

इसपोर्ट्स कल्चर in haryana



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Certificate

This to certify that the work incorporated in this report entitled “**Sports Culture in Haryana**” submitted by the undersigned Research Team was carried out under my mentorship. Such material as has been obtained from other sources has been duly acknowledged.

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Abstract

The paper focuses on identifying, exploring, and analysing various socio-cultural and institutional factors influencing sports culture in the province Haryana. The region is the epicentre to India's developing sportspersonship, the province produces almost one-third of India's national and international athletes. It is essential to understand the various aspects that have brought Haryana to its stature. To address the scope, research was conducted at different locations such as Chandigarh, Patiala, Yamunanagar, Jagadhri, and Kheda Village on the basis of their socio-economic backgrounds, rural-urban settings, and relevance to the topic. Findings suggest that the Haryanvi identity is inclined towards sports, and physical activity. Psychological conditioning received by the people of the region through mechanisms of history, family, agriculture, military, institutionalisation, policy, and commercialisation promote sports. Hence, we conclude that the positionality of individuals in Haryana in their current environment naturally emphasises participation in physical, and sports activities that distinguishes the region in comparison to others in the Indian Union.

Keywords: sports, sports culture, Haryana, institutionalisation, gender, military influences, training, agricultural influences, drugs, doping, commercialisation, policies, family, food and nutrition, DAV College, Haryana Olympic Association, Netaji Subhas National Institute of Sports, and akhara.

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Chapter 1: Introduction and Methodology



Introduction

India has been known as ‘*Sone ki Chidiya*’, i.e. the golden bird, adding to its beautiful blend of numerous cultures stitched together into a single nation. The year 1947 saw the partition of India and Pakistan into separate nations, which was an aftermath of the widening rift between Hindus and Muslims, which divided people with a common history into smaller fragments. To bridge this widening gap between not only countries but also different cultures is a task for the youth to take up (M. Singh, personal communication, February 9, 2020).

Sports have always been celebrated in India, both as an important cultural component and as a source of entertainment. The former is especially prevalent in regions such as Haryana, Punjab, Maharashtra, and the North-East. Sport is a medium through which those belonging to various socio-economic classes, genders, regions and speaking different languages can engage with each other and intermingle. In the recent past, the state of Haryana has witnessed an increasing number of participants and winners in the Olympics, Commonwealth Games (CWG), and other athletic events. This sudden rise of Haryana to an elevated pedestal of recognition has attracted the attention of researchers and media, alike (Singh, 2014).



Figure 1.1. Map highlighting colonial Punjab

Source: Asia Minute: *Mapping the Law in India* [Map]. (2016, May 8). Hawai'i Public Radio. <https://www.hpr2.org/post/asia-minute-mapping-law-india#stream/0>



Haryana's history plays an important role in answering the question of why so many sportspersons emerge from this region. It's important to remember that Punjab and Haryana were one state before they were separated. Colonial Punjab bordered other neighbouring countries, and was repeatedly invaded by Huns, Turks, and Afghans and has had many such wars fought on its ground due to its status as the "Gateway of North India" (Dr. A. Mann, personal communication, February 11, 2020). The risk of constant invasions is speculated to have caused those dwelling within Punjab to adapt physiologically, and thus develop a sturdy physique. Thus, giving them a natural inclination towards intense physical activity. This would also explain their tendency to participate in labour-intensive agricultural-military activities, and engage in sports. To further develop and maintain their sturdy physique, people from these regions engaged in combat-oriented sports such as boxing and wrestling, the latter of which is traditionally known as *kushti*. This contributed to the rise of sports culture in Haryana (S. Bhardwaj, personal communication, February 11, 2020).

One of our interviewees, Chetanpreet Kaur (National Shooter, DAV College, Chandigarh) stated how, due to colonial Punjab's proximity with the border, there was a subsequent increase in trade within the region as well. The agricultural sector, in turn, saw development in these regions and which provided a healthy source of food. The increased consumption of such food was speculated to have contributed to the sturdiness of the residents of Haryana and Punjab, i.e., then-colonial Punjab (C. Kaur, personal communication, February 10, 2020). Primary and secondary data indicates that mainly agrarian regions of Haryana contribute heavily to participation in sports. The established routine of "constant toiling for long hours builds the stamina of ordinary people and produces in them a natural inclination for sports" (Yadav, 2010). Various sportspersons and other stakeholders agree. The constant toiling has also contributed to building their naturally powerful physique. This strength was built upon and passed down through generations, where their sturdiness was employed in sports and enabled Haryana to rise as an important sports hub (A. Singh, personal communication, February 12, 2020).

In the current scenario, there is an increasing amount of recognition being gained by traditional sports such as *kabaddi* and wrestling alongside sports like cricket, the latter of which is already established as a popular sport. This has encouraged the commercialisation of sports due to the growth of sports within institutions, sports policies have been formulated by the Haryana government to encourage participation in sports mostly through incentives and other government schemes. The growing popularity of sports led to the



development of India's most efficient academy for sportspersons and coaches in the year 1961. The Netaji Subhas National Institute of Sports (NSNIS), Patiala came into existence for training coaches whose goals are to discover and train budding athletes throughout India. This institution stands amongst the most prized academies for sports in Asia and has produced many champions (Singh, 2014).

