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ABSTRACT

India boasts a rich sporting heritage dating back thousands of years. Despite its rich sporing culture, India only began developing its own sporting ecosystem in 1954 with the creation of the All-India Council of Sports (AICS), shortly after gaining independence from the United Kingdom in 1947. However, in the seven decades that have passed, the systematisation and development of sport of India has been relatively slow and internationally India have had limited success on the elite stage. The aim of this profile is to provide a detailed insight into the vast sporting ecosystem in India by exploring the policies, enablers, and barriers in relation to sport participation, elite sport, and the use of sport across the nation to tackle non-sporting objectives. Following an introduction highlighting the key demographics and sporting culture in India, the profile moves onto outline the state led provision of sport in India, including how sport is organised and funded. Next, the significance of the commercial sport sector in India is highlighted, followed by a section detailing the growth of the not-for-profit sector. Finally, the profile highlights the current public policy priorities and challenges, which include elite sport success, tackling inactivity and poor governance in sport before offering some concluding observations.

Introduction

India is the second largest country in the world with a population of more 1.2 billion encompassing approximately one-sixths of the world's population (World Bank 2022). Boasting the world's largest democracy, India has 29 states, seven union territories and is characterised by its diversity in terms of religion, culture, language, and ethnicity (Chelladurai *et al*. 2011, Nicholson *et al*. 2011, Chelladurai and Nair 2017, Chelladurai and Patil 2020). Over the past decade, the nation's integration into the global economy has been accompanied by economic growth. India now boasts one of the fastest growing economies in the world and the current value of the economy is USD 2.30 trillion, the seventh largest in the world (World Bank 2022). Despite its growing economy, the publicly investible resources available in India are scarce due to low per capita income and high poverty rates (Mahapatra 2020, Mukherjee and Badola 2021), as such the investment into sport is limited as the nation is compelled by more basic needs (e.g. tackling issues related to poverty). In terms of India's purchasing power parity (PPP) its economy ranks third in the world, however India ranks 122nd in the world for PPP per person, due to its vast population (CIA 2022).

This country profile provides a detailed insight into the vast sporting ecosystem in India by exploring the policies, enablers, and barriers in relation to sport participation, elite sport, and the use of sport across the nation to tackle non-sporting objectives. Administratively, India is a relatively

young nation, having gained international recognition as an independent country in 1947, for that reason sports policies in modern India are also young and evolving as it tries to create and forge its own identity on the global sporting landscape. While India as an independent nation is a little more than 70 years old, it is important to recognise that the Indian subcontinent has a rich sporting culture and heritage dating back thousands of years. For example, it is one of the few countries that have retained the popularity of indigenous sports (e.g., yoga, gilli-danda, kabaddi and kho-kho). In addition to indigenous sports, many sports were also imported due to colonialisation and influence from the West e.g., cricket, football, rugby union, golf, tennis, squash, hockey, boxing, snooker, and billiards. As such, modern sport in India enjoys a diverse mixture of popular sports which include a blend of indigenous sport and imported sports (Polson and Whiteside 2016). In spite of having the second largest global population, the performance of India in international sports, barring cricket, has been described as 'dismal' (Nandakumar and Sandhu 2014, p. 14). Although India has won medals on the world stage in tennis, badminton, shooting, boxing and wrestling, the number of medals won, compared to the size of its population and growing economy, India is considered an underperforming nation on the elite sport stage.

State led provision of sport

The Jawaharlal Nehru led government created the All-India Council of Sports (AICS) in 1954 to promote sports in the country. The role of AICS was to advise the government on issues such as the national sports policy, funding of national sports federations and providing coaching for elite athletes (Khasnis *et al*. 2021). Prior to the 1982 Asian Games hosted in New Delhi, the Indira Gandhi led government installed a specific government department to look after sport (now known as Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, MYAS). As its first act, the MYAS introduced India's first ever National Sports Policy (NSP) and launched the Sports Authority of India (SAI) to develop coaches and physical education teachers, to grow participation in sport and physical activity participation, and sporting infrastructure (Ghosh *et al*. 2013). The MYAS set up two distinct government units in 1986: the Netaji Subhas National Institute of Sport (NSNIS) and the Lakshmibai National College of Physical Education (LNCPE) to emphasise the importance of sport and physical education in the education sector through the National Education Policy (Chelladurai *et al*. 2002, 2011, Chelladurai and Patil 2020). India's early sport policy in 1984 separated physical education and sport from each other as two distinct focus areas. In the subsequent years, while sport policies and sporting ecosystems were embedded in many other nations, there was no sport policy update for 16 years in India, until 2001.

