

Cricket Vs Other Sports: The Indian Scenario

Dr. Vipendra Singh Parmar*

Assistant Professor, V.S.S.D. PG College, Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh

Abstract – It perhaps is a fact that people in India eat, live, sleep, talk and walk cricket. This is much to the extent that even our national sport Hockey gets overshadowed. The hue and cry over India's early exit from the Twenty- Twenty World Cup and the negligence of our Hockey Team's victory in the Azlanshah Cup for the second time in the row left a huge impact upon sports lovers. In the outrage of our emotions against the Indian cricket players and their ardent criticism, we forgot to give Vishvanathan Anand (who became the world champ in chess for the fourth time) and our own hockey team for winning laurels for the country the importance they deserved. I am sure that these laurels are in no way less than any cricket laurel, then the question arises why the step-motherly treatment meted out to other sports?

It's bitter but very true that one single game blotting many others games in India. Cricket fever overshadowed our national sport Hockey. There is no question of any debate that cricket is killing other sports in our country. Indians eat, live, sleep, talk and walk cricket. Theoretically we all know that hockey is our national game but in practical vision its cricket maniac all over.

Keywords: Cricket, Other Sports, Games.

INTRODUCTION

This is not the first time that such a scenario took place during May 2010, In 2008 when India won the T-20 World Cup and the Asia Cup in Hockey. The cricket players became heroes, welcomed by the state government on arrival in Mumbai, with the BCCI doling out large sums of money to the players. BCCI is a body for cricket, and it can give awards. But the Government has to appear broad-based and fair to all sports, and yet we know that is fiction. So, the hockey players, protested against the doling out of money to the players by State Governments. Irked by the step-motherly treatment meted out to the Indian hockey players by the central and four state governments, when compared to the SOPs given to cricketers after their win in the Twenty20 World Cup, the team members decided to go on a 'hunger strike'.

National Chief Coach, Joaquim Carvalho strongly objected to the announcement of cash awards by the Civil Aviation Minister Praful Patel and the state governments of Maharashtra, Haryana, Jharkhand and Karnataka to the cricketers while ignoring the victory of his wards in the Asian Continental Championship. Some feel that Cricket in India is becoming an obstacle in the progress of other sports. M.S Gill, the sports minister of the country painstakingly said, "Television, commercialization and the advertising world have promoted cricket to an extent that it has become a Mount Everest, which is badly affecting other sports in the country." Now whether Cricket has sounded a death knell to other sports is perhaps a

debatable issue, but there is full truth that an equal exposure is not given to all sports in the country. Many budding players in sports like shooting, lifting, etc. cannot continue their passion due to lack of governmental aid provided to them at International level which is not the case with cricket.

Hence there is a need to reform the administration, infrastructure, training and facilities given to players of other sports than cricket in order for them to perform well. Other sports have the full right to move up the pecking order.

No one remembers that in Shooting, Gagan Narang won four Gold medals in Common Wealth Games 2010, or Indian World Champion wrestler Sushil kumar has won the gold medal in FILA 2010 World Wrestling Championships or Olympic bronze medals won by tennis star Leander Paes (Atlanta, 1996), but Anil Kumble's 10-wicket haul, Harbhajan's hat-trick, and Virender Sehwag's 309 will be evergreen in memory. It's a common sight that young children are playing perfect cricket with bat and ball in lanes, streets, gardens. But people don't know how to play other sports or what are the rules for other games? A budding sports kid who is almost as tall as the bat he holds claims that someday he would be like "Tendulkar". Why not like "Ajit pal signh" or "Dhayan chand"? Answer is very simple that they don't know about these heroes. We cannot play here any blame game because it's our society who is responsible for this situation.

Cricket in India is becoming an obstacle in the progress of other sports. Television, commercialization and the advertising world have promoted cricket to an extent that it has become a Mount Everest, which is badly affecting other sports in the country. An equal exposure is not given to all sports in the country. New comers in cricket sport get name & fame in a short span. But it's not happen with other sports players.

Many budding players in sports like shooting, lifting, hockey etc. cannot continue their passion due to lack of governmental aid provided to them at International level which is not the case with cricket. Scarcity of stadiums, playgrounds and poor sports system in schools colleges also pull down interest of people in other sports.

