

Future of Sports Education, what is Necessary to Transform India into a Sports Superpower

By

Maj Gen AK Chaturvedi, AVSM, VSM

“Every human being has a fundamental right of access to physical education and sport, which are essential for the full development of his personality. The freedom to develop physical, intellectual and moral powers through physical education and sport must be guaranteed both within the educational system and in other aspects of social life.”

-The International Charter of Physical Education and Sport, UNESCO, 1978

Introduction

Sports is generally a common thread that binds people together and helps in developing a feeling of patriotism and unity that can counter regional factionalism and sinister design of various separatist forces. Sports has a huge role to play when it comes to nation-building as it helps in elevating qualities like discipline, determination, teamwork and a passion for fitness in the psyche of a nation. In post-independence period India had been busy with many other problems, but time is ripe that the Country decides to work on achieving excellence in Sports.

It is interesting to note that first Gold in Olympic Games which India won; was way back in 1928 in Hockey. This was won by sheer excellence of Late Maj Dhyan Chand and other members of the Team and credit is totally to the dedication, sincerity and hard work of the Team. Similarly first individual medal; a Bronze; by an Indian was won in an Olympic games; was by Norman Pritchard in 1900. Both these wins flag one issue; that India indeed had a love for sports and people worked hard despite very minimal organisational support. As a corollary, it can easily be concluded that with an organisational support India indeed has potential to do well in sports in international arena. Success in recent years in Cricket and shooting bear testimony to this fact.

It is heartening to note that the culture of sports is picking up in India; albeit little slowly. Today there are 568 colleges/ universities, including a National Sports University established in Manipur by an act of Parliament in 2018, which are offering

courses in physical education/ sports. In addition Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose National institute of Sports (NIS) at Patiala is dedicated to train coaches since 1961. It is Asia's largest sports institute and offers following courses:-

1. MSc (Sports Coaching).
2. Post Graduate Diploma in Sports Medicine.
3. Certificate Courses in Sports Coaching.
4. Diploma in Sports Coaching.
5. Skill Development Courses.

Over a period of time, under the aegis of the Sports Authority of India and other government organisations including Armed Forces hospitals as well as in private Sector a number of Sports Medicine Centres have also come up, which are essential for the selection of right kind of potential sports persons and helping the athletes to tackle the sports related injuries. However the sheer size of India calls for many more training establishments and testing/ rehabilitation centres to come up.

Sports Management in India

An Analysis of Indian Performance in Olympic Games-

Table-1: Indian Medal winners

Year	Place of games	Discipline	Name	Medal Colour
1900	Paris	Athletics	Norman Pritchard	2X Bronze
1928	Amsterdam	Hockey	Indian team	Gold
1932	Los Angeles	Hockey	-do-	-do-
1936	Berlin	Hockey	-do-	-do-
1948	London	-do-	-do-	-do-

1952	Helsinki	-do-	-do-	Gold
		Wrestling	KD Jadav	Bronze
1956	Melbourne	Hockey	Indian Team	Gold
1960	Rome	-do-	-do-	Silver
1964	Tokyo	-do-	-do-	Gold
1968	Mexico City	-do-	-do-	Bronze
1972	Munich	-do-	-do-	Bronze
1980	Moscow	-do-	-do-	Gold
1996	Atlanta	Lawn Tennis	Leander Paes	Bronze
2000	Sydney	Weightlifting	Karnam Mallehwari	Bronze
2004	Athens	Shooting	Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore	Silver
2008	Beijing	-do-	Abhinav Bindra	Gold
		Wrestling	Sushil Kumar	Bronze
		Boxing	Vijender Kumar	Bronze
2012	London	Shooting	Vijay Kumar	Silver
		Wrestling	Sushil Kumar	Silver
		Wrestling	Yogeshwar Dutt	Bronze

		Boxing	Mary Kom	Bronze
		Badminton	Saina Nehwal	Bronze
		Shooting	Gagan Narang	Bronze
2016	Rio-de-Janeiro	Badminton	PV Sindhu	Silver
		Wrestling	Sakshi Malik	Bronze