In 2001, India updated its sport policy to focus on a dual aim of mass participation in sport and excellence at the elite level (Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports 2022g). According to the 2001 policy the promotion of mass participation was to be led by the central government, whereas the central government and the SAI collaborated with the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) and NSFs to promote elite sport excellence. Unfortunately, these policies saw very little improvement in elite Indian sport as India won a total of 4 medals in the two subsequent Olympics (2004, 2008).

The development of sport was identified as a national priority again in 2011 by the Manmohan Singh led UPA government. The National Sports Development Code (NSDC) of India was formed in 2011, see Figure 1 (Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports 2022e) and recognised that sport could offer in promoting an active lifestyle, child and youth development, social inclusiveness, employment opportunities, peace, and development, belongingness and national pride. The aims of the NSDC 2011 were twofold. Firstly, it aimed to define the areas of responsibility of the various agencies involved in the promotion and development of sports, identify National Sports Federations (NSFs) eligible for coverage under these guidelines, to set priorities, and to detail the procedures to be followed by the Federations, benefit from Government sponsorship and assistance and state the
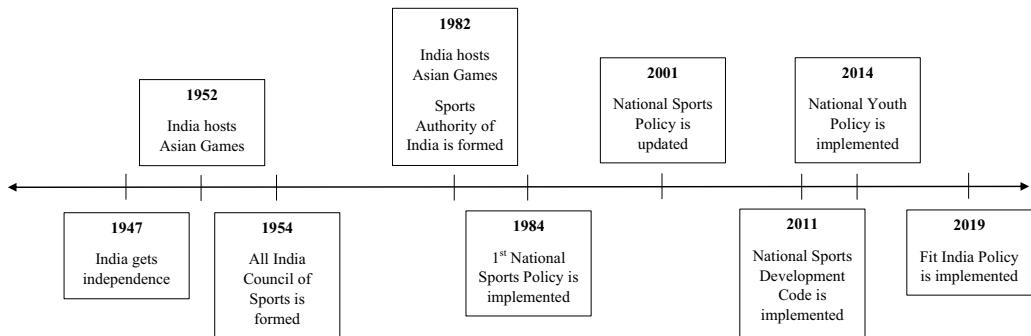
Figure 1. A timeline of key dates influencing sport development policy in India between 1947–2019.

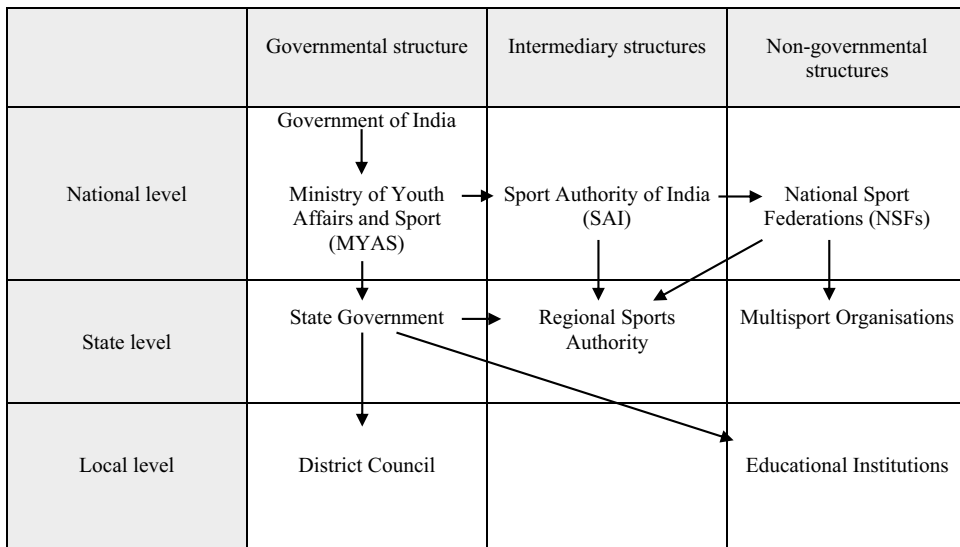|	Governmental structure	Intermediary structures	Non-governmental structures
National level	Government of India ↓ Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sport (MYAS)	Sport Authority of India (SAI)	National Sport Federations (NSFs)
State level	State Government	Regional Sports Authority	Multisport Organisations
Local level	District Council		Educational Institutions

