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Volleyball federation of India: Emergence and development

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Abstract

The formation of Volleyball Federation of India (V.F.I.) has been one of the main factors in the development and popularization of the game of Volleyball in India. Since the formation of the V.F.I. the Indian team started to participate in World Championships, Asian Games, Asian Championship, Commonwealth Championship and many other International Tournaments held in India and abroad. The Volleyball Federation of India has quickly fallen in line with the World body's desire to popularize the game by promoting club volleyball. In India, the game is played both indoors and outdoors. The rural teams in India have shown tremendous talent. Better technological and scientific methods need to be introduced in the coaching them to ensure sustenance of better results. The India Men's National Volleyball Team and the India Women's National Volleyball Team represent India in international volleyball competitions. All this is managed by the Volleyball Federation of India. A league named has been started in India for volleyball with six teams participating in four round robin format at two different venues Chennai, and Kochi. It is called Pro Volleyball League. Indian Volleyball team is inching forward to the top list in the world. However, the game needs more publicity and awareness among all groups of people in order to develop Volleyball in India to the next level. Volleyball in India needs more technological and scientific training process as well.

Keywords: Volleyball, Volleyball Federation of India (V. F. I.), Indian Olympic Association (IOA), National Volleyball League Club Championship, India Men's National Volleyball Team, India Women's National Volleyball Team

Introduction

The game volleyball was introduced in India by the Y.M.C.A. during the early part of the 20th century India. The game of Volleyball was brought to India more than 70 years ago when some Physical Education teachers who had been abroad, were trained in different games including Volleyball. The Y.M.C.A. college of Physical Education at Madras was one of the first institutions to take up Volleyball and the physical education teachers trained there have taken the game to almost all parts of the Indian sub-continent. The students trained here took the sport to other parts of the country. The formation of Volleyball Federation of India (V.F.I.) has been one of the main factors in the development and popularization of the game of Volleyball in India.

Today game play throughout the length and breadth of the country schools, colleges, universities, stadiums, public play grounds and in villages and rural areas. The popularity of the game is increasing day by day in all the states of the country. The number of tournaments, championships, competitions and coaching's camps conducted throughout the year are a clear indication that it has taken deep root on Indian soil. Volleyball is one of the games for inter-school and inter-collegiate championships in many places and inter-university and north-zone inter-university championships are held every year.

The Volleyball Federation of India was formed in the year 1951. Prior to the formation of the Volleyball Federation of India (VFI), the game was controlled by the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) and at that time the Interstate Volleyball Championship was held every two years from 1936 to 1950 for men only. The first Championship was held in the year 1936 at Lahore (now in Pakistan). In 1951, Volleyball Federation of India was formed, and its first meeting was held in Ludhiana (Punjab). Since the formation of the V.F.I. the Indian team started to participate in World Championships, Asian Games, Asian Championship,

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Commonwealth Championship and many other International Tournaments held in India and abroad. India won the Gold medal at the Invitation Asian Meet at Japan in 1955. Volleyball comprises energetic body movements as well as rapid jumps and leaps. Being a fairly affordable sport, volleyball is played in all parts of the country around the year. Volleyball in India is played by several educational institutions and the armed forces also. The Indian Volleyball team secured third place and the bronze at the Asian games in 1958 at Tokyo, the year in which the game was first introduced in the event. In the third and fourth Asian Games held at Tokyo in 1958 and Djakarta in 1962, India won the bronze and silver medal, respectively. India got a major setback when no player was honoured with the Arjuna Award from 1963 to 1971. India also did not take part in any class of competition from 1964 to 1973. In the year 1974 when India participated in the Asian Games at Tehran it got 5th place and it was felt that India had lagged behind. In the year 1980 in the first Commonwealth Games for Men, India got 3rd place in the Championships. Moreover, the Indian team won many matches against visiting teams in India and also out of India in International meets. The Volleyball Federation of India has quickly fallen in line with the World body's desire to popularize the game by promoting club volleyball. India is among half a dozen Asian countries putting this variety of league in place. The preliminary phase of the National Volleyball League Club Championship was spread across different centers culminating in a Final League. This new platform has given Club volleyball a fresh lease of life. For these clubs there is now this national pride to play for, greater exposure and recognition coming in its wake. Some of the top clubs in the country jumped into the bandwagon.

