



Making India more sports oriented from khelo India initiative: the insights of indian sports industry

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Abstract

Marketing has been an important tool for spreading out the message to the right target population at the right place and time. It is the study and management of exchange relationship. It is one of the premier components of business management. Be it retail, services and even e-commerce, marketing has helped them to get into the lifestyle, habits and most importantly into the minds of the prospective customer. And if we take sports, it has created wonders for everyone, be it the organizer, sponsor, merchandiser, athletes, coaches, etc. It has shaped a way the sports have been viewed by the people. From the earlier times when sports were used as a medium of entertainment for Kings and Queens to marketing and branding of athletes for selling the product or service, it has come a long way shaping the sports by not only viewing it but it has made sports as an experience to be felt in the 21st century.

The purpose of this study is to understand how marketing in sports have benefitted the Khelo India School Games and its long-term impact in the development of sports in India.

Keywords: marketing, sports, Khelo India school games

1. Introduction

Sports has always been a part of our society since the ancient times. The word "Sport" comes from the Old French "desport" meaning "leisure", with the oldest definition in English from around 1300 being "anything humans find amusing or entertaining". Sports like Wrestling, Sprints, Archery and Gymnastics have been practiced during ancient civilizations. It is not only practiced for enjoyment, but it helps in physical and mental development of human body. As an academic discipline, the philosophy of sport has been in existence for a relatively short period. Although the philosophy of sport as an academic endeavor is relatively young, the philosophical view of sport itself is not new. Although sport was a major activity according to the Greeks and Romans, it lost its importance during the Middle Ages. After the Renaissance, education came to be a necessity. With its incorporation and utilization in the educational curriculum, physical education obviously became more common in the curricula of the Renaissance and Reformation than it had been in the Middle Ages. Opinions about the sport of ancient times have influenced those of the modern era. (Duygu Harmandar Demirel and Ibrahim Yildiran, 2013) ^[14]. In Ancient time (500-300 B.C.), winners were seen as special people in the period when feasts were made for the purpose of worshipping gods. All sport-centred activities were launched to end the religious civil wars that were taking place (Er *et al.*, 2005) ^[15]. The Athens school system was based on physical training and mainly involved music and various sporting activities; these were aimed at developing the physical, mental and moral attributes of the citizens of the city-state. Thus, a physical training system, gymnastics, emerged for the first time (Yildiran, 2005) ^[16]. During the Hellenic Age (336-30 B.C.), when a healthy perception of life developed, education (in which physical training played an important role) gained importance. Sports were considered "physical training for health", and agonal

(competitive) gymnastics were also highly regarded. Whereas competitive gymnastics remained the preserve of athletes, competitions in holy games also returned to round up the list of competitions (Yildiran, 2005) ^[16]. Unlike other Greek civilisations, Spartan woman were trained and educated physically (Bandy, 2000). In Ancient Greece, boys attended wrestling schools because it was believed that playing sports beautified the human spirit as well as the body (Balci, 2008) ^[19]. The palaestra was a special building within ancient gymnasiums where wrestling and physical training were practiced (Saltuk, 1990) ^[20]. The education practiced in this era covered gymnastic training and music education, and its aim was to develop a heroic mentality, but only for royalty. With this goal in mind, education aimed to discipline the body, raising an agile warrior by developing a cheerful and brave spirit (Aytac, 1980).

Sport is a social product and service as it is often marketed within a community of people (Traquattrinietal 2015). Marketing in the field of sports has a different approach because of the personal identification sport has with people (Mullin, 1983) ^[12]. Due to the emotional investment people have with certain sports, marketing is a useful avenue that can have a positive impact if conducted in the appropriate manner. Marketing can be used as a non-verbal and verbal medium for the consumption of a product to be realistic and viable in consumer's viewpoint (Unger and Kernan, 1983) ^[11]. The three major types of sports marketing are about interest, participation and consumption (Chalip, 1992) ^[3]. Sport marketing to promote fan interest involves increasing the linkage between sport products and services with fan behavior (Ratten, 2011a) ^[7]. This can include promoting sports teams or athletes based on consumer behavior. Sport marketing to promote sport participation increases the visibility of sport as a recreational activity that people can engage in a number of ways. One of the most common ways people participate in sport is by playing, refereeing or

supporting others either physically or electronically through the use of online communicators. Sport marketing can be used to promote the consumption of sport related products, services and merchandise. Sport clothing including football jerseys is a major revenue raiser for sports organizations and is popular also as leisure wear. Other products such as beverages and merchandise can be branded with sport logos to encourage people to consume these products. Celebrity endorsement by athletes or clubs is another way sport can be used to increase consumption.