Figure 2. The organisational structure of sport in India.

conditions for eligibility to receive government recognition and grant. Secondly, the NSDC 2011 aimed to ensure the functioning of NSFs in accordance with the principles and objectives of the concerned international federation, the principles of the Olympic Charter and the constitution of the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) to be eligible for financial assistance and sponsorship from MYAS. However, between 2011 and 2017, several developments challenged the ethics and good governance in sports administration in India, prompting the Narendra Modi led NDA government to introduce the draft National Code for Good Governance in Sports 2017 (Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports 2022b). The primary aim of the draft NCGGS 2017 was to clarify the basic universal principles of good governance, ethics and specify the mandatory minimum governance standards and norms for the IOA and NSFs. However, the policy has not been adopted as different NSFs have utilised legal loopholes to keep the implementation of various principles of NCGGS 2017 at bay (McLeod and Star 2020). Most recently, the Narendra Modi led government launched the Fit India movement in 2019 to make fitness and physical activity an integral part of the daily life in India (Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports 2022c).

The organisation of sport in India

The government of India, also known as the Union of India, is modelled after the Westminster system (Harding 2004). According to Harding (2004), the Union government is mainly comprised of the executive, the legislature, and the judiciary, and powers are vested by the constitution in the prime minister, parliament, and the supreme court, respectively. The Union Council of Ministers includes the prime minister, Cabinet Ministers, and Ministers of State (MoS). Figure 2 summarises the organisational structure of sport in India at the National, State and Local level.

The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports is a branch of the Government of India. The Ministry was set up as the Department of Sports at the time of organisation of 1982 Asian Games New Delhi. Its name was changed to the Department of Youth Affairs & Sports during celebration of the International Youth Year, 1985. In 2008, the Ministry was divided into Department of Youth Affairs and Department of Sports under two separate Secretaries (Chelladurai *et al.* 2011, Chelladurai and Patil 2020). The Sports Authority of India (SAI) is the highest national sports body of India, established in 1982 by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports for the development of sports in India (Sports Authority of India 2022). In the year 2020–2021, the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports listed 61 recognised National Sports Federations (NSFs) which included a range of Olympic and non-Olympic sports (Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports 2022d).

After independence, on 7 May 1961, the National Institute of Sports (NIS) was set up for the development of sports at the Motibagh Palace grounds in Patiala and was renamed Netaji Subhas National Institute of Sports (NSNIS) in 1973 (Sports Authority of India 2022). According to its website, the SAI has 2 Sports Academic institutions, 11 Regional Centres, 14 Centres of Excellence, 56 Sports Training Centres and 20 Special Area Games. The Training of Elite Athlete Management Support (TEAMS) division is the backbone of SAI, which provides support to the National Sports Federations (NSFs) in the preparation of National Teams, which participate in various international events (Nandakumar and Sandhu 2014). The TEAMS Division coordinates the Long-Term Development Plan of each NSF; provides logistics and training support at various academic institutions and other Regional Centres of SAI and at selected training centres outside SAI.

Under the Charitable Endowments Act of 1890, the Atal Bihari Vajpayee led Government of India established the National Sports Development Fund (NSDF) in 1998. The NSDF is managed by a council constituted by the Government of India, with the Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports serving as the chairperson of the Council. The funding for the NSDF comes mainly from the Public Sector Units (PSUs) and the Public Sector Banks (PSBs). However, following the implementation of Companies Act 2013, private sector companies have contributed to the NSDF as a part of their Corporate Social Responsibility (Harneja and Lal 2019).

The Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS) was started by the Government of India in the year 2014 within the overall objective of identifying and supporting potential medal prospects for the Olympic and Paralympic Games. Under the TOPS scheme, a committee by the name TOPS Elite Athletes' Identification Committee was constituted to identify the athletes who have the potential to win an Olympic medal for the country. The members of the committee are selected by the MYAS with special emphasis on representation from high priority sports like archery, wrestling, badminton, hockey, shooting and boxing. In 2018, the MYAS earmarked a total of INR 100 crore for the funding of athletes under this scheme. Potential medallists from various disciplines such as athletics, badminton, boxing, sailing, shooting and wrestling are identified and provided financial assistance of Rs 50,000 (approximately USD 650/GBP 516) per month (Chelladurai and Nair 2017). In 2019, the MYAS announced the establishment of 20 National Centres of Excellence. The main vision of these centres is to prepare athletes for the 2024 Paris and 2028 Los Angeles Olympics and Paralympics. Each centre of excellence is designated funds for four to six selected sports depending on the infrastructure available and will train athletes in the developmental group for the 2024 Olympics (Lokapally 2019).