This table highlights following: -

1. Individual talent will always be supreme but with better coaching and psychological build up, the Colour of medal can always be improved.
2. Better Coaching, medical support and sports specific dietary support will improve the quality of performance.
3. Need for psychological build up will help athletes to develop character to work relentlessly even when conditions are adverse (before her winning of Silver Medal in Rio Olympics, PV Sindhu was considered a choker for big events). In this regard the loss of Indian Hockey Team in 1990 Asian Games at New Delhi is a classic case of a better team losing the nerve in a crunch event.
4. Better infrastructure will help athletes to perform better (some of the better performing states within India have better sports infrastructure). The efforts of BCCI to improve the sports stadia as well as other infrastructure clearly bear testimony to the relevance of better infrastructure. However, in this connection it is important to realize that better infrastructure is no guarantee for instant results. It takes time for results to come about.
5. Better funding can definitely improve the probability of success in international sports. This aspect would be clear when funding in India in sports is benchmarked against other successful sporting nations. In this context the issue would get amply clear based on Table-2: -

Table-2: Sports to GDP Ratio

Country	No of Medals	Population (in million)	GDP-PPP (\$ billion)	Medals/million population	Medal per \$100billion of GDP
USA	121	321.4	17.95	0.38	0.67
Great Britain	67	64.1	2.68	1.05	2.50
China	70	1367.5	19.39	0.05	0.36
India	02	1251.7	7.97	0.00	0.03

There are few aspects that this table flags: -

- a. US does not have any system of government funding. She has a system of corporate sponsorship. Which supports only the best. Talent hunting is done through schools and colleges.
- b. Success of Great Britain has been most significant. The Great Britain Team finished second in overall medal tally and became the first host nation (2012 Olympic Games) to improve her medal haul in the following away games through a combination of lottery funding, inspirational leadership of Sebastian Coe (who himself has been an Olympic Gold medal winner) and exceptional individual talent. As against this; India spent only Rs 266 crores on national coaching camps and foreign coaches. In this connection it needs to be flagged that during CWG -2010 the budget had gone up to Rs 3000 Crores and results were there for all to see. Another comparison with Great Britain brings out that except BCCI which is headed by Saurav Ganguly none of the sports organisations including IOA are headed by sports men of repute. During last tenure of the present NDA government Lt Col Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore headed sports ministry and as such that period saw some great initiatives being taken which will help Indian sports to grow in medium to long term.
- c. Chinese sports: although take inspiration from the communist philosophy that the excellence in sports is an expression of qualitative excellence against other systems of governance but relevance of a good and robust organizational to support the sports cannot be undermined . In China, though, the sports are government driven

but these are also well supported by the Industry. During a visit to China by the author few years back, it was noticed that the sports Infrastructure was being utilized to generate funds by using its spare capacity for non-sporting activities. Such an approach can definitely help the growth of sports to fund itself. Needless to add that it was being done without relegating the centrality of the sports and it never affected the quality of training. Their selection process and subsequent growth in the sports is through a very detailed process which is reminiscent of old soviet/ communist system; wherein the growth of a child is medically forecasted at a very early age to appreciate the child's growth trajectory. Finally, they also try to accommodate the athletes into sports/ administrative related activities post their retirement from sports, which reduces any kind of stress in the minds of athletes during the training. In, in effect improves the performance substantially.

- d. Indian experience of recent times for sports to self-generate funds is also unique. Introduction of IPL in cricket, not only broad based the selection options for the national squads but also helped the BCCI to generate enough funds for the development of sports and also helped in changing the psyche of parents who earlier were of the view that sports were only for fun and their children should concentrate on better education for getting future ready. However, now there is a change of thought process among the parents and many of them are ready to encourage their children to take up sports as a career. Seeing the success of IPL, many other sports league in India have come up. The performance of India in some of the sports have definitely improved besides providing selectors a better base for the national squad. No doubt this model is a work in progress and better results are sure to come in future. Some of the success stories of this approach, besides Cricket, are Hockey, Kabaddi, Wrestling, Badminton and Golf.

Selection to Medal- The 2006 Sports policy meant to prepare athletes for success in the international events a study (SPLISS) was done which identified nine pillars to influence the state of sports within a nation and its success in the global sporting arena. These and some other factors which based on experience of the author are as follows:-;

1. **An Integrated Approach to Policy Development-** it has to be a national endeavour wherein planning is done in full; from development of a discipline at grass root level to working of centres of excellence based on identified discipline which should be a priority sport for a period not less than 8-10 years.

