

# Building a healthy nation: A white paper on Olympic sports and the Indian education system

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## ABSTRACT

The Indian education system has produced top-class global corporate leaders in recent decades. The combination of a solid educational foundation, work ethic, adaptability, technical and analytical skills, leadership abilities, networking, entrepreneurial spirit, and cultural values collectively contribute to the success of Indian students and professionals in the corporate world. On the contrary, India's overall performance in Olympic sports has been modest compared to its population and potential. The education system of any country has a significant role in sporting success. To fully harness the potential of sports in schools, addressing these challenges and creating a supportive environment that values and promotes sporting abilities alongside academic excellence is essential. This will require concerted efforts from various stakeholders, including the schooling system, educational institutions, government, sports organizations, corporate sponsors, and the community. This white paper aims to systematically organize the available knowledge and debates around India's sporting performance in the background of mainstream education culture. This paper also addresses the systemic devaluation, exclusion, disfranchisement, and stereotyping of sports and sportspersons in India. One key argument put forward in this paper is to extend absolute equivalence to Olympic sports disciplines (e.g., football) at par with general academic disciplines (e.g., mathematics) in terms of examinations and award of qualifications within the mainstream education system of India. And India must host the Olympics before 2047.

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## India and the Olympic Games

The next Olympic Games will be held in Paris, France, officially known as the 2024 Summer Olympics. The Paris 2024 Summer Olympics will occur from July 26 to August 11, 2024. Events will be held across various iconic locations in Paris and surrounding areas, including the Stade de France, Roland Garros, and the

Champs-Élysées. The 2024 Olympics will feature 32 sports and 329 events. India has participated in the Olympic Games since 1900 and has won 28 Olympic medals (as of the 2020 Tokyo Olympics), including nine gold, seven silver, and 12 bronze medals. Most of India's medals have been won in field hockey, with the Indian men's hockey team winning eight gold medals between 1928 and 1980. India's golden era in the Olympics was men's field hockey, where the team won six consecutive gold medals from 1928 to 1956 and another gold in 1964 and 1980. However, India's dominance in hockey has declined in recent decades, and the men's team has struggled to replicate past successes. While hockey has historically been India's strongest sport in the Olympics, individual athletes have also succeeded

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in other disciplines. Notable medalists include shooter Abhinav Bindra, who won India's first individual gold medal at the 2008 Beijing Olympics; wrestler Sushil Kumar, who won medals in 2008 and 2012; and boxer Mary Kom, who won a bronze medal in 2012. In the Tokyo Olympic games, Neeraj Chopra became only the second Indian individual Olympic champion to win Gold in men's javelin throw. PV Sindhu won her second Olympic medal, while the men's hockey team won an Olympic medal after 41 years.<sup>[1]</sup> Olympians such as Shri Milkha Singh Ji have remained legends and national heroes in India [Images 1-3].

### Success of the Indian education system: Global corporate leaders and CEOs (Chief Executive Officers)

The Indian education system has produced top-class global corporate leaders in recent decades. The Indian education system strongly emphasizes on Mathematics, Science, and Engineering. Many Indian students excel in standardized tests and competitive exams, gaining a deep understanding of these subjects. Many Indian students pursue advanced degrees from prestigious institutions in India (like IITs and

IIMs) and abroad, providing them with high-quality education and global exposure. The combination of a solid educational foundation, work ethic, adaptability, technical and analytical skills, leadership abilities, networking, entrepreneurial spirit, and cultural values collectively contribute to the success of Indian students and professionals in the corporate world. These factors help them meet and often exceed expectations in highly competitive and dynamic business environments. Many Indians have reached the top of global companies, showcasing their leadership and strategic insight. These leaders have demonstrated exceptional skill in steering their respective companies to success, contributing to the global business landscape, and inspiring aspiring leaders worldwide. They leaders exemplify Indian-origin executive's global influence and leadership capabilities in the corporate world [Table 1].<sup>[2]</sup>

### Modest performance at the Olympics: Potential role of mainstream education system

In contrast to the corporate world, despite individual successes, India's overall performance in the Olympics has been modest

**Table 1: Global business leaders of Indian origin**

Name	Role	Company	Background
Sundar Pichai	CEO	Alphabet Inc. (Google)	Sundar Pichai was born in Chennai, India, and earned his degree in Metallurgical Engineering from IIT Kharagpur. He later pursued an MS from Stanford University and an MBA from the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania. He joined Google in 2004 and became CEO of Google in 2015 and Alphabet Inc. in 2019.
Satya Nadella	CEO	Microsoft	Born in Hyderabad, India, Satya Nadella earned a Bachelor's degree in Electrical Engineering from Manipal Institute of Technology, an MS in Computer Science from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, and an MBA from the University of Chicago Booth School of Business. Nadella joined Microsoft in 1992 and became CEO in 2014.
Arvind Krishna	CEO	IBM	Arvind Krishna was born in West Godavari district, Andhra Pradesh, India. He earned a Bachelor's degree in Electrical Engineering from the Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur, and a Ph.D. in Electrical Engineering from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He joined IBM in 1990 and became CEO in 2020.
Shantanu Narayen	CEO	Adobe Inc	Shantanu Narayen was born in Hyderabad, India. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Electronics and Communication Engineering from Osmania University, an MBA from the University of California, Berkeley, and a Master's in Computer Science from Bowling Green State University. He joined Adobe in 1998 and became CEO in 2007.
Raj Subramaniam	CEO	FedEx	Born in Trivandrum, India, Raj Subramaniam holds a Bachelor's degree in Chemical Engineering from the Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay, an MS in Chemical Engineering from Syracuse University, and an MBA from the University of Texas at Austin. He joined FedEx in 1991 and became CEO in 2022.
Laxman Narasimhan	CEO	Starbucks	Laxman Narasimhan was born in Pune, India. He earned a degree in Mechanical Engineering from the College of Engineering Pune, an MA in German and International Studies from the Lauder Institute at the University of Pennsylvania, and an MBA from the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania. He joined Starbucks as CEO in 2023 after holding executive positions at PepsiCo and Reckitt Benckiser.
Sanjay Mehrotra	CEO	Micron Technology	Born in Kanpur, India, Sanjay Mehrotra earned a Bachelor's and Master's in Electrical Engineering and Computer Sciences from the University of California, Berkeley. He co-founded SanDisk and later became CEO of Micron Technology in 2017.
Ajay Banga	President	World Bank	Born in Pune, India, Ajay Banga holds a Bachelor's degree in Economics from St. Stephen's College, Delhi University, and an MBA from the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad. He served as CEO of Mastercard from 2010 to 2021 and became President of the World Bank in 2023.
Indra Nooyi	PepsiCo (former CEO)	Former CEO and Chairman	Indra Nooyi, from Chennai, India, holds a Bachelor's degree in Physics, Chemistry, and Mathematics from Madras Christian College, an MBA from the Indian Institute of Management, Calcutta, and a Master's degree in Public and Private Management from Yale School of Management. She served as CEO of PepsiCo from 2006 to 2018.