Huge crowd pack the cricket stadium when there is a India-Pakistan match, to boost the morale of their country but where does this "morale boosting brigade" disappear when sportsmen of other than cricketers need them.

We do have Sania Mirza, Leander Paes and Mahesh Bhupathi bringing laurels to the country in the field of tennis; a Vishwanathan Anand in the field of chess. In hockey we have great legends like Balbir Singh, Pargat Singh, Surjit Singh, Ashok Kumar, Ajit Pal Singh, who conquered hockey cup in 1975. They all play hard to bring pride and glory to our country just as cricketers. It was a time when hockey commentary delivered by commentator Jasdev Singh holds the breath of nations' listeners. That sensational wave sound has now vanished from radio sets and stadiums. Other games like chess, tennis, and hockey are craving for true status as cricket game.

Cricket is not our national game, but it is celebrated as a festival. It has been used as a bridge between two nations. Our country's politics also get active with these sports. Players of international fame and caliber in other sports are not given the proper media support and attention as well as proper facilities for further development. Media hype and money involvement in cricket game are the main culprits for cricket ruling the roost, to the detriment of other sports in India.

Paradoxically our country is still struggling hard to form a good football team. Day by bay Indian football is losing the little charm it had gained. Recently JCT club has decided to disband and fold off its team. It was not very shocking news as even Mahindra United decided to discontinue its football team last year. Same happens with our national game hockey. There was a time when India did win the Hockey World Cup in 1975 and people showed a keen interest in the sport, but not so anymore. The sport has died a natural death from lack of leadership and sponsorship.

If this cricket mania continues, India can never do well in the Olympics for years to come. Hence there is a great need to reform the administration, infrastructure,

training and facilities given to players of other sports than cricket so that they can shine more brightly with their stunning performances. Other sports have the full right to move up the pecking order.

On the off chance that Sachin is God, cricket is unquestionably the national religion of India. Relatively few in the nation thought that it was odd or amusing when the cricketing symbol of the nation turned into the focal icon in a sanctuary worked in Bihar. Cricket is a high stakes diversion and another frontier heritage that India continues. Every youngster in the nation is a trying cricketer, regardless of that exclusive 11 of the best can play in the universal group. Making it to the group guarantees soaring pay levels, a consistent fan following, and conceivably included livens as games autos and condos. Cricket stars of the nation are among the glamorous first class, some of them all the more so because of their fruitful relational unions to exceptionally wonderful and pined for performing artists. It is each young fellow's fantasy future. However, does the national fixation come at the cost of different recreations and games in the nation? This is the issue the nation has been requesting decades now.

Several people are arguing that

1. The T20 format has been posing a threat to traditional test cricket, which is considered as true format that unveils the mettle of any cricketer.
2. Because of the busy schedule, the fitness of the cricketers is getting affected and their performance has been falling.
3. IPL became a back door for selection into international team.

IMPACT ON OTHER SPORTS:

Because of the cricket mania, several other sports like hockey, tennis and athletic sports are being neglected. Hockey is the sport in which our nation won gold consecutively for 8 times in Olympics. Because of the lack of support the game gradually lost its importance and today we reached a stage where we need to play qualifying matches for Olympics. We need to thank people like Gagan Narang, Sushil Kumar, Vijay kumar, Mary com and Saina nehwal who won Olympic golds in 2012. Their achievements brought all these sports again into lime light. Apart from the fan following the other aspect which has been impending the rise of these sports are lacking of financial support.

MEASURES TO ENCOURAGE OTHER SPORTS:

1. Unlike BCCI all governing bodies of these didn't have independent charge and they work under the Government. The Govt of

India should bring all sports associations under one organization so that the profits of one game can be used as resources to other sports in the country.

2. Otherwise government should impose certain terms and conditions to BCCI so that certain part of their revenue should be given to encourage other sports apart from regular taxation.
3. The groups like Indian Hockey Federation and Indian Olympic Association should maintain a time table just like the calendar year of BCCI with regular practice sessions keeping the sporting events like Olympics, Asian games and Common Wealth games etc.

What is India's National Game?