2. **Requisite Financial Support-** a system of prioritisation based on policy imperatives and potential for winning medals based on capabilities & physical capacities of the identified athletes.
3. **A Scientific System of Talent Identification-** it needs to be noted that there is always a gap between; potential; probability and reality; each one is affected by many other factors. The talent spotting team should consist of a coach, a sports medicine qualified doctor and a psychologist. Besides visiting the hinterland/ catchment areas this team may visit the recognised local competition to see new talent. In this connection it is important that a federation in conjunction with State Olympic Associations should organise events as per approved calendar so that time visits to observe a potential athlete. In this connection school and college level events also play a very important role. After all a Kapil dev, a Dhoni or many of the new breed shooters have come from junior events. There should also be system to pick up athletes from those who have gone abroad to study and have grown to be good potential athletes.
4. **Development of a Training Infrastructure-** these facilities will be different for beginners and different for top level athletes. In this connection role of coaching academies at district level, Sports hostels of SAI, Navodaya Vidyalaya, KV based sports facilities, Boys Sports Companies of Army Centres and similar facilities by other schools/ youth associations/ local clubs will go a long way in nurturing the young talent.
5. **A well-developed Coaching System-** including certification of coaches, for this while best practices in the world be considered but indigenous coaching system should be developed keeping in view the physical state of own athletes, their state of awareness and their ethnic characteristics. Coaching should be such that it helps coaches to learn enough about the necessary biomechanics required for the sport and malpractices related to drug abuse as per World Anti-Doping agency (WADA) guidelines so that they can guide athletes suitably.
6. **Regular Participation in the International Competitions-** to ascertain the growth of the athletes which will help the coaches to work out mid-course corrections.
7. **System of Sports Medicine Support-** to remain physically free from injuries. This set up should be working with the talent hunting team to scientifically assess the anatomical as well as physiological growth of a potential athlete in future, if the athlete is young and also to see his cardio vascular state, and other parameters necessary for an athlete to grow into an international sports person.

8. **System of Psychological Assessment-** of a potential athlete. It is essential for a top level athlete to develop an attitude not to give up even in adverse situations, not to get overawed by big time event and a capability to be able to work in a team.
9. **Nutrition-** Arrangement to provide wholesome food having high nutritional value to an athlete. In this connection it would be better to identify a balanced diet menu depending on ethnic taste of an athlete, rather than working out a diet which may be high on nutritional value but is not to the taste of the athlete.
10. **System of research-** to study an athlete based on scientific parameters to work out a course correction. For this a detailed MIS needs to be built.
11. **Resettlement Organisation for the Retired Athletes-** it should be meant to help the athlete to prepare for the post active sports career life depending on the level reached, educational qualification and aptitude. In this connection I will refer to Shanghai Water Sports Centre. It was noticed that every person in that Centre starting from lowest to highest officials were all athletes who kept getting wasted out depending on reaching the plateau in their sports career and then side stepping to a job within the centre depending on their qualification and skill sets.
12. **Medical Support-** Chances to get hurt in sports are always there therefore it is essential that all sports persons from the level of novices to elite class should be covered by subsidised medical insurance. Depending upon the level of their excellence the liability coverage can be decided. For example at the beginning it could be parents and once the potential sports person is selected for further coaching/ development then it could be by the organisation he has been selected.
13. **Generating Sports culture-** it is important that base for the selection of sports person be widened. One of the measures could be regular organisation of mass events which will help individuals to realise their own potential. In this connection I recommend that conduct of marathons/ cross country runs/ cycling/ swimming and many other similar events where participation is large could be thought of. Similarly events in traditional sports at village level could also be conducted on regular basis. It is felt that such events will help in many of those having their talent not known to them will come forward and thus will provide a wider base for selectors. These events could be from pre junior, junior as well as senior level. This kind of approach not only will widen the base but will also encourage people to go more and more for a more healthy outdoor life style.

Grassroots or International Events ?