In India, the game is played both indoors and outdoors. The volleyball courts in India are generally 18 meters long and 9m wide. It is split into 2 halves, each 9m in length. The net is 2.43 and 2.24 m above ground level for men and women, respectively. There is an attack line 3m from and parallel to the net. This is for the teams to split their formations into a front and back row sub-teams. Each team has 6 players, and the sport in India adheres to all international standards. The popularity of the game in India shot to better heights when India won the gold medal at the SAF (South Asian Federation) games in 1987 at Calcutta. In the 1989 version of the game, India lost the finals to arch rivals Pakistan. The Indian team clinched the gold medal again in 1991 at Colombo. After this, the women's game started gaining popularity. Though they put up a good show in the 1993 SAF games at Dhaka, the women's team is yet to make an impact as big as the men's team.

Many Indian players received the Arjuna award for their contribution to the game. Jimmy George, the best ever Indian volleyball player. Some of them include, Palaniswamy (1961), Nripjit Singh (1962), Balwant Singh (1972) after a 10 year gap, Malini Reddy, Shyam Sundar Rao, Ellamma, Jimmy George etc. Jimmy George in particular was a very talented individual. He was the first Indian player to become a professional and was also regarded as one of the best ten players in the world in his time. Sadly though, he met a bad end dying in a crash in Italy. The Indian junior teams have also impressed. They reached the World Championships in 2002 and in 2003, in the presence of about 7000 home fans in the newly constructed stadium at Vishakhapatnam; the team clinched the Asian title. Indian volleyball witnessed its best in the year 2003, when the Indian team won an Asian Games title at the Rajiv Gandhi Port indoor stadium in

Vishakhapatnam. The Indian junior team also qualified for the World Championship at the end of the year 2002. It won the Asian Games in Iran in 2010. Volleyball in India, Indian Athletics Though the performance of the team has been fairly consistent over a long time, they have not been able to get the required limelight and sponsorship to propel the sport forward in India. The rural teams have shown tremendous talent, but sadly there is not much scope for them. They lack exposure and hence that talent never comes to the fore. Better technological and scientific methods need to be introduced in the coaching to ensure sustenance of better results ^[1].

Description

Volleyball in India is a much reputed sport that is almost 70 years old. Volleyball is popular in Indian states and cities like Bengaluru, Chennai, Hyderabad and Yanam. The game is played all over the country and various tournaments are conducted every season. Volleyball in India is a popular sport that is played in various regions of India and several reputed Volleyball tournaments are also organized as well. The physical education instructors who came to Indian from abroad around 70 years ago introduced volleyball in India. Volleyball comprises energetic body movements as well as rapid jumps and leaps. Being a fairly affordable sport, volleyball is played in all parts of the country around the year. Volleyball in India is played by several educational institutions and the armed forces also. The Indian Volleyball team secured third place and the bronze at the Asian games in 1958 at Tokyo, the year in which the game was first introduced in the event.

• Origin of Volleyball

Volleyball originated in the United States. William G. Morgan, a physical education teacher, is credited as its inventor. He devised the game by merging aspects of tennis and throw ball to form an indoor game. The first exhibition match was held in 1896 at Springfield College, Massachusetts, where the game's use of volleys led an observer to dub it as Volley-Ball.