The Khelo India Youth Games, Khelo School Games and the Khelo India University Games are part of the Khelo India programme. Khelo India translates as 'Play India' and these series of initiatives are

examples of a government talent identification initiative. According to Wani and Gopinath (2019) the government aimed to use the Khelo initiative to embed a strong sporting culture in India beginning at the grassroots level. The aim was to build a strong framework for all the Indian sports as well as establishing India as a great sporting nation, and to identify talented players in priority sports disciplines at different levels by a high-powered committee. However, the Khelo initiatives have been continually criticised for not fulfilling its aim of identifying talented athletes and also giving a fair chance to the vast talent pool India is believed to have (Chelladurai and Nair 2017, Sanyal 2018).

Funding

The Union Budget of India, also known as the Annual Financial Statement in Article 112 of the Constitution of India, is the annual budget of the Republic of India. The Government presents it on the first day of February so that it could be materialised before the beginning of new financial year in April. An independent budget was first allocated to the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports in 2008. It is important to note that the allocation of budget is different from actual spending as budget deficits for a calendar year are presented during the Union Budget announcement for next year in the parliament. In the annual budgets shown in Table 1. The total budget for sport in India has fluctuated between a low of INR 320 crore (434 USD million/319 GBP million) in 2019/2020 and a high of INR 448 crore (758 USD million/558 GBP) in 2017/2018. In the 2021/22 budget of the Government of India, a total of INR 443 crore was allocated to the development of sport. Considering that a crore is equivalent to 10 million, the 21/22 sport budget equated to approximately 594 million USD or 437 million GBP. In the 2020–21 budget, the Government of India allocated INR 375 core for elite and participation sports combined, which shows that between 2020/2021 and 2021/2022 there was an increase in government budgets to sport by 18.1%.

Table 1 shows a higher percentage of funding towards participation sports in comparison to funding elite sport in all years in Table 1, except for 2015/2016, which indicates that India prioritises its funding for participation sport over elite sport.

The significance of the commercial sport sector in India

In recent years, there are increasing examples to evidence that the Indian government and the private sector are collaborating to strengthen the Indian sports industry. While the development of sport in India has historically been government-led, the commercial sector has seen growth through

Table 1. Annual budgets (2015–2022) for participation sport and elite sport in India.

Year	Participation sport			Elite sport			Total		
	in INR crore	In USD million	In GBP million	in INR crore	In USD million	In GBP million	In INR crore	In USD million	In GBP million
2021/ 22	280	375	276	163	219	161	443	594	437
2020/ 21	245	321	236	130	170	125	375	491	361
2019/ 20	245	333	245	75	101	74	320	434	319
2018/ 19	342	489	360	66	94	69	408	583	429
2017/ 18	302	469	345	186	289	213	488	758	558
2016/ 17	302	276	203	52	77	57	354	353	260
2015/ 16	185	283	208	225	343	253	410	626	461

Source: (Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports 2022a)

corporate social responsibility channels, Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) in sports infrastructure development and for-profit sports academies. Until recently, the main support from the private sector in sports infrastructure development in India comes in the form of PPPs, as such, they are a key enabler of sports development. Examples of successful PPPs highlighted in a report by KPMG and the Confederation of Indian Industry (2014) include Jindal Steel Works which collaborated with the Sport Authority of India (SAI) as part of its Corporate Social Responsibility initiative to oversee the upgrading and maintenance of infrastructure at SAI's regional training centre in Hisar. A second example is the Naya Raipur Development Authority which has built a sports city in Naya Raipur, which have tennis, aquatic, and an indoor stadium facility. Some of the land in Naya Raipur was earmarked for a residential complex, which cross-subsidised the sports facilities (CII-KPMG 2014). While commercial sector involvement in stadium/sports city creation is mainly through the PPPs, several for-profit academies and strategic initiatives have produced some of India's leading athletes. The 'Business of Sports' report by KPMG and the Confederation of Indian Industry (2014) highlights private academies including the Gopichand Badminton Academy, Mary Kom Boxing Academy, Mahesh Bhupathi Tennis Academy, Prakash Padukone Badminton Academy, Bhaichung Bhutia Football Schools, and Bhiwani Boxing Club.