**Image 1:** Shri Milkha Singh Ji addressing family physician's conference on 22nd November 2015 at the Indian Habitat Center (IHC), New Delhi



**Image 2:** Shri Milkha Singh Ji felicitated by author Dr Raman Kumar, Founder & National President, Academy of Family Physicians of India, New Delhi, 2015



**Image 3:** "Run For Family Health: Physical Activity for All Family Members" Campaign launch by living legend & national hero Shri Milkha Singh Ji, 2015, New Delhi

compared to her population and potential. The education system of any country has a significant role in sporting success. Several challenges within the sports sectors, such as inadequate sports infrastructure, limited access to quality coaching and training facilities, funding constraints, bureaucratic hurdles, and systemic issues, have hindered India's ability to perform consistently at

the Olympic level. These challenges stem from systemic, cultural, and infrastructural factors.

The Indian School Education System is one of the largest in the world, with nearly 14.89 lakh schools, more than 95 lakh teachers, and nearly 26.52 Crore students of pre-primary to higher secondary level from varied socio-economic backgrounds. The system strives to maintain standards and uniformity across the country while giving ample scope for the country's diverse culture and heritage to grow and flourish. According to the All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE), 2021-22, the total number of universities/university-level institutions registered is 1,168, with colleges at 45,473 and standalone institutions at 12,002.<sup>[3]</sup> In the Indian society, there is often a greater emphasis on academic achievement than sports. As a result, aspiring athletes may prioritize academics over sports, leading to less investment in athletic development and fewer opportunities for pursuing sporting careers. While sports like cricket enjoy immense popularity in India, other sports often need more attention and support.

To fully harness the potential of sports in schools, addressing these challenges and creating a supportive environment that values and promotes sporting abilities alongside academic excellence is essential. While the Indian schooling system endeavors to encourage physical strength through physical education and sports activities, challenges, such as competing academic priorities, inadequate sports infrastructure, and limited resources, may impact the effectiveness of these efforts. To maximize the promotion of physical strength, schools must prioritize sports education, invest in sports infrastructure and resources, and foster a supportive environment that values and encourages active participation in physical activities among students. A broader sports culture that recognizes and promotes diverse sports beyond cricket is needed. More systematic and widespread grassroots development programs are needed to identify and nurture talent at a young age. Addressing these challenges will require concerted efforts from various stakeholders, including the schooling system, government, sports organizations, educational institutions, corporate sponsors, and the community. By investing in grassroots development, improving sports infrastructure, fostering a sports culture, and promoting professionalism and innovation in sports administration, India can work towards overcoming its shortcomings in sports and realizing its potential as a sporting powerhouse.

### Cricket: Cocktail of colonial sports and nationalism—Impact on Olympic performance

Cricket in India enjoys a status unlike any other sport, marked by a genuine following, significant financial investment, and consistent international success. Cricket was introduced to India by British colonialists in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century. The first recorded cricket match in India occurred in 1721 in Cambay, Gujarat.

In 1848, the Oriental Cricket Club, the first Indian cricket club, was established in Mumbai. The Bombay Quadrangular

tournament began in 1912, initially as a competition among the Europeans, Parsis, Hindus, and Muslims. Cricket was introduced to various parts of the British Empire, including the Caribbean, India, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and other regions. British soldiers, colonial administrators, and settlers played a significant role in spreading the game. The British established schools, clubs, and institutions where cricket was a part of the curriculum or recreational activity. Elite schools in colonies often had cricket teams, and the sport was seen as a way to instill British values and discipline. Over time, cricket became a symbol of resistance and national pride, especially as Indian teams began to compete and succeed against their colonial rulers. India's first Test match in 1932 and the 1983 Cricket World Cup victory were landmark events cemented cricket's place in the national consciousness.<sup>[4]</sup> The 1983 World Cup win, in particular, ignited widespread enthusiasm and established cricket as the most popular sport in the country. Cricket in post-colonial societies often integrated local cultures, languages, and traditions. It became a tool for social change and development, with cricketing heroes often emerging from humble backgrounds. The International Cricket Council (ICC) governs cricket globally, with member nations from former British colonies and new cricketing regions.

While cricket's dominance in India has brought significant benefits to the sport and the country, it has also posed challenges to the development and popularity of other sports. Balanced resource allocation, increased media coverage, and supportive policies are essential to ensure the growth and success of a diverse range of sports in India. While cricket's dominance in India has brought immense popularity and financial success to the sport, it has negatively impacted other sports. Because of its popularity and financial returns, cricket receives the lion's share of sponsorship, government funding, and corporate investment. Other sports often need help to secure adequate funding for infrastructure, training, and international competitions. Investment in cricket facilities and stadiums can overshadow infrastructure development for other sports. Cricket's immense fan base can eclipse the following for other sports, making it challenging to build large, dedicated audiences for sports like athletics, hockey, and football. Popular cricket events can draw attention away from other sports, reducing spectator numbers and engagement. Young athletes may be more inclined to pursue cricket due to its higher visibility, potential financial rewards, and societal prestige. Efforts to promote and develop other sports can be undermined by the overwhelming focus on cricket. Cricket offers lucrative career opportunities through domestic leagues like the IPL, endorsements, and international contracts. Athletes in other sports often face financial instability and limited earning potential, discouraging them from pursuing careers outside cricket.

Once the most popular sport in India, hockey has seen a decline in viewership and investment since the rise of cricket. Despite historic successes, hockey struggles to regain its former glory due to insufficient funding and infrastructure. Although football has a

growing fan base, especially with the Indian Super League (ISL), it still competes for attention and resources against cricket. The overwhelming focus on cricket hinders the development of football talent and infrastructure. Sports like athletics, badminton, boxing, and wrestling receive less attention and support than cricket. Despite producing world-class athletes, these sports need more recognition and financial backing. Other sports need help attracting talent, affecting their grassroots development and future competitiveness. This can only be possible through the mainstream education system.