What is India's national game? If you thought it was Hockey, think again. While most of us have grown up studying from text books that told us that hockey is India's national game, the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports has a different take on the matter. In 2012, a 10-year-old girl, Aishwarya Parashar became famous for the RTI (right to information) queries she had filed to satisfy her curiosity. One of the queries was a seemingly simple one about India's national game. In response, the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports said that India does not have a national game as no game has been notified to be India's signature game. The answer flummoxed Ms. Parashar and the rest of the nation. India's national hockey team has been its major strength and pride at most international sports meets. If cricket brings out our fierce sense of competition, hockey is the one sport that evokes a sense of nationalism. It is not due to movies such as Chak De, but due to the fact that 8 of the 9 Olympic gold medals won by India were won by the hockey team. Our national hockey team also earned us one silver and two bronze medals at the Olympics games. If hockey is not currently India's national game, isn't it time the government steps up and declares it to be the national sport? And is it not time the Ministry of Sports does something substantial to improve the lot of hockey players in the country – honour our Olympians and encourage the deteriorating team's talent?

India's Performance at the Olympics

India is the second most populous country in the world. Talent and sportsmanship is abundant. It is rather unfortunate that despite no lack of ambition or skilled aspirants, India is unable to push forward its performance at the Olympic Games. Since the 1900 Paris Olympics, India has won 9 gold medals, 6 silver medals and 11 bronze medals; totaling about 26 medals at the Summer Olympic Games and none in any Winter Olympics. In comparison, China, the most

populous country in the world has bagged 201 gold medals, 144 silver medals, and 128 bronze medals, taking their total to about 473 medals in the Summer Olympics alone. In the Winter Olympic Games, the People's Republic of China has bagged some 9 golds, 18 silvers, and 17 bronze medals. This marked disparity has one very clear reason – a lack of emphasis on sports apart from cricket. The country's youth is exposed greatly to cricket, thanks to television and media. Finding avenues for coaching and participating in other sports is an arduous task.

TRP GAMES

Apart from the money and the glamour, the Indian Premier League has added a lot more to the TRPs of Indian television channels than any other show or broadcast could. India, however, has 9 other professional sporting leagues –

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- Indian Athletics League
- Indian Racing League
- Indian Volley League
- Indian Golf League
- Indian Badminton League
- Indian Wrestling League
- Indian Super League (football)
- Pro Kabaddi League
- Indian Hockey League

These matches are also broadcast on national television, but do not generate a fraction of the TRPs or revenue that cricket does. In a country with 1.25 billion population, which is also known for its diversity, it is impossible to envisage a lack of interest in these other sporting events. The key to encouraging them may then lie in attitude. Both the people of the country and the government need to work in tandem if India is to come up as a multi-sporting nation.

What Can GoI Do to Promote Other Sports?

Promote Sports Culture – This country lacks a serious sporting culture. Sports, apart from cricket, are not considered to be career options. By treating other sports as serious career options and by focusing more on physical development and training as part of the school/college curriculum, this mindset of Indian parents can undergo a major change.

Strengthen Infrastructure – One of the important ways in which sports such as athletics, football, badminton, swimming and watersports can be promoted is by building sports arenas and providing infrastructural support to aspirants. Most public pools and sporting fields lack upkeep. This leaves sports aspirants who cannot afford private coaching with very little choice in their efforts to pursue their interests. India's sports budget needs a considerable hike.

Highlight Achievements – Former Olympics and even national level champions make the best brand ambassadors for their respective sports. The government must make use of their stature instead of letting them languish in poverty and anonymity.

Create Awareness – One of the reasons cricket is such a smashing success in India is because of advertising and awareness. Cricket attracts more sponsors, more money. Ad revenue makes it more lucrative to telecast cricket; with greater viewership comes fame. Other sports may be promoted by the Gol by an active awareness campaign and by a suitable rewards and recognition programmes.

Talent Hunt

One of the greatest setbacks to the development of sports apart from cricket in India is the inability to tap into the immense talent pool of the country. For example, traditional sports such as Kabaddi, swimming, and wrestling are played widely across the nation, mostly in villages and rural areas. There are many talented sportspersons who do not get identified, thus letting their skills languish. Regular talent hunts held by sports federations will help identify such talent and bring out India's true potential.

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Corresponding Author

Dr. Vipendra Singh Parmar*

Assistant Professor, V.S.S.D. PG College, Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh

E-Mail – vippusingh2@gmail.com