Over the past 10 years, the sport industry in India has seen significant commercial growth. Today, the business of sport is not just an active platform for marketing and creating branding opportunities for businesses investing in sports, but also creating value for fans across the country with sports leagues now emerging as a primary vehicle for the private sector. Sporting leagues in India have seen a rise in strategic initiatives by league promoters and franchises to invest in grassroots infrastructure, training and talent scouting to actively engage communities and develop a culture for their respective sports, ensuring long-term sustainability of their commercial properties, e.g., leagues and franchises (CII-KPMG 2016). The most prominent examples include the Indian Premier League (Cricket), Indian Super League (Football), Pro Kabaddi League, Ultimate Table Tennis (UTT), Premier Badminton League and Pro Wrestling League India.

In particular, the Indian Premier League (IPL) has fascinated cricket fans all over the world since it began in 2008 and is the most successful league in the world of cricket (Khondker and Robertson 2018). Whilst the league has witnessed many ups and downs, Yakkundi *et al.* (2021) argue that it still manages to follow a sustainable financial model, and additionally contributes to the development of cricket in India and contribute to government funds. For example, the league takes place in different parts of country which brings job opportunities and an economic boost to host grounds and the surrounding communities over the two months per year in which the IPL is played (Khondker and Robertson 2018).

The not-for-profit sport sector in India

In addition to commercial sector growth, there are a plethora of not-for-profit foundations and charities working in the elite sport development and sport for development and peace sectors who primarily use sport as a vehicle to foster social change. Not-for-profit organisations that focus on elite sport development tend to engage with underprivileged youth and communities to identify talent and support them to become professional athletes, representing their city, state, or country (Dasra 2013). Several not-for-profit foundations that contribute to elite sport development have been set up by former athletes. The most well-known of which is the Olympic Gold Quest (OGQ), founded by Geet Sethi (Former Billiards World Champion) and Prakash Padukone (Former top ranked Badminton Player) as a space to support training costs of up-and-coming athletes, help them gain sponsor deals and ultimately become Olympic medallists. Interestingly, the last three Summer Olympic Games (London, Rio, and Tokyo), 9 out of the 14 individual-sport medal winners for India were supported by OGQ (Olympic Gold Quest 2022).

India is also home to some important not-for-profit organisations, initiatives and events that work at the grassroots levels to bring about changes, including life skill development, gender equality,

poverty eradication, socio-emotional development, and education through sports participation amongst youth from marginalised sections of society. The initiatives and events within this space are delivered under the broader banner of activities known globally as the 'Sport for Development and Peace' (SDP) sector. While the scale of organisations using sport to foster social change is increasing, the pace of growth has been slow, due to systemic issues in the Indian sports ecosystem (Dasra 2013). Founded in 1999, Magic Bus is now Asia's largest mentoring organisation and has transformed the lives of one million children and young people, helping them move out of poverty in the past two decades (Magic Bus 2022; Coalter 2007, 2013). Other examples of not-for-profit organisations that work in the SDP sector include Naz India Goal, Shreeja India, School of Football Excellence (SoFE), Monkey Sports and Pro Sport Development (PSD), programmes which uses sport and life skills education to transform the lives of adolescents who live in underserved communities which uses sport for the holistic development of youth. While it is acknowledged that the sport system in India is primarily government-led, this section has illustrated that significant growth within the not-for-profit and commercial sectors is evident. The organisations operating within these sectors can positively contribute to public policy objectives regarding growing grassroots participation, elite sport success and using sport as a vehicle to achieve social change.

Key public policies and challenges

The following section highlights public policy priorities and funding trends. It begins by outlining the key governmental policies and initiatives since the government of India took its first step to promote sport by creating the All-India Council of Sport (AICS) in 1954. The latter part of the section discusses the balance between elite success, youth/school sport and mass participation in India alongside current priorities to tackle inactivity.

After independence was gained in 1947 the government of India first created the Ministry of Sport in 1982 before making an official policy statement pertaining to sports by launching the 1984 National Sports Policy. Further, the National Education Policy of 1986 included the National Sports Policy's emphases for application in the educational sector. In conjunction with the National Sports Policy the government also set up an apex body, the Sports Authority of India (SAI), in the 1980s to promote (a) the development of coaches; (b) the training of physical education teachers; (c) participation in sport and physical activity; and (d) building infrastructure for sports.