### Decline in rural sports culture in India

India is a country of villages and rural landscape. Rural sports in India have a rich and diverse history, deeply embedded in the country's cultural and social fabric. These sports have evolved over centuries, reflecting rural communities' lifestyles, values, and traditions. Rural sports in India are more than just physical activities; they are a testament to the country's rich cultural heritage and traditional values. These sports have evolved, but they continue to play a vital role in rural communities' social and cultural life. While some traditional sports have gained national and international recognition, others remain cherished local traditions, reflecting the diversity and vibrancy of rural India. Rural sports are often tied to local festivals and celebrations. For example, Jallikattu is held during the Pongal festival in Tamil Nadu, and Vallam Kali (boat races) are conducted during the Onam festival in Kerala. These events foster community spirit and unity. Traditional sports like Kabaddi, Kho-Kho, and Kushti (wrestling) are part of the cultural heritage, passed down through generations. They are a source of pride and identity for rural communities.<sup>[5]</sup>

Many rural sports are integrated into people's daily lives, promoting physical fitness and health. For instance, activities like wrestling and Kabaddi help build strength and endurance, essential for agricultural work. Rural sports help preserve traditional skills and practices. For instance, Kalaripayattu, an ancient martial art from Kerala, is a sport and a way to preserve traditional combat techniques and knowledge. In rural areas with limited access to modern entertainment, sports serve as a primary source of recreation. Community members gather to watch and participate in local sports events, creating a vibrant social scene. Events like bullock cart racing, archery, and traditional wrestling matches are platforms for showcasing skills and gaining social recognition. Sports are a vital aspect of rural culture in India, contributing to the social, economic, and cultural development of communities. They foster a sense of identity, promote physical fitness, preserve traditions, and offer opportunities for social and economic advancement. Recognizing and supporting rural sports can lead to India's more inclusive and vibrant cultural landscape. Till recently, most sporting heroes in India have shined from rural and humble backgrounds.

However, there has been a progressive decline in interest in sports in rural areas, with a few exceptions. The decline of rural

**Table 2: Careerpathways for sportspersons**

Career Pathways	
Professional Athlete	Cricket is the most popular sport in India, and lucrative careers are available through domestic leagues like the Indian Premier League (IPL), national teams, and international opportunities. Badminton, tennis, and other sports are increasingly popular and offer professional opportunities through national and international tournaments and leagues. Former athletes can become school, college, professional, or national team coaches.
Coaching and Training Personal Trainers	Certification as a personal trainer allows sportspersons to work with individuals, gyms, and fitness centers. Sports Academies: Opportunities exist to train the next generation of athletes in sports academies and training centers.
Sports Management and Administration: Sports Commentators:	Roles in managing teams, athletes, and sports events. Sports Administrators: Positions in sports federations, associations, and government bodies, overseeing the development and regulation of sports.
Fitness and Wellness Industry	Providing live commentary and analysis for sports events on television, radio, and digital platforms. Sports Journalists: Writing for newspapers, magazines, and online platforms, covering sports news, events, and profiles of athletes.
Brand Ambassadors	Advising individuals and organisations on fitness and wellness. Nutritionists and Physiotherapists: Specialising in sports nutrition and physical therapy, helping athletes maintain peak performance and recover from injuries.
Entrepreneurship	Endorsing brands and products, leveraging their popularity and reputation. Corporate Trainers: Conducting motivational and team-building sessions for corporate employees. Management Roles: Utilising leadership and teamwork skills in various corporate roles.
Government and Public Sector Education	Establish training centers or sports academies. Sports Equipment and Apparel: Starting businesses in sports gear, apparel, and accessories. Event Management: Organizing sports events, tournaments, and leagues.
Military and Police Forces	Positions within the Sports Authority of India (SAI) and other governmental bodies. Involvement in developing and implementing sports policies and programs.
Scholarships and Fellowships	Teaching physical education in schools and colleges. Sports Sciences: Pursuing careers in sports psychology, biomechanics, and sports medicine.
	Many military and police organisations recruit sports persons under sports quotas, allowing them to continue their sports careers while serving in these forces.
	Many universities offer scholarships for athletes, allowing them to pursue higher education while continuing their sports careers. These scholarships also provide opportunities for research and development in sports sciences and management.

**Table 3: Sports supportive sectors**

Supporting industry domain	
Sports Equipment and Apparel	Companies design, manufacture, and sell sports gear, equipment, and clothing. Major brands include Nike, Adidas, Puma, and Under Armour.
Sports Medicine and Health	Medical professionals, physiotherapists, and sports scientists who specialize in injury prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation. This also includes companies that produce health supplements and fitness-tracking devices.
Media and Broadcasting	Television networks, online streaming services, and radio stations that broadcast sports events play crucial roles. Companies like ESPN, Sky Sports, and streaming platforms such as Amazon Prime Video and Disney+Hotstar also play crucial roles.
Event Management and Sponsorship	Organizations that plan and execute sports events, from local competitions to international tournaments. This includes event promoters, venue operators, and companies providing sponsorship.
Sports Marketing and Public Relations	Agencies that manage the promotion of sports teams, athletes, and events. They handle advertising, public relations, and social media presence to engage fans and attract sponsors.
Sports Facilities and Infrastructure	Companies involved in building and maintaining sports venues, including stadiums, arenas, and training facilities, as well as those providing seating, lighting, and turf.
Sports Technology	Firms that develop technology solutions for sports, such as performance analytics, virtual and augmented reality for training, and fan engagement platforms. Examples include Catapult Sports and Hudl.
Education and Training	Institutions and organisations that provide education and training for athletes, coaches, and sports management professionals. This includes universities with sports science programs and certification bodies for coaching.
Nutrition and Wellness	Companies that offer specialized nutrition products and services tailored for athletes include sports drinks, energy bars, and dietary supplements.
Legal and Financial Services	Legal firms specializing in sports law, including contract negotiation, intellectual property rights, and compliance with regulations. Financial advisors and firms that manage the finances of athletes and sports organisations.
Travel and Tourism	Agencies that cater to the travel needs of athletes, teams, and fans, including transportation, accommodation, and travel logistics for sports events.
Merchandising and Retail	Companies that produce and sell sports-related merchandise, such as team jerseys, memorabilia, and fan gear. Retailers range from official team stores to large sports retail chains.

sports in India is a multifaceted issue involving socio-economic changes, urbanization, cultural shifts, and lack of support and infrastructure. It can be attributed to several interrelated social, economic, and cultural factors. The migration of people

from rural to urban areas in search of better employment opportunities and living conditions has led to a decline in the population actively participating in rural sports. This migration disrupts the traditional community structures that support these

sports. The urban lifestyle often lacks the communal spaces and time needed to engage in traditional rural sports, leading to a shift towards more modern forms of entertainment and recreation. Many rural areas need more proper infrastructure and facilities for sports. This includes well-maintained fields, equipment, and training centers. The absence of professional training and coaching facilities in rural areas makes it difficult for talented athletes to develop their skills. With proper guidance and training, many potential athletes may reach their full potential, leading to a decline in the quality and popularity of rural sports. Limited access to healthcare can deter participation in physically demanding sports due to the risk of injury and lack of medical support. Health and nutritional status in some rural areas can positively affect the physical capabilities required for sports. In economically disadvantaged rural areas, survival and livelihood take precedence over sports. Families may need help to allocate time and resources to non-essential activities like sports. Lack of sponsorship and financial support for rural sports events and athletes discourages participation and development.