1. There is always a dilemma as to what is more important; broad basing the growth or laying emphasis on identified star performers? The construction of 22 indoor sporting halls for public use in a state whose default weather setting is cold and which is torn by strife? Or, the construction of some new stadiums in the national capital that will be used sparingly?
2. These are the kind of competing priorities that confront the Union Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, which is mandated with the responsibility of promoting sports in

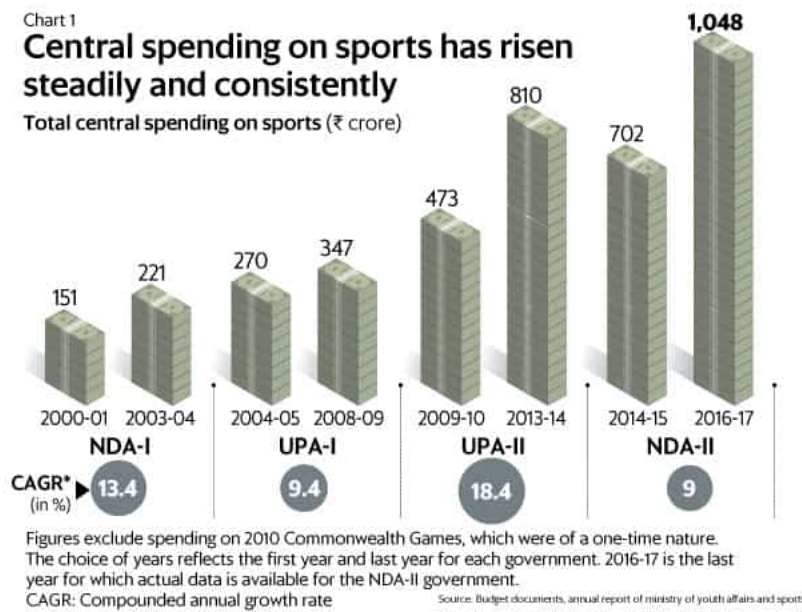


Chart-1: Central Spending on Sports

India and which was handed a budget of ₹1,575 crore in 2018-19 to do so. Over the last ten years, the share of the national sports federations in the central government's overall sports budget has tripled and has been rising at a steady, inflation-beating rate of 9% to 18%. Even as the centre is increasing its budget, it is getting directed on enabling preparations of the top sportspersons. As such greater share of the central sports budget is being directed to national sporting federations as assistance. In 2009-10, this figure was 11%. In 2016-17, it stood at 34%. Accordingly; the share of funds received by the Sports Authority of India (SAI), has declined from 63% in 2014-15 to 47% in 2016-17. It is relevant to note that the federations spend money to conduct camps, organise national and international tournaments, procuring sports equipment/ gear and spent money on the exposure trips of the selected sports persons abroad. Between 2014-15 and 2016-17, the federation that runs the sport of shooting in India has received the maximum assistance (₹42.4 crore). It is followed by

hockey, wrestling, and badminton. Thus federations cater for the elite sports persons. In all fairness it needs to be accepted that the top 10 federations in terms of financial assistance received, are among the more prolific in medal returns. However; it also needs to be realised that such a distribution of funds has an adverse bearing on the build-up of the sports infrastructure in the country and also on the running of the area based sports hostels for the training of young talent. The approach definitely needs a review to arrive at a better system of generating funds (Not wholly depending on govt funds but seeking funds from the corporate houses) and optimal utilisation of the available funds because both needs are equally important.

- 3. Impact of Organising a Mega Sports Event-** Last time India organized a large multi-disciplinary international sporting event was the Commonwealth Games (CWG) in New Delhi in 2010, which saw Indian sportspersons reel in a record 101 medals. To make those games happen, between 2005-06 and 2010-11, the centre spent ₹5,882 crore through the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, to upgrade or set up new sporting venues. There are views that instead of spending so much of money on a single event it would have been better to spend that kind of money to setup good facilities at grass roots level to widen the spread of sports infrastructure. Both approaches have their pluses and minuses, however; it cannot be denied that conduct of such mega events; not only help the country to project a better image of the country; but also help the nation to improve the sports standards. It is on record that in the wake of the CWG; in 2012 Olympic Games India for the first time won five individual medals. It is also significant to note that conduct of such events help in improving the sports standards. For example India improved its position in medal tally from 50 to 101 from CWG 2006 to 2010. Likewise from 1978 to 1982 Asian Games medal tally went up from 28 to 57. Now India is planning to bid for three mega events, namely; the 2026 Youth Olympics; the 2030 Asian Games and the 2032 Olympics. However a deeper analysis clearly brings out that it is difficult to establish a correlation between the centre's spending and progress in performance based on budget alone. India's medal count has mostly been range bound, making only incremental gains in 2018

Growth of Indian sports

Sports Authority of India (SAI)- The Sports Authority of India is the apex national sports body of India. It was established in 1982 by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports of the

Government of India for the development of sport in India. This organisation is also responsible to build and maintain sports infrastructure in India.