Following a sixteen-year gap, the next National Sports Policy was launched in 2001 by the Central Government in conjunction with the State Government, the Olympic Association (IOA) and the National Sports Federations. The 2001 policy aimed to promote the broad base of participation in sport across India (e.g., mass sport) and achieve excellence at the national and international levels through elite sport development (Chelladurai et al. 2002, 2011). Through the policy, Sports and Physical Education were targeted as ways in which to integrate more effectively with the Education Curriculum. The policy envisaged that mass participation of sports would be the major responsibility of state governments, with the central Government working to supplement their efforts in the rural areas. The promotion of the pursuit of excellence at a national and international level would be assumed by the union government and the Sports Authority of India (SAI) in collaboration with the Indian Olympic Association and recognised National Sports Federations. The policy also places great emphasis on promoting participation by women and young people in rural areas.

The population of India majorly comprises of young people, 53.7% under the age of 25 (Government of India 2011) and therefore as a nation, there is evidence from the 2014 National Youth Policy that India has sought to not only to address problems faced by the youths but also provide them opportunities to grow. A focus on sport and individual wellbeing was evident in the 2014 National Youth Policy which one policy objective dedicated to developing a strong and healthy generation through effective health care, promotion of healthy lifestyle and sports.

There is recent evidence to suggest a major governmental policy focus towards tackling inactivity based the launch of the Fit India movement in 2019. The mission of the movement aims to make

fitness an integral part of Indian's daily lives and to bring about behavioural changes and move towards a more physically active lifestyle in a bid to tackle lifestyle diseases as well as communicable diseases.

Fitness protocols and guidelines have been created for three population groups: 5–18 year olds, 18–65 year olds and 65+ year olds. As an example, the protocols and guidelines for 5–18-year-olds suggests a minimum of 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous Physical Activity per day, along with details of how to deliver a progressive age-appropriate sport and physical activity curriculum (and supporting report card) in the areas of; recreational games, modern and traditional sports, dance, yoga and free hand exercises. The guidelines also include a system for monitoring the overall progress of schools as well as each class and children. This was the first instance, when the Government of India broad-based the definition of sport on physical activity. However, the success of the policy is yet to be measured as the Government of India has not released any results following the implementation of the policy.

Emerging challenges and debates

India has a history of introducing sporting initiatives to contribute towards broader policy objectives, however under-funding in relation to sport is a major criticism (Chelladurai *et al.* 2011) and is why India is still widely considered to have an underperforming sports system (Chelladurai and Nair 2017). Other longstanding barriers in achieving policy objectives include a lack of appropriate infrastructure at grassroot and elite level; a lack of mass participation initiatives; a lack of monitoring or evaluation; poor governance; a lack of quality home-grown coaches and a lack of sport science support (Polson and Whiteside 2016). Additionally, India has a no policy objective or strategy in respect to hosting major sports events, which is a challenge, given that India have hosted some major sports events in the past (e.g., Commonwealth Games, Cricket World Cup, Women's Cricket World Cup, Field Hockey World Cup).

Elite sport performance

Despite its best efforts, India is still struggling to succeed in international sport (Khasnis *et al.* 2021). On paper, India has strong credentials to becoming a top-sporting country, it has a high population (1.2 billion), millions of avid sports fans, a growing economy, along with a large bureaucracy that oversees sports (Chelladurai *et al.* 2011, Chelladurai and Nair 2017, Chelladurai and Patil 2020). The SAI does manage various athlete centred schemes towards training of Indian sportspersons in sports disciplines across the country. Athletes are provided special assistance under the Target Olympic Podium Schemes (TOPS). TOPS is a flagship athlete centric programme of the MYAS to help India's top athletes in their preparations for the Olympic and Paralympics Games. A common criticism of the TOPS scheme is that a large portion of the allocated budget goes to only a few athletes, especially those already receiving enough funding from elsewhere. This essentially leaves the other athletes, more in need of the funding, with very minimal financial assistance (Shirotriya 2019). In addition, Khelo India Youth Games (KIYG) has introduced a wide range of sports leagues (e.g., football, badminton) to increase participation in and popularity of sports with the aim to develop sports and, consequently, inculcate a stronger elite sporting culture and talent pool. KIYG too has been criticised for not identifying talented athletes and giving a fair chance to the immense talent pool India is believed to have (Chelladurai *et al.* 2011, Chelladurai and Nair 2017, Sanyal 2018).