Revitalizing rural sports would require comprehensive strategies that address these challenges, including improving infrastructure, providing financial support, promoting cultural preservation, and encouraging community participation. Recognizing the value of rural sports in preserving cultural heritage and promoting holistic development is crucial for their revival and sustainability. Schooling and the education system can foster support and environment for rural sports.

### **Sports: Expanding the economic opportunities for Indian citizen**

India has one of the largest youth populations in the world. India has a significant proportion of its population in the youth category. According to the United Nations, India is set to have a 34.33% share of youth in the total population by 2020, and the current trends indicate this number is still substantial. The youth population generally includes individuals aged 15–29 years. However, some statistics and programs may include those up to 35 years. The large youth population is often called a demographic dividend, providing a potential economic boost due to a higher proportion of working-age individuals. This can increase productivity and economic growth if the youth are well-educated and employed. India has expanded significantly in recent years, driven by increasing investments in sports infrastructure, government initiatives, and growing public interest. Sports is a potential domain that can contribute to youth engagement, employment, and economic growth. The expanding scope of career opportunities for sports persons in India reflects the growing recognition of sports as a viable and respected career path. With support from the government, private sector, and sports organizations, athletes can pursue diverse and fulfilling careers within and beyond their sporting disciplines. The prominent career paths have been compiled in the Table 2.

The sports industry encompasses a wide array of supportive sectors that contribute to the growth and development of sports at various levels. These supportive industries work together to ensure the smooth functioning and growth of the sports sector, creating a robust ecosystem that benefits athletes, fans, and stakeholders. Table 3 compiles these.

### **The colonial worldview on the Indian education system: Human resource is the Indian oil**

The colonial worldview on the Indian education system during British rule in India was shaped by several factors, including economic interests, cultural attitudes, and administrative needs. This worldview had significant implications for the development and structure of education in India. The British needed a class of educated Indians to assist the colony's administration. Lord Macaulay's famous "Minute on Indian Education" (1835) emphasized creating a class of persons, Indian in blood and color but English in taste, opinions, morals, and intellect, to serve as intermediaries between the British rulers and the Indian population.<sup>[6]</sup> The colonial education system often devalued Indian knowledge systems, including traditional sciences, mathematics, medicine, and literature, portraying them as inferior to European knowledge. English was promoted as the medium of instruction, which the British believed was superior to indigenous languages and literature. This policy marginalized traditional Indian educational systems and created a divide between the English-educated elite and the rest of the population.

The education system established under British rule laid the foundation for the modern education system in India. It created a class of educated Indians who later played crucial roles in the development of post-independence India. The emphasis on English left a lasting impact, making English a significant language in India today, with positive and negative implications for cultural identity and social mobility.

The needs of the British administration, economic interests, and a belief in cultural superiority drove the colonial worldview on the Indian education system. While it introduced modern education to India, it also had significant adverse effects, such as reinforcing social hierarchies and devaluing indigenous knowledge. India's educated and trained workers have significantly contributed to various sectors globally through past two centuries. This diaspora, often referred to as the Indian workforce abroad, has substantially impacted both the host countries' economies and India's socio-economic development. Indian workers play a crucial role in the global economy, contributing significantly to various sectors and bringing substantial benefits to their host countries and India. Despite their challenges, their impact is profound and multifaceted, encompassing economic, cultural, and social dimensions.

Trained and competent human resources are essential components of any economic order. Colonial recruitment refers to colonial powers enlisting individuals from their colonies into various roles, often within the military, administrative, or labor sectors.

From slavery since ancient times, contractual servitude was a common practice during the colonial era, primarily in the 19th and early 20th centuries, when European powers controlled large parts of Africa, Asia, and other regions. Colonial recruitment was a complex and multifaceted phenomenon with significant consequences for both the colonial powers and the colonies. Several mechanisms of pull and push for global human resources continue to function. Wars, displacements, mass migration, and conditional citizen rights can be considered the continuity of colonial habits. Cultural training for refugees and migrants is essential to help them adapt to their new environments and promote mutual understanding between refugees and host communities. This is important for modern nations established in colonized territories and the nations that emerged from middle age darkness to the industrial revolution. This type of training aims to bridge cultural gaps, reduce misunderstandings, and facilitate smoother integration. As a civilization state, India must grow out of the colonial worldview of human resource development and focus on the welfare of her own citizens.

### **Decolonizing Indian education system: Population dividend leverage for economic growth**

In ancient Indian education systems, sports and physical activities played a significant role in the holistic development of individuals. The ancient Indian philosophy of education emphasized a person's overall development, including physical, mental, and spiritual growth. Physical education was considered essential for maintaining good health and physical fitness. Activities like wrestling (mallayuddha), archery (dhanurvidya), and other forms of martial arts were integral to the curriculum. Sports and physical exercises were believed to enhance mental discipline, focus, and resilience. The emphasis was on developing a solid, sound mind in a healthy body. Sports were often linked to cultural festivals. Competitions and tournaments were held during these occasions, promoting social cohesion and cultural heritage. Sports activities helped in building a sense of community and camaraderie among participants.

They fostered teamwork, leadership, and social skills. In ancient India, the education system provided training in various physical activities alongside academic and spiritual education. Many sports activities were designed to prepare young men for warfare. Skills in archery, sword fighting, and horse riding were crucial for defense and military training. Emphasis on physical training and martial arts as part of their education. Yoga, which includes physical postures (asanas) and breathing exercises (pranayama), was an integral part of the education system. It promoted physical well-being, mental clarity, and spiritual growth. Yoga was believed to balance the body and mind, fostering inner peace and enhancing physical capabilities. Ancient Indian epics contain numerous sports and physical training references. The characters in these epics are often depicted as skilled in various sports and martial arts. Texts like the Arthashastra emphasize the importance of physical education and sports in the upbringing of individuals, especially the youth. Traditional games, such as kabaddi, kho-kho, and chaturanga (an early form of chess), were

popular in ancient India. These games provided entertainment as well as physical and mental exercise.

Recreational sports and games were encouraged as they provided a break from academic learning and helped maintain a balanced lifestyle. Sports and physical activities were often linked to ethical and moral training. The emphasis was on fair play, integrity, and respect for opponents. Participation in sports was seen as a means to build character, teach discipline, and foster a sense of responsibility and duty. Sports played a crucial role in the ancient Indian education system by promoting physical fitness, mental discipline, and holistic development. They were intertwined with cultural, social, and spiritual aspects of life, contributing to individuals' overall growth and well-being.

Decolonizing the Indian education system involves revisiting and reforming educational practices, curricula, and policies shaped by colonial influences and integrating indigenous knowledge, perspectives, and values. It is a multifaceted process requiring comprehensive curriculum, pedagogy, policy, and community engagement reforms. It aims to create a more inclusive, culturally relevant education system that reflects India's diverse heritage and contemporary realities.