Funding- Central spending on sports has been steadily increasing throughout the twenty-first century. The sports budget has increased from Rs 702 crore, in 2014–15, to Rs 2,216 crore in the 2019–20's interim budget.

Khelo India- In 2016, the three existing schemes, namely; the Rajiv Gandhi Khel Abhiyan; the Urban Sports Infrastructure Scheme and the National Sports Talent Search System were merged into the Khelo India scheme. The scheme was launched primarily to encourage participation of youth in annual sports competitions and for creation of sporting facilities at the grassroots level. In this connection a promise was made by the Sports Ministry to broaden the National Women Sports Festival but so far this promise has not been converted into reality. It should be done at the earliest as India stands good chance in bagging medals in the Women's category.

Training- A number of Sports academy across the country for various discipline were required to be established. A total of 10 numbers of them have been established by the Sports Authority of India and five more are being established. A number academies are also coming up in private sector too. These academies indeed help in taking sports to common people. It is also felt that at least government should consider establishing most of the new academies in rural India and also corporates be encouraged to establish them in Rural India as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility.

National Sports Development Fund (NSDF)- It was established in 1998 under the Charitable Endowments Act 1890 and notified by the Government of India in November, 1998 with the aim to impart momentum and flexibility to assisting the cause of sports. The Fund helps sportspersons by providing them opportunities to train under coaches of international repute with technical, scientific and psychological support and giving them exposure to international competitions. It also provides financial assistance for development of infrastructure and other activities for promotion of sports. Role of the Fund is supplementary to the overall policy and activities of the Department of Sports in achieving excellence in sports. The Fund is managed by a Council constituted by the Central Government. Union Minister in charge of Youth Affairs and Sports is the Chairperson of the Council. Members of the Council include senior Officers

of the Department of Sports, Chairman & Managing Directors of Private and Public Sector Companies / Corporations, representatives of Sports Promotion Boards.

Areas which need Improvement

Reservations in Private sector for the Sports Persons- This promise by the government to provide job reservations in public and private sector is still not fulfilled and the government has not yet fixed any sports quota in Private Sector.

Social Security for the Sports Persons- It was promised to devise a special scheme for sportspersons to ensure social security. However no such scheme has not developed. In this connection in response to a question raised in the Lok Sabha, on 19 July 2018, it was informed that the pensions for medallists at various international events had been doubled on 1 April that year.

Directive to Business Houses to Support Sports- It was promised to issue a policy directive to Corporate houses to encourage business houses to patronise sports and sportspersons. However there has been no policy initiative by the Government, though sports development remains as one of the activities listed in the Companies Act, 2013, for businesses to invest in, as part of their corporate-social-responsibility spending.

Sports facilities in the Housing Colonies- It was promised by the Government that all new housing colonies will be mandated to include Sports facilities. No such mandate has been has been introduced by the government or any of the state governments. It should be done at the earliest as it would help to build sports culture in the country.

Need for a Better Sports Infrastructure-

1. A world Class infrastructure is an important element in creating a system which can deliver good results. Realising the benefits of sports in general and sports infrastructure in particular, nations such as China, Australia, and the United States have invested heavily in related infrastructure. For instance, China, as part of its National Fitness Program, started investing in sports infrastructure since 1995. Australia has focused on grass-roots development by building community sports infrastructure. The United States has tightly integrated sports infrastructure into its education system by providing

athletics with facilities across schools, colleges and universities. This has helped these nations in becoming global sporting powers.