2. Literature Review

Sports marketing is a dynamic subject area linking academic research, marketing practitioners and public policy planners. Marketing is important in order to overcome consumer resistance and focus on the most appropriate communications for reaching consumers (Lazarus and Wexler, 1988) ^[1]. Some consumers first become involved with certain products because of their association with sport (Vaughn, 1980) ^[2]. Sport marketing is dynamic because of its polysemic nature as it generates multiple affective means for consumers based on spectator behavior (Chalip, 1992) ^[3]. Sporting events are polysemic as they invoke multiple sources of affective behavior because of their cultural power (Handelman, 1990) ^[4]. Sport marketing receives a high degree of attention due to the involvement of consumers. People are motivated to be involved in sport for a variety of reasons including economic, political, aesthetic, social, community and collective (Guttman, 1986) ^[5]. The social psychology literature has been used to explain the reason for the high linkage between sport and consumer involvement because of the relationship between emotions and fan behavior. Some people use sports as a diversion to everyday life as this can be described as entertainment theory or "sportertainment", which is the combination of sport with entertainment. A useful example of this is the use of half-time live performances by musicians at sports games. Chalip (1992) ^[3]. states that there are three major sources of polysemy in the sports context: multiple narratives, embedded genres and layered symbols. Multiple narratives involve stories that are interrelated between contemporary events and history (Real, 1989) ^[6]. In sports this could include a theme song or anthem related to a team sport (Ratten, 2011a) ^[7]. Embedded genres involve parallel associations related to the same theme (Rothenbuhler, 1989). Examples of this could be linked to sports competitions or events based on a certain theme link the World Cup (Ratten and Ratten, 2011) ^[9]. Layered symbols involved the ceremonies or rituals associated with an event. In sports contexts there are a number of different layered symbols utilized from team mascots and logos on clothing.

3. Sports in India

India is home to a diverse population playing many different sports across the country. Football is a popular sport in some of the Indian states. India has won all the Kabaddi World Cups to date. The country has won eight Olympic gold medals in field hockey. However, cricket is the most popular sport in India. Kabaddi, an indigenous sport is popular in rural India. Several games originated in India including chess, snooker and other regional games. India has won medals in badminton, kabaddi, hockey and many other sports and disciplines.

The history of sports in India dates back to the Vedic era.

Physical culture in ancient India was fuelled by religious rights. The mantra in the Atharvaveda, says, "Duty is in my right hand and the fruits of victory in my left." In terms of an ideal, these words hold the same sentiments as the traditional Olympic Oath: "For the Honour of my Country and the Glory of Sport." Badminton probably originated in India as a grownup's version of a very old children's game known in England as battledore and shuttlecock, the battledore being a paddle and the shuttlecock a small feathered cork, now usually called a "bird." Games like chess (chaturanga), snakes and ladders, playing cards, originated in India, and it was from here that these games were transmitted to foreign countries, where they were further modernised. Wrestling in India has a glorious past. The wrestlers, traditionally, use to wear a loincloth, langota. In Ancient India wrestling was most famously known as Malla-yuddha. One of the premier characters in Mahabharata, Bhima was considered to be a great wrestler of the time, and some of the other great wrestlers included Jarasandha, Duryodhan and Karna. In the other Indian epic, Ramayana also mentions wrestling in India and Hanuman is described as one of the greatest wrestlers of his time. During the Muhgal rule who were of Turko-Mongol descent, the influence of Iranian and Mongolian wrestling were incorporated to the local Malla-yuddha to form the modern Pehelwani. In India is also known as Dangal, and it is the basic form of a wrestling tournament.

India hosted the Asian Games in New Delhi in 1951 and 1982. The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports was initially set up as the Department of Sports in 1982 at the time of organisation of the IX Asian Games in New Delhi. Its name was changed to the Department of Youth Affairs & Sports during celebration of the International Youth Year in 1985. India has also hosted or co-hosted several international sporting events, including the 1951 and the 1982 Asian Games, the 1987 and 1996 Cricket World Cup, the 2003 Afro-Asian Games, the 2010 Hockey World Cup, and the 2010 Commonwealth Games. Major international sporting events annually held in India include the Chennai Open, Mumbai Marathon, Delhi Half Marathon, and the Indian Masters. The country co-hosted the 1987, 1996, 2011 Cricket World Cup and the first Indian Grand Prix in 2011.