### **Endeavor for improving India's performance in the sports through formal mainstream education system**

Many schools in India have sports facilities such as playgrounds, courts, and fields where students can participate in various sports and physical activities. However, the availability and quality of sports facilities can vary significantly between schools, with urban private schools often having better infrastructure than rural and government schools. Inter-school sports competitions and tournaments are organized at the district, state, and national levels. They provide opportunities for students to showcase their sporting talents and compete against peers from other schools. These competitions help foster a spirit of sportsmanship, teamwork, and healthy competition among students. Some schools offer sports scholarships, incentives, and recognition for students who excel in sports and represent the school in inter-school competitions. Scholarships may include financial support, coaching assistance, and academic concessions for student-athletes to balance their sports and academic commitments. Besides formal physical education classes, schools may offer extracurricular sports clubs, teams, and coaching programs to cater to students' diverse sporting interests and abilities. These extracurricular activities allow students to explore different sports, develop skills, and pursue their passion for sports outside regular school hours.

The Government of India has launched various initiatives to promote sports in schools, including the Khelo India program, which aims to identify and nurture sporting talent at the grassroots level, provide scholarships and training opportunities, and develop sports infrastructure in schools and communities.<sup>7</sup> Parents and the community play a crucial role in encouraging and supporting children's participation in

sports. Parents may sometimes prioritize academic achievement over sports, leading to a need for more encouragement or resources for children to pursue sporting activities outside of school. Despite these efforts, there are challenges in effectively integrating sports into the Indian schooling system. These challenges include inadequate sports infrastructure, limited trained physical education teachers, academic pressures, cultural attitudes towards sports, and the dominance of academic pursuits in shaping educational priorities. There have been efforts in recent years to promote sports and physical education within schools. Physical education is a compulsory subject in Indian schools, and the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) and other educational boards prescribe guidelines for physical education curriculum and assessment. Schools are required to allocate time for physical education classes, which include activities such as sports, games, fitness exercises, and yoga.

**Table 4: Barriers and challenges while participating in sports in the Indian education system**

**Academic Pressure:** Indian society strongly emphasizes academic success, leading to a perception that sports distract from studies. The education system in India often has a heavy academic load, leaving little time for extracurricular activities like sports.

**Rigid Curriculum:** The Indian education system often follows a rigid curriculum that strongly emphasizes rote learning and standardized testing, leaving little time for extracurricular activities like sports. The emphasis on preparing for board exams and entrance tests can reduce the emphasis on physical education and sports.

**High Academic Workload:** Students face heavy academic workloads and pressure to perform well in exams, reducing time for sports and physical activities. Many parents prioritize academics over sports, fearing that time spent on sports will negatively impact academic performance and future career prospects.

**Inadequate Facilities:** Many schools, especially rural areas, need more sports infrastructure, such as playgrounds, courts, fields, and sports equipment. **Limited Access to Coaches:** More trained and qualified coaches who can provide proper guidance and training to students need to be hired.

**Insufficient Funding:** Schools often need more budgets for sports programs, leading to inadequate resources and facilities.

**Health and Safety Concerns:** Concerns about injuries and the lack of proper medical facilities or first aid can deter participation in sports. Extreme weather conditions like heat and monsoon rains can limit outdoor sports opportunities.

**Policy and Implementation Issues:** Although policies promoting sports exist, their implementation could be more consistent across different schools and regions. There is often a focus on identifying elite talent rather than promoting mass participation, which can limit opportunities for all students.

**Lack of Awareness and Role Model:** There is often a lack of awareness about the benefits of sports for physical and mental health and their potential as careers. While India has successful athletes, they are less visible and celebrated than academic achievers, leading to fewer role models for aspiring young athletes.

**Economic Barriers:** Sports equipment, training, and event participation can be prohibitive for many families, especially those from lower socio-economic backgrounds.

**Gender Bias:** Girls often face additional barriers due to societal norms and gender stereotypes that discourage their participation in sports.

India's National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, a comprehensive framework aiming to transform the country's educational landscape, emphasizes the importance of sports and physical education. The NEP 2020 integrates sports into the educational system. This policy emphasizes the role of sports in promoting physical fitness, mental well-being, and holistic development. The following are essential components of NEP related to sports.

**Balanced Education:** Encourages a balanced approach to academics and co-curricular activities, including sports.

**Mandatory Physical Education:** Sports and physical education are integral to the school curriculum from the foundational stage.

**Interdisciplinary Approach:** Encourages an interdisciplinary approach where sports are integrated with other subjects to foster a well-rounded education. This proposal proposes the development of adequate sports infrastructure in schools and higher educational institutions.

**Shared Resources:** This proposal encourages schools and colleges to share sports facilities with local communities to maximize usage and benefits.

**Early Identification:** Focuses on identifying sports talent at an early age and providing them with appropriate training and support.

**Sports Scholarships:** Introduces scholarships and other incentives to encourage students to pursue sports.

**Teacher Training and Capacity Building:** Emphasizes the need for training teachers in physical education and sports coaching. Offers specialized courses and certifications for physical education teachers and sports coaches.

The NEP 2020's emphasis on integrating sports and physical education into the academic curriculum is a significant step towards fostering holistic development and promoting a sports culture in India.<sup>[8]</sup> The policy aims to nurture talent and create a healthier, more active society by ensuring equitable access, developing infrastructure, and encouraging community participation.

### School and university students in India face several barriers and challenges while participating in sports

Balancing rigorous training schedules with academic commitments can be very demanding. Young athletes often need help to allocate sufficient time for their studies and sports. The traditional education system in India could be more flexible in accommodating the needs of young athletes. Attendance requirements, exam schedules, and the need for special provisions for athletes can hinder their academic progress.

For some families, the time spent on sports could be taken away from time that could be used for part-time work or additional studies. While school students in India face several challenges in participating in sports, addressing these issues through comprehensive policies, increased funding, infrastructure development, and cultural shifts can help create a more supportive environment for young athletes. By recognizing the importance of sports for overall development, India can ensure that students have the opportunity to excel both academically and athletically. These challenges stem from cultural, infrastructural, educational, and policy-related factors. The key obstacles are mentioned in Table 4.

