Department of Psychology, Mahatma Gandhi Kashi Vidyapeeth, Varanasi	April. 2002 – March, 2006
4.	Dr. Rajinder Singh, School of Studies in Physical Education and Sports Sciences, Jiwaji University, Gwalior	April 2006 – March, 2012
5.	Prof. N.S. Mann, (Retired Professor and Chairman, Department of Physical Education, Punjab University), Chandigarh	April 2012 - to date

Secretary General

Sl. No.	Name and Institutional Affiliation	Term of Office
1.	Dr. M.L Kamlesh, Punjab Government College of Physical Education, Patiala	February 1985 – March, 1993
2.	Dr.(Miss) Avinash Sidhu, Laxmibai National College of Physical Education, Gwalior	April 1994 – March, 1998
3.	Dr. H.A. Khan, Faculty of Sports Sciences, Netaji National Institute of Sports, Patiala	April 1998 – March 1999
4.	Dr. Sanjiv Sahni, Sports Authority of India, New Delhi	April 1999 - March 2002 (temporary charge)
5.	Dr. Jayashree Acharya, Laxmibai National College of Physical Education, Thiruvananthapuram	April 2002 – March 2006
6.	Prof. Dilip K. Dureha, Department of Physical Education, Faculty of Arts, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi (U.P.)	April 2006 – March 2006
		April 2012 - to date

Finance Secretary

Sl. No.	Name and Institutional Affiliation	Term of Office
1.	Dr. H.A. Khan, Faculty of Sports Sciences, Netaji Subhas National Institute of Sports, Patiala	February 1985 – March, 1998
2.	Dr. (Miss) Usha Singh, Daulat Ram College, New Delhi	April 1998 – March, 2002
3.	Dr. Dilip Dureha, Department of Physical Education, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi	April 2002 – March, 2012
4.	Dr. Dhananjay Shaw, Associate Professor, IGI of Physical Education, Vikaspuri, New Delhi	April 2012 till date

Current list of SPAI executives^[2]

President SPAI

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Secretary General SPAI

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Finance Secretary

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