At the international level, India's performance in sports is very promising. In Olympics, sports like Hockey, Wrestling and Shooting has given great laurels for India followed by Badminton, Boxing and Weightlifting. Also, in Asian and Commonwealth Games, India has a good track record of producing medals. As per the records, India has won 139 Gold Medal, 178 Silver Medal and 299 Bronze Medal in Asian Games followed by 155 Gold Medal, 155 Silver Medal and 128 Bronze Medal in Commonwealth Games.

4. Khelo India School games

Khelo India School Games or KISG in short are the national level multidisciplinary grassroot games in India for the under-17 years school kids. Its 1st edition was organized in New Delhi from 31st January till 8th February 2018. The athletes participated in 16 disciplines organized in 5 iconic stadiums in New Delhi. It is for the first time that school games have been conducted in a large scale. The result was astounding with Haryana bagging the 1st place with 38 gold, 26 silver and 38 bronze medals followed by Maharashtra with 36 gold and then by the host state Delhi with 25 gold medals. The programme aims at strengthening the ecosystem

by promoting the twin objectives of mass participation and promotion of excellence in sports. The mascots for the games were Vijay (Tiger) and Jaya (Black Buck).

Table 1: Medal Tally KISG 2018 (Top 10)

Rank	State	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
1.	Haryana	38	26	38	102
2.	Maharashtra	36	32	43	111
3.	Delhi	25	29	40	94
4.	Karnataka	16	11	17	44
5.	Manipur	13	13	8	34
6.	Uttar Pradesh	10	24	28	62
7.	Punjab	10	5	20	35
8.	Kerala	7	11	10	28
9.	Tamil Nadu	6	11	11	28
10.	West Bengal	5	4	6	15

Source: <https://www.kheloindia.gov.in/>

5. Objective of the games

India has a glorious past in sports. Since ancient times, the Aryans and the Vedic people have been indulged in different kinds of sports like hunting, archery, mace fighting, bull fighting, horse riding, wrestling, etc. The objective of sports in ancient time was for survival and entertainment for Kings, Queens, Sultans, Emperor and Chief of Tribes. As the time passes, sports were made essential for the prince of royal families as a part of their curriculum as it can be attributed from Ramayana and Mahabharata era and also from medieval era. They used to practice archery, sword fighting, horse riding and wrestling. With the establishment of British Raj in India, sports had got a complete overhaul with the introduction of shooting which was directly related to hunting of wild animals for leisure time.

The first modern Olympic Games was started in 1896 in Athens, Greece but India participated in the Olympic movement in 1900 in Paris, France under British India flag where Mr. Norman Pritchard won 2 silver medals in 200m and 200m hurdles respectively. This was the foundation stone of India's Olympic participation. Till 1936, India continued its participation under British India flag where Field Hockey gave us gold medal and producing one of the most decorated hockey legends, the "Hockey Wizard", Mr. Dhyan Chand. But all this achievement was under the British flag. In 1948 London Olympics, right after gaining independence from British Raj, India won gold in Field Hockey by defeating Great Britain in finals which showcased how a culturally rich nation which was once robbed of her riches can again rise to glory with her young aspirations. Apart from team sports, India has achieved its first medal in individual sports with Mr. Khashaba Dadasaheb Jadhav, popularly known by K D Jadhav, won bronze medal in Wrestling in 1952 Olympics in Helsinki, Finland, a sport which has its roots in Aryan and Vedic era. These achievements have shown to the world that a young independent nation has entered the arena of international sports.

By the 1970s and 1980s, education became so important which had some negative effect on the development of sports in India. The basic notion was put on education as a means to everything, be it job, marriage, good lifestyle, etc., which can best be explained by the famous Hindi saying, "Padoge Likhoge Toh Banoge Nawab, Kheloge Kudoge Ton Banoge Kharab", which means by basic education one

can become successful and not be sports. Education is a necessary means to achieve but not without the inclusion of physical activity in one's day to day life. The statement did impact the performance of Indian athletes on the international podium finish. The Khelo India School Games is a concept brought to change the mindset of people towards sports. The tagline of the Games itself was kept in order to change the age-old mindset of people towards sports which was "Kheloge Kudoge Toh Banoge Lajawab". The Games were conceptualized in order to achieve multiple objective, the main and the foremost being the restructuring of sports in India. The objective of games was to identify sporting talent at the grassroot level, organize, train and prepare young athletes for international events. It also includes financial assistance for their training and education since many promising athletes back out of sporting disciplines due to lack of funds.