When sports gradually expanded and became more recognized in India, for every match played by an individual, an award of Rs. 2 was granted (M. Singh, personal communication, February 9, 2020). The transition of this award from Rs. 2 to more than Rs. 2 crore today is a prime example of how commercialisation has raised sports on a pedestal due to the high level of engagement by citizens of the country to invest in it. Haryana is a prime example of a region heavily invested in sports that have seen a rapid increase in participation and achievement in sports. However, the same cannot be said about Punjab. It has been speculated that due to its exposure to terror attacks, residents of Punjab have resorted to drugs to cope with the trauma they have faced, which has reportedly led to an unfortunate decrease in sports participation (A. Mann, personal communication, February 11, 2020). In addition to this, drugs of a different kind are at greater risk of ending an athlete's career before it comes to fruition. According to M. Singh, the culture of doping, which is the consumption of performance-enhancing drugs (PEDs) to elevate an athlete's performance in their sport. However, it led to a handicapping of India's progress in the domain of sports.



Figure 1.2. Milkha Singh

Milkha Singh, in his interview, stated how the world is advancing towards intoxication and impure food consumption. The food habits of the people in recent generations are experiencing a fall in quality in terms. Hence, reduced health and fitness as a result of this. Contradicting this, a few rural interviewees like Ajmer Singh asserted that some regions within Haryana have managed to preserve the purity that these agrarian states held in the past. A majority of the athletes' and locals' food consumption is dependent on the fields they look after - a nod to their natural physical inclination and agrarian roots. Singh owned fields growing pulses, and cows that provided them with unadulterated milk. The resources owned by these athletes and locals, consisting of agricultural produce and other animal products such as milk, were for self-consumption only, and not for commercial sale (A. Singh, personal communication, February 12, 2020).

The history of Haryana has sowed the seeds of sports culture in the region owing largely to the agricultural background shared by most people, which has made Haryanvis genetically stronger to take up sports (N. Goyat, personal communication, February 14, 2020).



Rationale

Sports and games are essential for a healthy and fit life. In India, sports have undergone commodification and commercialisation as seen in the cases of cricket, football, and kabaddi. The province of Haryana is at the center of India's sports culture. Haryana produces almost one-third of India's athlete bank (Basu, 2018). On an international level, India as a nation has received criticism due to the declining quality of Indian athletes (Chandran, 2016). However, this is the opposite for Haryana wherein socio-cultural aspects and policy promote sports culture uniquely, especially when compared to other regions in the country. There are studies conducted to understand how athletes perform, and how their motivational factors can be improved. However, our research "Sports Culture in Haryana" attempts to understand how and why social entities of Haryana promote sports culture or attitudes.

Research Question and Objectives

Research Question(s)

1. What are the socio-cultural attributes that influence Haryana's sports culture, and how?
2. How do institutional frameworks and mechanisms enable, or impede sportspersonship in Haryana?

Objectives

- To understand the lifestyle (discipline, diet, and social interactions), and psyche of sportspersons and other stakeholders in the region.
- To study the historical relevance of sports through agriculture and militaristic influences on Haryana.
- To study policies and official sanctions that enable or impede the sports culture in Haryana.
- To investigate the influence of economic conditions and monetary incentives on the participation of Haryana residents in sports.

Research Methodology

Qualitative Research

The scope and nature of this investigation only enable us to take up a qualitative approach. The chosen approach permitted us to comprehend the subjectivity of the respondents.



Sources of data collection

Secondary research conducted pre-field helped identify the pre-existing literature for the topic and the gaps prevalent in these studies. Scholarly sources like journal articles, books, government data, and Ph.D. theses were referred to. Non-scholarly sources included newspaper articles and videos by news channels.

Additionally, secondary data provided a basis for primary research and later allowed to collate the primary findings of the research.

Sampling

The target population consisted of students, athletes, coaches, sports psychologists, policymakers, families of sportspersons, and locals. Certain important personalities such as Mr. Milkha Singh (Padma Shri), Mr. Kanwar Pal (Education Minister, Government of Haryana), and Mr. Gupta (District Sports Officer, Yamunanagar) were also included as part of our sample. The sample was selected through non-probability sampling techniques such as snowball, convenience, and purposive sampling. The sample consisted of both males and females aged within the range of 7-91 years. There were a total of 58 respondents out of which 35 were male and 23 were female.

Tools of data collection

Semi-structured open-ended interviews, telephonic interviews, focus group discussions, oral history, and non-participant observations were used to collect data. These tools enabled a deeper understanding of the opinions and beliefs of the respondents in addition to gauging their physical environment.

Questionnaires were developed in two languages - Hindi and English for the reference of the interviewers.

On-field ethics

The participation of all respondents was completely voluntary. They were also presented with a choice to drop out at any point in time. Informed verbal consent was taken before recording any of the responses presented during the course of our research. Confidentiality was also maintained.