One of the main reasons that India's sporting ecosystem is judged to be underdeveloped is in relation to the medals won in international sporting events. Associated factors include the limited budget allocated to elite sport, poor infrastructure, and workforce (elite coach) development. Table 2 details India's elite sport performance over the past six editions of three multi-sport Major/Mega sports events including the Asian Games, Commonwealth Games and Summer Olympic Games, to illustrate the performance of India at an elite level. This is shown by medal table rank, number of medals (bronze, silver, gold) and the percentage share of the total medals on offer.

Table 2. India's elite sport performance at the Asian games, commonwealth games and summer olympic games (1998–2020).

Asian Games	Medal table rank	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total	Total % of medals available
1998	9th	7	11	17	35	2.86%
2002	7th	11	12	13	36	2.67%
2006	8th	10	17	26	53	3.80%
2010	6th	14	17	34	65	4.12%
2014	8th	11	10	36	57	3.92%
2018	8th	16	23	31	70	4.51%
Commonwealth Games						
1998	7th	7	10	8	25	3.76%
2002	4th	30	22	17	69	7.55%
2006	4th	22	17	10	49	6.56%
2010	2nd	39	26	36	101	12.20%
2014	5th	15	30	19	64	7.77%
2018	3rd	26	20	20	66	7.86%
Olympic Games						
2000	71st	0	0	1	1	0.11%
2004	65th	0	1	0	1	0.11%
2008	50th	1	0	2	3	0.31%
2012	55th	0	2	4	6	0.62%
2016	67th	0	1	1	2	0.21%
2020	48th	1	2	4	7	0.65%

Sources: (Commonwealth Games Federation 2022; International Olympic, Committee 2022, Olympic Council of Asia 2022)

Delhi 2010 Commonwealth games was a standout success in India's otherwise poor elite sport record. As the host nation, India finished 2nd in the medal table with 101 medals, which equated to 12% of all the medals on offer. Tokyo 2020 was another turning point for India with its highest ever Olympic medal haul – seven – to date. Whilst there is no doubt that this is a positive, the seven medals equate to just 0.65% share of the total medals on offer, which for the Tokyo 2020 games was 1080 medals. Using the Olympic games as a lens, a total of 518 athletes represented Team India at the Summer Olympic Games between Sydney 2000 games, up to and including the Tokyo 2020 games (Olympic Council of Asia 2022), comprising of 318 men (61%) and 200 women (39%). Considering the general population of India is relatively equal (48% women, 52% men), it is evident that female athletes are underrepresented at the Olympic Games.

Hosting major sports events

India faces a challenge as it does not have clear strategy when it comes to bidding for the rights to host major sports events. India has experienced relative success in hosting ad-hoc single discipline major sports events, e.g. men's and women's cricket world cup, field hockey world cup, Formula One Grand Prix. However, India's hosting reputation has been tarnished following the disastrous hosting of the 2010 Commonwealth games (CWG) in Delhi. The preparations for the CWG 2010 were widely covered by the global media. Preparations were plagued by concerns such as over-spend of almost US$1.75 bn (NDTV 2010), infrastructure compromises, poor living conditions for Athletes in the Games village, severe delays in construction of the main venues of the Games (BBC 2010a, 2010b) and governance failures within the Games' Organising Committee (Bloomberg 2010).

The Indian government formed a special committee after the conclusion of games to look into the allegations of corruption and mismanagement against the Organising Committee. These investigations uncovered a range of corrupt transactions, with inflationary contracts being the most of them. This probe was in addition to the investigations of Central Bureau of Investigation, Enforcement Directorate, and Central Vigilance Commission, subsequently many of the organisers were given jail sentences because of investigations (Majumdar 2012). From a legacy perspective, 10 out of 12

venues purpose built for the CWGs have seen little to no use since the completion of the games (Majumdar 2012).

On 4 December 2012, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) suspended the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) on the basis of corruption, government interference, and not following guidelines of the IOC. As a result, these venues have left behind a negative legacy, shattering the dream of using the CWGs as a springboard to bid for and host an Olympic Games in 2032. Most recently, India has shifted its focus to bidding for the 2048 Olympics and Paralympics after it was effectively eliminated from the race to host the 2032 Games.