• History of Volleyball in India

The Y.M.C.A. College of Physical Education in Madras (now Chennai) first began training its students in the sport, which then eventually spread to other parts of the country. Initially, the game was managed by Indian Olympic Association and the Interstate Volleyball Championship was conducted every 2 years, between the years 1936 and 1950. At the time, the Championship was organised for male players only. In the year 1951, the Volleyball Federation of India was established and since then the national team had participated in several international championships like Asian Championship, Commonwealth Games, and Asian Games etc. After Indian independence, the first Indian National Championship was organised in 1952 at Chennai. The game was there upon organised for both men and women. The Indian Volleyball team won Gold medal in 1955, at the Invitation Asian Meet held at Japan. Between 1963 and 1963, none of the Volleyball players received any of the Arjuna Awards, which was considered as a set back to Volleyball in India.

• Rules of Volleyball in India

The basic rules of Volleyball in India mention that one team scores point if they throw the ball into the opponent's court and the opponents fail to throw it back; and can also gain point if any fault is made by the opponent team. The team that

scores 25 points first wins the set, and in a 5 setter, the team winning 3 sets also wins the match. Further, a team can touch the ball thrice before it traverses the net but only different players can push the ball in succession. Generally, hands or arms are used to hit the ball but hitting by any body parts is allowed legally since the 1996 Olympics. The volleyball court is generally 18 m long and 9 m wide, parted into two 9 m by 9 m courts. The net is kept 2.43 m and 2.24 m above the centre of the court for men's and women's competition respectively. There is also an attack line that is around 3 m from and similar to the net in each team's court that separates it into back and front row areas.

• Development of Volleyball in India

The popularity of volleyball in India made it the only game to make a stable place in the South Asian Federation Games (SAF) in 1987 in Kolkata. In the year 1991, the Indian Volleyball team regained its gold medal in Colombo games. The Indian Women Volleyball team distinguished itself in the 1993 SAF games in Dhaka, although it is yet to make a mark in the Asian games. Indian volleyball witnessed its best in the year 2003, when the Indian team won an Asian Games title at the Rajiv Gandhi Port indoor stadium in Vishakhapatnam. The Indian junior team also qualified for the World Championship at the end of the year 2002. It won the Asian Games in Iran in 2010.

• Indian Volley League

Indian Volley League is a professional volleyball league in India. It was launched by the Volleyball Federation of India in 2011. The inaugural edition featured six teams and the top players in the country. Chennai Spikers, Hyderabad Chargers, Karnataka Bulls, Kerala Killers, Maratha Warriors and Yanam Tigers are the prospective teams in Indian Volley League. 2011 Indian Volley League season was the debut season of the Indian Volley League, established by Volleyball federation of India in 2011. Indian Volley League commenced on the 29th May 2011 and ended on 24th June 2011. The Chennai Spikers were the champions of the inaugural edition^[2].

Volleyball Federation of India

Volleyball Federation of India was formed in the year 1951. Prior to the formation of the Volleyball Federation of India (VFI), the game was controlled by the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) and at that time the Interstate Volleyball Championship was held every two years from 1936 to 1950 for men only. The first Championship was held in the year 1936 at Lahore (now in Pakistan). In 1951, Volleyball Federation of India was formed, and its first meeting was held in Ludhiana (Punjab).

• Aims, Objectives, Functions And Duties

Over the years, the major aims, objectives, functions, and duties of the V. F. I. as stated in the Constitution are:^[3]

I. To encourage and promote physical well-being for both Men and Women spirit of participation in Games & Sports in general and promotion of the game of Volleyball in particular. Provided always that the aims and objects would not be profit making. The benefits should be available to all competent persons without distinction of religion, caste and / or sex. The application of the Volleyball Federation of India fund and activities would be confined to the territories of India.