## Call for societal reforms: Stereotyping of sportspersons in the Indian education system & the society at large

The stereotyping of sportspersons in the Indian education system is a multifaceted issue that can significantly impact students involved in sports. Students who excel in sports are often unfairly labeled as less intelligent. This stereotype suggests that athletic skills are mutually exclusive with academic excellence, discouraging students from pursuing both simultaneously. In most Indian schools, academic performance is prioritized over sports, with the perception that sports distract from studies. This can lead to an undervaluation of the skills and dedication required for sports. Sports are often considered a male domain, with boys encouraged to participate more actively in physical activities. Female athletes may face additional stereotypes, such as being labeled as "tomboys" or facing questions about their femininity. Sportspersons from lower socioeconomic backgrounds may be stereotyped as having fewer academic aspirations or capabilities, with sports seen as their only viable path to success. Certain regions or communities in India are stereotyped as producing better athletes in specific sports, which can create biases and limit opportunities for students from other areas. Stereotyping can negatively affect the self-esteem and self-perception of student-athletes, making them doubt their academic abilities or feel pressured to conform to societal expectations. These stereotypes can influence career choices, with students feeling compelled to abandon sports to focus solely on academics due to societal and familial pressures. Sportspersons often receive less recognition and support from school authorities than academically high-performing students, affecting their motivation and performance. The media often reinforces stereotypes by focusing more on academic achievements in school-related news and downplaying the importance of sports. Successful athletes might be depicted in a narrow, often sensationalized manner. The lack of diverse role models in the media who successfully balance academics and sports can perpetuate these stereotypes. Schools should adopt a holistic approach that values academics and sports equally, recognizing the importance of physical education in overall development. Addressing these stereotypes requires a concerted effort from educational institutions, policymakers, parents, and society to create a more balanced and supportive environment for student-athletes.

## Sports disciplines are not included as a direct component of scholastic assessment or academic grading systems; Curricular vs extracurricular debate

The Indian schooling system traditionally strongly emphasizes academic achievement and standardized testing, which may not always prioritize or adequately support the development of sporting abilities. Therefore, sports remain an extracurricular activity. It is understood that the physical education component on a nominal basis cannot match the rigor of competitive sports training and coaching. Most educational boards in India, including the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) and the

Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations (CISCE), prescribe physical education as a compulsory subject from primary to secondary levels. The curriculum includes various physical activities, sports, and exercises to develop motor skills, physical fitness, teamwork, and sportsmanship among students.

While physical education is a compulsory subject, it is typically graded separately from academic subjects. While participation in extracurricular sports may be recognized and celebrated, it is not typically directly linked to academic assessment or grading. Some schools and educational institutions may offer sports scholarships, awards, and recognition to students who excel in sports and represent their school at various levels of competition. However, these are considered separate from academic achievements and are not directly factored into academic assessment or grading. Schools play a crucial role in promoting a sports culture and encouraging active participation in sports and physical activities among students. By providing access to sports facilities, coaching, training, and opportunities for competition, schools contribute to the overall development of students' physical strengths, skills, and well-being.

While sports are an integral part of the education curriculum in India, they are not typically included as a component of educational assessment or academic grading systems. Instead, sports are valued for contributing to students' physical fitness, character development, teamwork, and overall holistic growth. The Indian education system often follows a rigid curriculum emphasizing rote learning and standardized testing, leaving little time for extracurricular activities like sports. Students face heavy academic workloads and pressure to perform well in exams, reducing time for sports and physical activities. Individual Olympic sports are not recognized as academic disciplines or subjects for study.

## Government schemes

The Indian government has launched various initiatives to support Olympic sports and enhance India's performance in international competitions. Initiatives such as the Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS), Khelo India program, National Sports Development Fund (NSDF), and Mission Olympic Cell (MOC) aim to identify and support talented athletes, provide training and financial assistance, and improve sports infrastructure and facilities across the country. Despite challenges, there is optimism about India's prospects in the Olympics, given the growing interest in sports, increasing investments in sports development, and the emergence of talented athletes across various disciplines. With continued efforts to address systemic issues, promote sports culture, and support athletes, India aims to achieve tremendous success and make its mark on the global sporting stage in the future. Overall, while India's performance in the Olympics has room for improvement, there is potential for the country to leverage its talent, resources, and sporting heritage to achieve tremendous success and inspire future generations of athletes.

The National Sports University (NSU) in India has been established as a specialized university dedicated to sports education and development. The NSU was established in 2018 in Imphal, Manipur, India, through the National Sports University Act 2018.<sup>[9]</sup> This university offers degrees in sports sciences and promotes research in sports science, technology, and related fields to improve athletic performance and sports infrastructure. It provides advanced training facilities and programs for athletes. NSU aspires to identify and nurture sporting talent from a young age. There are training programs for coaches and sports administrators to enhance the quality of sports training and management. This university when fully evolved is likely to play a pivotal role in developing and promoting sports education and excellence in India. It aims to nurture the next generation of athletes, coaches, and sports professionals by offering specialized programs, advanced training facilities, and research opportunities, contributing significantly to the country's sports landscape.

## Sports Authority of India: National Centres of Excellence (NCOEs)

In its endeavor to train athletes to achieve excellence in the Olympics and other International Events, the Sports Authority of India has established National Centres of Excellence (NCOEs) across the country to impart specialized training to promising athletes by providing state-of-the-art infrastructure and playing facilities, sports science backup, individualized diet prescribed by trained nutritionists and overall supervision under the best coaches, qualified support staff, and High-Performance Directors. National Centres of Excellence operate as regular coaching camps for the best available talent in India and provide concurrent layers of prospective sports persons, giving a wider choice of talent and continuity for selection to National Teams and alternative second and third options. To maintain uniformity of the financial norms and to dispense with the differentiation between trainees on the same campus/premises at SAI Regional Centre/Academic Institutions/Stadia, the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Govt. of India, decided to merge all Schemes Operating on the same Campus/premises in SAI Regional Centre/Academic Institutions and Stadia as SAI National Centre of Excellence (NCOE). NCOEs cover 14 focused/priority disciplines and 11 other disciplines where Indian athletes perform well and have chances to win medals in International Events/Championships/Games, availability of FOP, existing athletes, local talent, etc., The focused sports disciplines are Archery, Athletics, Badminton, Boxing, Cycling, Fencing, Hockey, Judo, Rowing, Swimming, Shooting, Table Tennis, Wrestling, and Weightlifting. The other disciplines are Football, Gymnastics, Basketball, Handball, Kabbadi, Kho-Kho, Kayaking and Canoeing, Para Sports, Taekwondo, Volleyball, and Wushu.<sup>[10]</sup>

## Way forward

### BA - Bachelor in Arts in Football

(player) : All university with sports facilities under University Grant Commission

It is proposed to accept of Football and other sports as mainstream academic disciplines that encompass a range of

studies and research related to the sport, addressing its many facets, including physical performance, coaching techniques, management, cultural impact, and more. Football as an academic discipline shall be recognized as a multifaceted field that combines practical and theoretical knowledge to advance the sport and its impact on society. Below are a few key areas within football that may be included as a body of knowledge as an academic discipline:

- Sports Science and Medicine:** Studying how the body responds and adapts to physical activity, including endurance, strength, and recovery specific to football. Understanding the dietary needs of football players to optimize performance and recovery and researching common football injuries and effective treatment and prevention strategies.
- Coaching and Performance Analysis:** Developing and analyzing coaching techniques and strategies for different levels of play. Performance Analysis: Using technology and data analytics to assess player and team performance, improve tactics, and make informed decisions.
- Sports Management:** Managing football clubs, including financial aspects, marketing, operations, and fan engagement; organizing football matches and tournaments; ensuring smooth operations and a positive experience for spectators. Developing marketing strategies, securing sponsorships, and promoting football brands.
- Sports Physiology:** Techniques to improve players' focus, confidence, and resilience. Studying group behavior and team cohesion to enhance performance.
- Sociocultural Studies:** Exploring the historical evolution of football and its global spread. Cultural Impact: Investigating how football influences and is influenced by culture, politics, and society. Examining issues of gender equality, diversity, and inclusion within football.
- Law and Ethics:** Covering legal aspects such as contracts, labor laws, and regulations specific to football and addressing ethical issues like doping, match-fixing, and fair play.
- Academic Programs and Research:** Universities should offer undergraduate and graduate programs in sports science, sports management, sports coaching, and related fields focusing on football. Academics shall have dedicated research centers focusing on various aspects of football, from biomechanics to fan behavior. Academic journals and conferences provide platforms for researchers to share findings and advance knowledge in football studies.
- Career Opportunities:** Graduates with expertise in football as an academic discipline can pursue careers in coaching, sports management, athletic training, sports journalism, and more. They can work with professional football clubs, sports organizations, educational institutions, and media companies.

Similar educational programs can also be instituted in other sports disciplines, such as Archery, Athletics, Badminton, Boxing, Cycling, Fencing, Hockey, Judo, Rowing, Swimming, Shooting, Table Tennis, Wrestling, Weightlifting, Gymnastics, Basketball, Handball, Kabadi, Kho-Kho, Kayaking and canoeing, Para Sports, Taekwondo, Volleyball, and Wushu.

## *Scoring 100% in the school board examination: Integrating mathematics and chess as academic disciplines within the Indian education system*

Comparing mathematics and chess involves examining their similarities, differences, and the ways they intersect. Both fields require critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and strategic planning, but their fundamental nature and applications differ. While mathematics and chess are distinct in their nature and applications, they share common elements such as problem-solving, logical thinking, and pattern recognition. Their intersection in education and artificial intelligence highlights the complementary relationship between the two disciplines.

### **1. Similarities -**

**Problem-Solving and Strategy:** Both mathematics and chess involve solving complex problems. This involves finding solutions to equations, proofs, and other mathematical challenges in mathematics. In chess, it involves devising strategies to outmaneuver the opponent.

**Logical Thinking:** Both disciplines require rigorous logical thinking and the ability to anticipate consequences. In mathematics, this involves following logical steps to conclude. In chess, it involves planning moves and predicting the opponent's responses.

**Pattern Recognition:** Recognizing patterns is crucial in both fields. Mathematicians look for patterns to formulate conjectures and solve problems, and chess players recognize patterns in positions and strategies to gain an advantage.

**Abstract Thinking:** Both mathematics and chess require abstract thinking. Mathematics often involves abstract concepts and structures, while chess requires players to think abstractly about positions and moves.

### **2. Differences -**

**Nature and Purpose:** Mathematics is a formal science concerned with numbers, quantities, shapes, and abstract concepts. It aims to understand and describe the world through logical reasoning and proofs. Chess is a strategic board game played between two opponents. It is a recreational activity and a competitive sport primarily focused on strategy, tactics, and competition.

**Application:** Mathematics has wide-ranging applications in various fields, including science, engineering, economics, and technology. It provides the foundational tools and frameworks for understanding and solving real-world problems. The primary application of chess is in the realm of competition and entertainment. While it can teach valuable skills like strategic thinking and patience, its applications outside the game are more indirect.

**Learning and Mastery:** Mastery of mathematics involves learning a wide range of topics and concepts, often requiring formal education and continuous study. Mastery of chess involves understanding the rules, strategies, and tactics of the game, often through practice, experience, and studying the games of masters.

### **3. Intersections -**

**Educational Tools:** Both mathematics and chess are used

to develop critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and logical reasoning. Chess has been incorporated into some educational programs to help teach these skills.

**Research and Analysis:** Researchers have used mathematical concepts to analyze chess games and strategies. For example, game theory, a branch of mathematics, can be applied to understand optimal strategies in chess.

**Artificial Intelligence:** Both fields intersect in the development of artificial intelligence. Chess has been a benchmark for AI development, with programs like Deep Blue and AlphaZero using advanced algorithms to play at a high level. These programs often use mathematical concepts in their design.

## *Recognition and accepting equivalence of national and international sports events as formal academic qualifications through an Act of the Indian Parliament*

Sporting events come in many forms, ranging from small local competitions to large international tournaments. They can be categorized based on the type of sport, the level of competition, the number of participants, and other factors. These events feature competitions across various sports, bringing together athletes from different disciplines. India hosts a wide variety of sporting events that cater to different sports and levels of competition, from local and national to international levels. India's diverse sporting landscape includes a wide range of events, from traditional sports to modern professional leagues, catering to various interests and fostering a sporting culture. Qualifying, participating, and success in these sports competitions should be recognized as equivalent to corresponding educational qualifications through an act of parliament.

## *Constitution of National Sports Open School Examination Board (NSOSEB) and National Sports Open University (NSOU) through an Act of Parliament: Affiliation with all formal Schools, Colleges, and Universities*

The open schooling system is an educational framework that provides flexible learning opportunities to individuals who cannot attend or are not required to attend classroom learning due to various constraints. The open system is a vital educational model that caters to the needs of diverse learners, providing flexible, accessible, and inclusive education. It empowers individuals to pursue education and skill development at their own pace, contributing to lifelong learning and personal growth. An open school system for sportspersons is an educational framework designed to accommodate the unique needs and schedules of athletes. This system will allow sportspersons to pursue their academic goals while training and competing at high levels. An open school system for sportspersons shall play a crucial role in balancing their dual aspirations of academic and athletic success. By providing flexible, accessible, and supportive educational opportunities, such a system ensures that athletes can excel in both their sports careers and academic pursuits.

### **1. Key Features**

**Flexible Scheduling:** Students can complete coursework at their own pace, allowing them to balance academics with training and competitions. Schedules can be adjusted to accommodate

training sessions, travel, and competitions. Distance and Online Education: Access to lectures, assignments, and resources through online platforms. Availability of online tutoring and mentoring to support academic progress. Personalized Learning Plans: Courses and study plans are customized to fit the student's academic and athletic needs. Ability to transfer credits from other institutions or educational programs. Support Services: Dedicated advisors to help students manage their academic and athletic responsibilities. Psychological and career counseling to support overall well-being. Special Considerations: Adjustments to exam schedules and formats to accommodate training and competition schedules. Flexible attendance requirements to account for training camps and tournaments.