Tackling inactivity in sport and physical activity

Mass participation has been specified as a goal in all national sports policies to date, however the associated policies of the State governments have not been as consistent in supporting this goal (Chelladurai and Patil 2020). Recently, there has been greater emphasis on tackling physical inactivity through the FIT India policy as highlighted earlier. Physical Education in schools has been used often as a talent identification perspective for elite sport. This has in turn weakened the emphasis placed on Physical Education, school sport and physical activity as a tool to have broader impacts on improved health and fitness (Chelladurai et al. 2011). This priority towards elite school sports is evidenced through the work of the School Games Federation of India (SGFI) who state clear objectives around promoting the Olympic, Asian and Commonwealth games amongst the schoolboys & girls of India and to facilitate excellence in school sports sector in India by promoting inter school competitions (School Games Federation of India 2022).

The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports does not have a national measurement tool or reliable databases on the extent of participation in sport in India, which means that it is difficult to establish any participation trend data. There are reports, however, that indicate the low level of physical activity among the population. For instance, only 38% of young adolescents and 17% of children get the recommended 60 min/day of moderate-to-vigorous intensity physical activity (Katapally et al. 2016). Furthermore, there are gender and socioeconomic differences, with girls being less active than boys (Rani and Sathiyasekaran 2013) and students attending private schools in India (which generally cater to children from higher socioeconomic stratus) being less active than students in publicly funded government schools (George et al. 2014).

Improving the governance of Indian sport

There is also evidence to suggest that the Government of India want to improve the governance of sport. Good governance in Indian sport has become a focal point in recent years, especially since the 2010 Commonwealth Games in Delhi where revelations of corruption, nepotism, and gross mismanagement on the part of the organising committee caused outrage across the country (Ganguly 2012). McLeod and Star (2020) argue that these revelations were particularly damaging to India's reputation as an up-and-coming nation, and the media were scathing in their criticism of Indian sport leaders.

In 2017, in a bid to improve governance of sport, the Government of India formed an expert panel to draft the National Code for Good Governance in Sports 2017 (NCGGS 2017). However, the Code has not been officially launched as key stakeholders continue to disagree on what it should contain. This three main points of dispute in the NCGGS 2017 include:

- The ban on politicians serving as board members in national sport federations (NSFs)
- The age limit of 70 years for board members in NSFs
- The four-year cooling-off period to be served after two consecutive terms for board members in NSFs

In particular, the Indian Olympic Association (IOA), National Sports Federations and some politicians have been leading the resistance against the above provisions claiming that they are either unworkable, unfair, or inefficient. Conversely, industry lawyers, athletes and other politicians claim that the provisions represent good governance practices that are needed in Indian NSFs (McLeod and Star 2020). At the time of writing, the governance reforms in Indian sports administration are still on hold and there is little detail known on when transparency and accountability of sport governance will be implemented in full force.

Conclusion

It is evident that India's sport policy is still evolving, yet there are some issues that have more pertinence and relevance than others. Looking to the future, those responsible for the development of sport in India face some very real issues to contend with including the inconsistencies in year-to-year government funding, addressing the ongoing issues of poor governance, tackling the large levels of inactivity amongst the population, and improving international elite sport performances, particularly on the Olympic/Paralympic stage.

These issues are compounded by the fact that India has an outdated national sports policy launched more than twenty years ago, a factor which greatly impinges on the development of India's sport system as it has failed to successfully improve its strategies by learning from past mistakes or successes (Khasnis et al. 2021). Following the implementation of the National Sports Policy 2001, India has failed to achieve mass participation or excellence in elite sport in comparison to other, populated countries. Similarly, there is no strategy concerning hosting major sports events, which given India's desire to host the 2048 Olympic and Paralympic Games is a big concern. The nation's current focus is undoubtedly on tackling inactivity amongst its population; however, it is too early to assess the effectiveness of the 2019 FIT India policy which seeks to address the deep-rooted issues of physical inactivity across India. Its implementation will gradually be seen as it is embedded into national, state, and local level environments.

Finally, it is important to note that there is a need to improve the breadth and depth of research into the effectiveness and the impact of sport policies and programmes in India. The number of specific studies of sports policies in the country is still sparse and the literature that does exist tends not to review government sport and or physical activity policies, but focuses on key issues for example sport governance, elite sport performance and systems, the commercialisation of cricket or sports facilities. Given India's population, growing economy and heritage of sport, greater depth in research regarding its sport policy and effectiveness of sport and physical activity programmes is expected and is needed.

Limitation

A limitation of this study worth noting is the use of English-only academic sources. This has been the case because sport management and development scholarship are at a nascent stage within the Indian academic system.

Disclosure statement

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