- II. To promote, regulate, organize and control the game of Volleyball.
- III. To coordinate and encourage all activities in connection with Volleyball in India and abroad.
- IV. To hold National Championship for Men, Women, Boys and Girls and organize and run zonal and such other championships / competitions and trial matches as may be decided by the Executive committee of the Federation.
- V. To organize and hold coaching and training camps for players and refresher courses for referees and coaches for promotion of the game, and to establish and maintain libraries for the diffusion of knowledge in Volleyball rules and games.
- VI. To hold qualifying tests for Volleyball Referees, Volleyball Coaches and other officials and lay down rules and regulations for their registration and proper functioning.
- VII. To promote, control and assist in the formation of State and Departmental organizations and to admit them to suitable memberships and to lay down rules and conditions for the registration of State and Departmental organizations, players and 2 officials at all level.
- VIII. To lay down rules and regulations for the affiliation of the members with the Volleyball Federation of India and for their proper functioning.
- IX. To coordinate, assist and guide the activities and functioning of the member organizations and through the other Volleyball bodies under their jurisdiction.
- X. To take disciplinary action against the members and their officials and office bearers in relation to the Volleyball Federation of India.
- XI. To receive or to hear appeals from its members, Volleyball Players, Clubs, Referees, Coaches and other officials against disciplinary action taken against them by any other body and by any authority of the Federation and / or by its Member Unit.
- XII. To collect, receive and acquire grants, funds, donations, contributions, trophies, shields, awards and other properties, movable and immovable on behalf of the Federation.
- XIII. To levy affiliation and other fees from its members for the proper discharge of its functions.
- XIV. To seek affiliation with and recognition by the competent National and International bodies.
- XV. To invite Volleyball teams and officials to the country and to organize and / or finance international meets and championships and conduct tours by foreign team in this country.
- XVI. To arrange and sponsor participation for the National and other Volleyball teams in the Olympics, the World, the Asian and other International contests, games and meets and to select teams to represent India in International contests / competitions and / or games arranged in connection with cultural exchange programme between India and other countries AND to promote, control and finance visits by such teams abroad.
- XVII. To arrange representation of the Volleyball Federation of India in International bodies, Asian bodies and in such other bodies as is considered necessary and their meetings.
- XVIII. The Federation will only deal with amateur games as defined by the competent National and International

bodies.

- XIX. To allow members to send their teams abroad and / or invite teams from abroad as per the rules of Volleyball Federation of India.
- XX. To render, if any when possible, financial assistance to affiliated organizations for the promotion and training of the game.
- XXI. To grant scholarships / monetary help / contribute donations to institutions and / or to the families of deserving players / coaches / officials who are in need of the same because of natural calamities, hardship, poverty and distress.
- XXII. To compass differences, if any, among / between member / members and others at the request of the member and / or of its own and / or otherwise in resolving differences and other difficulties / differences within the member's / members' State / States concerned and to arbitrate and constitute Tribunals and set up Adhoc Committee, etc. give direction as is considered necessary either of its own or at the request of the member concerned and / or otherwise.
- XXIII. To be the official organization in complete and sole charge of all matters concerned with the game of Volleyball in India.
- XXIV. To generally do all such other acts as may be desirable or necessary to preserve and / or augment the interest / cause of the game.

- **Office-Bearers**

The 22 Office-bearers of I. V. F. are

- President
- One Executive Vice-President
- Nine Vice-Presidents
- Secretary General
- Two Associate Secretaries
- Treasurer
- Seven Joint Secretaries

India Men's National Volleyball Team

The India men's national volleyball team represents India in international volleyball competitions. It is managed by the Volleyball Federation of India and is currently sponsored by Sahara India Pariwar and Asics. The Indian volleyball team had a rollercoaster ride in its history. Although they have never qualified for the Olympics, they have appeared in the World Championship twice. Despite having little to no presence at the world stage in its history, the team has enjoyed some success at the continental level by clinching a silver medal and two bronze medals at the Asian Games. After the decline post 1980s, the team has fared well at the recently introduced Asian Cup competition, receiving a silver and a bronze medal so far.