- 2. Benefits:** Balancing Academics and Sports: It will allow athletes to pursue their education without compromising their sports careers. It provides a safety net for athletes to have a career path post their sporting life. Accessibility: It will make education accessible to athletes from diverse geographical locations. It will reduce the need for athletes to relocate for education, allowing them to stay with their training teams. Holistic Development: It will promote the overall development of athletes by emphasizing both academic and physical growth. It will also encourage lifelong learning and intellectual development alongside athletic achievements. Enhanced Career Opportunities: Equip the athletes with academic qualifications that can open up career opportunities after their sports careers. Provides knowledge and skills that are valuable in various professional fields.

### 3. Implementation Strategies

Collaboration with Sports Bodies: Partner with sports federations, clubs, and academies to ensure the educational needs of athletes are met. Develop programs that are recognized and supported by sports authorities. Use of Technology: Leverage digital platforms to provide interactive and engaging educational content. Utilize virtual classrooms, online assessments, and e-learning resources. Policy Support: Advocate for government policies that support the education of sportspersons, including scholarships, grants, and flexible examination systems. Encourage educational institutions to adopt athlete-friendly policies. Awareness and Advocacy: Raise awareness among athletes and their families about the availability and benefits of open school systems. Advocate for the importance of education in the holistic development of athletes.

## National Sportsperson Social Security Scheme (NSSS): Through an Act of Parliament

Social security for sports persons involves providing financial and social protections to athletes to ensure their well-being during and after their careers. This encompasses various aspects such as health insurance, retirement benefits, disability benefits, and support for career transitions. Creating a robust social security system for sports persons requires collaboration between sports organizations, governments, and private sectors to ensure the comprehensive well-being of athletes throughout and after their

careers. In the United States, The Major League Baseball Players Association (MLBPA) offers a comprehensive benefits package, including pensions and health insurance. Various football (soccer) associations in Europe provide retirement and disability benefits through their players' unions. The Australian Sports Foundation supports athletes by funding Australia's health insurance and career transition programs. A national fund can be established through an act of parliament seeking contributions from the government, sports associations, corporate houses under CSR (corporate social responsibility), sponsors, and athletes. Following are a few key proposals for India's National Sports Social Security Scheme covering all sports:

**Health Insurance:** Athletes are prone to injuries, so comprehensive health insurance is crucial. This can include medical treatments, surgeries, and rehabilitation. Mental health services are also essential, addressing stress, anxiety, and other mental health issues athletes might face.

**Retirement Benefits:** Providing pensions to athletes helps secure their financial future after retirement. Sports organizations, governments, or private entities can fund these plans. Encouraging athletes to save some of their earnings in special retirement accounts with tax benefits.

**Disability Benefits:** Coverage ensures financial support for athletes who suffer career-ending injuries and provides financial security to their families in case of untimely death.

**Career Transition Support:** Offering further education and vocational training opportunities to help athletes transition to new careers. Assistance in finding employment after their sports careers end.

**Financial Management:** Providing access to financial advisors to help athletes manage their earnings and investments wisely. Ensuring athletes have access to legal advice to handle contracts, endorsements, and other professional agreements.

## India 2047: Time to host Olympics

While India is not currently in the formal bidding process for the Olympics, the interest and discussions indicate a potential future bid. The decision to bid would involve careful planning, coordination, and support from various stakeholders, including the government, sports bodies, and the public. There have been discussions and expressions of interest from various stakeholders within the country. The Indian Olympic Association (IOA) has expressed interest in bidding for future Olympic Games, including potentially the 2036 Summer Olympics. Discussions with government officials and sports administrators have backed this interest. There have been indications that the Indian government would support a bid as it aligns with the country's long-term sports and infrastructure development goals.

Hosting the Olympics is a significant undertaking with numerous potential benefits and challenges. Hosting the Olympics can

inspire a new generation of athletes and increase participation in sports at all levels. Developing world-class sports facilities can provide long-term benefits for local athletes and help improve India's performance in international competitions. The Olympics can foster a sense of national pride and unity, bringing people together to celebrate their country. Local communities can benefit from improved infrastructure and facilities, and the event can encourage volunteerism and community involvement.

Hosting the Olympics can lead to extensive infrastructure development, including the construction of sports facilities, transportation networks, and accommodation. These developments can have long-term economic benefits. The preparation for and execution of the Olympics can create many jobs, from construction to service industries. The influx of international visitors can boost the tourism industry during the event, in the lead-up, and afterward, as the host city gains global recognition. The Olympics provide an opportunity to showcase India's rich cultural heritage, history, and diversity to a global audience. The development projects undertaken for the Olympics can lead to urban renewal and revitalization, improving living conditions and urban landscapes. Hosting the Olympics can drive sustainable development initiatives and environmentally friendly practices. Successfully hosting the Olympics can enhance India's reputation on the global stage, portraying it as a capable and modern nation.

## Conclusion

The education system is the foundation of mentally and physically healthy citizens. Education and sports are not exclusive to each other; these are mutually inclusive. Reforming the sports and education sector in India involves addressing various systemic issues. Comprehensive reforms in the sports sector and integrating it with human resource development in India can create a more supportive and efficient environment for athletes. By focusing on infrastructure development, talent identification, governance, financial support, inclusion, health, education, and technology, India can encourage participation in sports. Social reforms for sports in India are also essential to promote a robust sports culture. Implementing these reforms through the mainstream education system can create India's more inclusive, supportive, and vibrant sports ecosystem. India should foster a culture that nurtures and celebrates athletic talent across all levels and demographics.

Sports can significantly impact the health of a nation. Participation in sports helps maintain physical fitness and reduce the risk of chronic diseases such as obesity, heart disease, diabetes, and hypertension. Regular physical activity strengthens muscles, improves cardiovascular health, and enhances overall bodily function. Sports can reduce stress, anxiety, and depression. Physical activity releases endorphins, which are natural mood lifters. Team sports also foster social connections, reducing feelings of isolation and improving overall mental well-being. Engaging in sports encourages individuals to adopt healthier

lifestyles, including better nutrition, regular exercise, and avoiding harmful habits like smoking and excessive drinking. Sports provide a constructive outlet for youth, helping to build discipline, teamwork, leadership, and time management skills. This can lead to better academic performance and reduced engagement in risky behaviors. Sporting events and activities can unite communities, fostering social bonds and a sense of belonging. This can enhance social capital and community resilience. A healthy population can reduce healthcare costs and increase productivity.

Additionally, sports can drive economic growth by creating jobs, tourism, and infrastructure development. Success in international sports can foster a sense of national pride and unity, contributing to social cohesion and a positive national identity. Overall, promoting and supporting sports at all levels can lead to a healthier, more engaged, and cohesive society.

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