6. Marketing of the games

Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Govt. of India has marketed the school games in a right manner which was never done before. The focus was on youth and school children in order to connect them with sports by projecting it as an essential part of human lifestyle. The best possible resources were utilized in different manner in order to reach as far and wide as possible.

The following marketing task was taken up to promote the games:

- **Television and Radio Advertisement:** In keeping up to the level of promotion, there was an extensive use of advertisement in television and radio. Around 3-4 television commercials were launched under the tagline "Kheloge Kudoge Toh Banoge Lajawaab" and one anthem under the tagline "Saath Mei Hai Hum". The commercial featured many elite sportsperson like P V Sindhu (Badminton), Sakshi Malik (Wrestling), Sachin Tendulkar, Sunil Chhetri (Football), M C Mary Kom (Boxing), Anup Kumar (Kabaddi), Deepa Malik (Para-Athlete), Dipa Karmakar (Gymnastics) along with Hon'ble Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports Sh. Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore (Former Shooter and Olympic Silver Medallist). Also, many elite coaches like Pullela Gopichand (Badminton), Balwan Singh (Kabaddi), Harendra Singh (Hockey), etc., were also featured in television commercial. Simultaneously, the radio advertisements under the same taglines were broadcasted in different radio channels.
- **Print Media:** This form of media has the power to reach where even electronic media cannot have access to. Hoardings, Billboards, etc., were installed across Delhi. Also, newspaper advertisement was published making readers aware about the mega event in the capital. Even the result of the matches played were published highlighting the athlete and his/her team's achievement in the games.
- **Live Streaming:** For the first time in the history, school games went live on big sporting channel "Star Sports" and its mobile application "Hotstar" along with the grand opening and closing ceremony which had a deep impact on the overall image of the games. The young athletes and their coaches got a chance to showcase their sporting talent in front of the world thereby motivating them to achieve more in their discipline.
- **Social Media:** Social Media has now become one of the

emerging mediums in the 21st century. It has not only brought world to a single platform but has made a huge impact in the lives of the people. This is true for the games as it was extensively advertised in platforms like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram by posting pictures of day-to-day activities from different venues across the city. Also, they showcased some star players from 16 disciplines highlighting their achievements. The medium became an instant connect with the target population.

- **Khelo India Carnival:** In order to connect with the people, a carnival was organized in Connaught Place area of New Delhi featuring different sports and equipment's for the general public. Also, activities like a small quiz and kabaddi match was a major feature of the carnival. It was intended to bring back people and encourage them to play sports for enjoyment and leisure purpose.

7. Conclusion

In today's global society, marketing intelligence and planning is competing for attention because of the increased complex myriad messages being communicated. Consumers whether they are individuals, organizations or government bodies are processing more sport marketing messages about products, services and technologies. The task of sports marketers is to focus on the best ways to find out the appropriate strategies based on planning decisions. Sports marketing practice can be enhanced by further research into the best ways to disseminate sports related information. This can be done by cognitively targeting marketing messages to be processed more through an evaluative approach than dramatic ones due to their subjective orientation.

Sports market segmentation has increased in popularity as a strategy for organizations to target appropriate consumers. Sport can represent more to marketers than a game because of its linkage to history and heritage of a region. The challenge to sports marketers is to dynamically engage with audiences using innovative strategies. Understanding dynamic sports marketing is significant to marketing practitioners and researchers affected by changing global contexts. The appeal of sports marketing can be enhanced by implementing intelligent planning activities that increase social interaction and identification

As India is slowly emerging as a sporting power, initiatives like "Khelo India School Games" are necessary for the development of sporting infrastructure in India and in nurturing young, talented and elite sportsperson in different sporting disciplines. By marketing it in different platforms and through celebrity endorsement, it has created its image to a mega sporting event just like Commonwealth and Asian Games. The initiative itself has brought together people of all ages to indulge in sports as a part of mental, physical and emotional development of human body.

Therefore, it can be concluded that marketing activities in sports are able to build a favourable image in the minds of the consumers and also by helping the athletes, coaches and organizers to create a brand image for themselves. And in a developing nation like India where Cricket has dominated for ages, now it is helping other sports to create a market for itself.

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