2. India is also going for a growth in sports infrastructure development in recent years, which will have a strong impact on the state of sports in the long run. Currently, India houses approximately 100 sports facilities fulfilling international standards of sports infrastructure. In addition, there are government-owned college and university grounds, community centres, sporting facilities and grounds owned by urban local bodies, grounds owned by Resident Welfare Associations, and facilities owned by private entities. These facilities are largely neglected and ignored in terms of utilisation and maintenance. Also, a majority of the Indian sports infrastructure facilities are mainly used for hosting international, national, state, and district-level games and competitions only. As a result, the occupancy rates of the facilities remain low and they are financially dependent on the regulatory authorities for operations and maintenance. This also has an adverse effect on sports enthusiasts, who could have made efficient use of such facilities. Recently, India witnessed massive growth of franchise-based sporting leagues, with 10 leagues existing in the country. Government initiatives like Khelo India have also inspired many potential individuals to take up sports. To sustain this growth momentum in sports, there is a need to increase the number of sporting facilities with world-class infrastructure, which will enable the government to achieve its vision of 50 Olympic gold medals soon.
3. Sports infrastructure should be treated as an integral part of urban planning so that adequate resources are budgeted for development and sustenance. Policy support from the government is essential for encouraging private investment into sports infrastructure via the public-private-partnership (PPP) model.

Need for an Institutional framework- The Ministry of Youth and Sports (MYAS) has been established by the Government of India to create infrastructure, achieve excellence in national and international sporting events, and build capacity for broad-based sports. In addition, the Sports Authority of India (SAI) has been set up by the ministry as an apex body. It develops and looks after stadiums and fields on behalf of the ministry. However, sports being largely a state subject, the bulk of the infrastructure is under the purview of state governments. As a result, states fund the development of sports and related infrastructure according to their priorities. In this connection it is important to note that no National or state legislation for sports regulation exists. Recently, increased capital investments and successful large-scale hosting of

events have boosted the development of sports infrastructure in India however there is a need of a comprehensive and uniform approach towards the development of sporting infrastructure across the country. In India's Sports Revitalization Action Plan, emphasis has been laid by NITI Aayog on encouraging private sector participation in the development of sporting infrastructure.

Need for Sports Federations to be managed by Sports Persons- Except Saurav Ganguly who is heading BCCI none of the heads of the sports federations including the IOA are headed by any sports person of repute. Extra ordinary success in Cricket needs to be emulated by other federations and it should become mandatory for a President and Secretary to have been an international player and also not more than two tenures be permitted for an official. These changes will help the federations to understand the psychology of the sports persons better, officials will have greater credibility and also fresh ideas will keep coming to the executive committees of the federations to further improve the performance of the athletes of their respective federations. One major ill of the organisational structure of the sports associations in India is that these have either been reduced to being preserve of a particular family or of fiefdom of politicians/ bureaucrats. A report suggests that 47% of the sports associations are headed by politicians. Bureaucrats are also not far behind. At least seven associations were headed by them in 2013, as reported by Gaurav Bisht in the 07 Oct 2013 in The Hindustan Times.

Initiatives by the Government- The government has launched a number of initiatives as part of the CBSE high school curriculum. However many schools lack the requisite infrastructure for the successful implementation of these initiatives. Although funds are being provided under sports grant scheme for the development of sports infrastructure but lack of space in the schools need to be addressed by adding this requirement at sanctioning of permission to establish a school. In the interim Locality wise sports infrastructure should be created by the civic bodies; either funding them directly or getting the same sponsored. Such facilities can be utilised by schools on time sharing basis. Schools may also be encouraged to share the cost of maintenance of these facilities.

Impact of International Leagues- Given the rising popularity of sports, international leagues and clubs have set up academies in major cities like Delhi-NCR and Mumbai to support grass-roots development.

Conclusion

Sports, games and physical fitness have been a vital component of our civilization, as is evident from the existence of the highly evolved system of yoga and a vast range of highly developed indigenous games, including martial arts. However form and nature of games and sports have changed over the years. Sports help in bridging the social, religious, regional and communal divide and help people to build a positive outlook. Therefore it is in the national interest that India lays more emphasis on developing a sporting culture. India has a unique advantage of having the youngest population in the world (356 million youth) and therefore it is possible to achieve excellence in sports. There is no doubt that India has to go a long way in catching with the leading pack of nations but there is no other choice. India should make a long term plan stretching over 15 years to reach its right full place in the comity of nations. In this long term perspective; short term and medium term objectives need to be set. These objectives should be for disciplines in which country has probability to do better; like shooting, archery, boxing (in lighter weights), Canoeing and Kayaking and wrestling (lighter weights and females) and Badminton, Hockey. Extra emphasis on capacity building of coaches should be done. Finally games and sports should proliferate to villages which will help to enhance the size of potential sports persons and as such improvement in the quality of performance. It needs to be noted that developing India into a sports super power is a dream which every India should see and try to realise it.