- **History**

Though the game was played informally for a long time, the first interstate volleyball tournament was held in 1936 by Indian Olympic Association (IOA). In 1951, the formation of Volleyball Federation of India gave the sport a better structure and the interstate tournament evolved into the senior national championship with the first edition being held in 1952. This platform gave birth too many talents who went on to represent India at the international level. India had immediate success after formation as they made their debut in FIVB Volleyball Men's World Championship's 1952 edition. After losing to France and Czechoslovakia by comfortable 3-0 margins in

the first round, they made a comeback in the 7th-8th placing round as they beat Finland, Lebanon and Israel to clinch the 8th spot. In 1955, India won the Asian Volleyball Tournament which was held in Tokyo. Three years later, the Gurudev Singh led team won the bronze medal at the 1958 Asian Games. They beat Hong Kong and the Philippines in three straight sets but could not get past volleyball powerhouses Iran and Japan, though they managed to win a set against each. In the 1962 Asian Games they managed to go one step ahead as they began their campaign with four consecutive wins against Burma (twice), Cambodia and Pakistan. Their old rivals Japan got the better of them in what was a five set thriller, with Japan winning the final set by 15-12 margin. This team was led by legendary players Nripjit Singh Bedi and A. Palaniswamy, both Arjuna Award winners, who had graduated to the senior team, which was then led by TP Padmanabhan Nair, who was also a part of the 1958 team. India has to settle for the Silver Medal which is currently their highest achievement ever at the Asian Games. After a memorable outing at the 1962 Asian Games, India finished fourth and fifth at the 1966 and 1974 Asian Games respectively, not making it to the 1970 edition in between. India did not enter into the inaugural Asian men's volleyball championship in 1975 but made their debut in the following tournament in 1979 where they finished fifth. In the 1978 Asian Games in Bangkok and at the 1982 Asian Games at home in New Delhi, the Indian volleyball team saw another upswing after finishing seventh and fourth respectively, falling just short of a medal in 1982 edition after they finished at the bottom of the table among four teams in the final round, going down to the heavyweights South Korea and China in straight sets.

In the following year at the Asian Volleyball Championship in Tokyo, India finished fifth yet again without any medal. However, the wait for a medal would not last too long. In the 1986 Asian Games India sent arguably its best team ever. Led by Cyril Valloor, the team boasted the presence of former national coach GE Sridharan, K Udayakumar, who later went on to captain the Indian volleyball team, Abdul Basith, Dalel Singh and PV Ramana, father of Indian badminton star PV Sindhu. All of them were Arjuna awardees but the most special of them all and the team's lynchpin was the talented Jimmy George, an Arjuna winner himself and a legend of Indian volleyball. He had been tearing up the national circuit for a decade and also had stints at clubs in Italy, one of the best leagues in that era, along with GE Sridharan. Jimmy George towered at a height of 6'2" and had the advantage of graceful jumps. His ability in the air for a fraction of a second longer helped him in his smashes, all of which were very powerful thanks to his larger frame. All of these factors combined well together, and the Indian volleyball team started the Asian Games with four victories – against Hong Kong, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and Indonesia. Later in the games, they went down to the home team South Korea, who went on to register another victory later, but in between the Indian volleyball team finally managed to beat powerhouses Japan, more impressively in straight sets, facilitated by Jimmy George's tremendous drive. However, they could not sustain the momentum, as they fell to eventual champions China, to end up with bronze medal. The general popularity of the sport in the country declined in the years to follow as in-fighting within federations coincided with the death of Jimmy George in an accident in 1987 and adding to it was the rise of the Indian national cricket team as a powerhouse. The Indian volleyball men and women's teams dominated the South

Asian Federation Games in the nineties, winning three medals each, but it did not spark a revival, with under par performances to follow at the 2006 and 2010 by the men after they came at ninth and sixth, respectively. However, they finished fourth in the 2005 Asian Men's Volleyball Championship which is currently their highest ever finish at this tournament. They went all the way to semi-finals where they lost in straight sets against Japan and then went down to South Korea in third place match losing with a margin of three sets to one.

The 2010 and 2014 editions of the Asian Games provided some respite as the Indian volleyball men's team finished a respectable fifth with modern-day stars and inspirational captains Sinnadu Prabhakaran and Mohan Ukkrapandian leading the way [6]. The team also played at the Asian Cup, where they achieved some fine results, capturing bronze medal at the 2010 Asian Cup and reached all the way to the final of the 2014 Asian Cup by defeating Japan in the group stage, the top Asian team Iran in the semi-final before succumbing to South Korea with a margin of three sets to one. Besides couple of good performances at the Asian level, the team also managed to claim a gold medal at the 2010 South Asian Games. The Indian volleyball men's team was ranked 34th in 2014, their best in the world, they also managed to win a gold medal eighth gold medal at 2016 South Asian Games, but just as it seemed that the sport was picking up again, an internal dispute in the VFI meant that it was banned from the International Volleyball Federation (FIVB) for two years till 2018. It meant that Indian volleyball players could not travel to other leagues to play, which affected the exposure to different styles, a factor which coach GE Sridharan felt led to a 12th place finish at the 2018 Asian Games.

However, things are looking up again. The Pro Volleyball League, a franchise-based tournament was started in 2019 and it was a resounding success, made more memorable by the appearance of stars like American David Lee, an Olympic gold medalist in 2008. India also gained their ninth and seventh successive gold medal at the South Asian Games in 2019. Though the men's Indian volleyball team will not be in Tokyo following their loss in the Olympic qualification tournament, with the renewed interest in the sport thanks to the new franchise league and Haikyuu!! anime, the nation could see the upswing in the next few years [4].

India Women's National Volleyball Team

Indian women's national volleyball team represents India in international competitions and is managed by the Volleyball Federation of India. In July 2018, Minamol Abraham was appointed as the captain of the Indian national team for the 2018 Asian Games. The team won the gold medal at the 2019 South Asian Games as they defeated Nepal in the final. Similar to their male counterparts, the Indian women's team has never qualified for the summer Olympics. India has qualified only once in the World Championship [5].

Conclusion

The Volleyball Federation of India was formed in the year 1951. Prior to the formation of the Volleyball Federation of India (VFI), the game was controlled by the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) and at that time the Interstate Volleyball Championship was held every two years from 1936 to 1950 for men only. The first Championship was held in the year 1936 at Lahore (now in Pakistan). In 1951, the Volleyball Federation of India was formed, and its first meeting was held

in Ludhiana (Punjab). Volleyball is a sport played all over India, both in rural as well as urban India. It is a popular recreation sport. India was ranked 5th in Asia, and 27th in the world in 2013. Doing well in the youth and junior levels, in second in the 2003 World Youth Championships. Currently, a major problem for the sport is the lack of sponsors. The Indian senior men's team is currently ranked 78th in the world. A league named has been started in India for volleyball with six teams participating in four round robin format at two different venues Chennai, and Kochi. It is called Pro Volleyball League. The teams come from Chennai, Hyderabad, Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Calicut and Kochi [6]. Indian Volleyball team is inching forward to the top list in the world. However, the game needs more publicity and awareness among all groups of people in order to develop Volleyball in India to the next level. The rural players need more motivation and to retain the good players from rural areas also needs financial help. Volleyball in India needs more technological and scientific training process as well.

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4. "The Volleyball Handbook" by Bob Miller
5. "Aggressive Volleyball" by Pete Waite
6. "The Volleyball Coaching Bible (The Volleyball Coaching Bible, #1)" by American Volleyball Coaches Association
7. "The Volleyball Coaching Bible Volume II (The Volleyball Coaching Bible, #2)" by American Volleyball Coaches Association
8. "Beach Volleyball" by KarchKiralay, Byron Shewman
9. "Live Like Line / Love Like Ellyn" by Bill Hoelt
10. "Dream Like A Champion: Wins, Losses, and Leadership the Nebraska Volleyball Way" by Brandon Vogel and John Cook
11. "Big Girl in the Middle" by Gabrielle Reece
12. "Coach Your Brains Out: Lessons on the Art and Science of Coaching Volleyball" by John Mayer and Billy Ketch Allen
13. "The Untold Story of William G. Morgan, Inventor of Volleyball" by Joel Dearing
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