Data collection and Transcription

The data was recorded through audio-visual means using DSLR cameras and a voice recorder, along with a transcriber taking notes of all the responses. Most of the interviews were taken in the locally spoken language, i.e., Hindi and Haryanvi.



The interviews were transcribed in English, and this primary data has been used as such in the report, barring certain terms which were written verbatim in vernacular due to the unavailability of literal English translations.

Limitations

Some pieces of information could not be duly obtained due to constraints in time and the absence of consent to record responses.

Having known about these facts that suggested an inclination towards sports shown by the people in the region , our focus moved towards finding other information exceptional about Haryana that contributes to how it remains a state apart in terms of the sports culture it has created. Our next chapter of the literature review will offer a deeper understanding of the other substantial factors we identified for the topic.



Chapter 2: Literature Review



Historic Overview

While studying sports in the present day, it is imperative to study its origin as well. In India, sports has been existent in its culture since the very beginning. The recorded history of sports in India dates back to 8000 years ago, with the existence of the Indus Valley Civilization. At this time, chariot racing and wrestling were two prominent games that were played. Vedic history shows the significance of the relationship between *guru shishya*, and how that affects a sports person's performance. The concept of '*dehvada*' or full-body realization was emphasized through sports like "chariot- racing, archery, horsemanship, wrestling, weight-lifting, swimming and hunting", during this period ("History of Indian Sports - Information, Facts and Traditional Indian Sports", 2019). Even during the time of Ramayana and Mahabharata, there were men of status who indulged in sports like wrestling and weight lifting. This prevalence of sports in the culture of India reflects on the significance to trace down origins of sports in states like Haryana.

As discussed by Shekhar and Kumar (2016), Indian rulers from years ago held wrestlers on a pedestal of respect and importance, so much so that they looked over their diet, making sure that they received important nutrients. Other than food habits, their physical activities were looked over as well. To retain their skills, these wrestlers often engaged in physically straining activities. Owing to such bodily strength retention, in the British era of India, these wrestlers were recruited into the British army. It was not until 1967 that Indian wrestlers were given much importance on a national and international level. In 1967, a 'World Wrestling Championship' was held at Delhi, where India ranked number 10 in the world. It was then that Indian wrestlers gained recognition throughout the world for the first time (Shekhar & Kumar, 2016). This historic significance of wrestling as a sport passed onto future generations, emerging as popular sports in today's world.

Sports have seen a growing competition over the years. With this increase in competitiveness among sportspersons, the percentage of viewers has increased as well. The rate at which people have displayed their interest in viewing sports has led to commercialisation in the disguise of IPL, World Cup, Pro Kabaddi League, among several other similar programs (Yuvaraja, Gururaja & Sampreetha, 2019).

In contrast to a major part of India playing these popular sports, Haryana is seen to engage in heavier and more conventional sports like *kushti*. Our research was carried out to answer the question of why this difference between Haryana and the rest of the world arises



based on sports. The reasons could be historic influence or something that we are yet to explore.

Gender

Men created organised sports during the mid-nineteenth century; the development of it was very male-centric. Consequently, women were completely avoided in this area due to the prevalent ideology of a two-sex classification of men and women and their roles in the society, which was so deep rooted within the society that there was no space for women or feminism in sports. The idea of sports and the attributes attached to it were very “masculine” like that of strength, stamina, physical build, as well as the roughness of the sport. It was also widely believed that women were athletically inferior (Coakley, 2017).

Recent times have seen an increase in the participation of women in sports, such as Dyutee Chand. For a long time, girls that seemed more masculine than “what they should be” were invasively tested to see if they had more testosterone in their bodies which would have given them an edge over other participants in their sport (Agency, 2020). Only women were subjected to such treatment and not men, when in fact the same could be applied to the latter as well. Alongside women, any individual that didn’t identify as a man or fit in a binary found it nearly impossible to enter the field of sports. And even if they did enter the field, societal shortcomings would have discouraged them from finding true success and acceptance in this domain (Agency, 2020).

Even as women dared to enter a field that was actively keeping them out, they were viewed as invaders into a male territory. A mere activity like that of riding a bicycle was considered to be of terrible character for females for which they could even be arrested (Coakley, 2017). Women were demotivated actively to make sure they would abandon their desire and motivation to become an athlete. The notion that constantly playing or participating in strenuous sports activity would adversely affect their uterus and that giving birth would be difficult was consistently reinforce into young women; they were also led to believe that too much sports would lead to their bodies becoming “very masculine and unattractive” (Coakley, 2017).

Though women were being accepted into sports, it was not without compromise. They were supposed to look “feminine enough” in order to compensate for partaking in something that was inherently “manly” (Coakley, 2017). Girls were supposed to wear “short skirts, tight blouses, tie their hair in pigtails” (Coakley, 2017) and then play sports that are also not so masculine. This was done to ensure that women were not pushing too



hard against the normative gender boundaries while participating in sport, leading to the imposition of such markers of femininity.

The sexualisation of women in sports was also prevalent; watching women play sports in revealing attires was viewed as something pleasurable. An example of that could be of the movie ‘*Dangal*’ based on Geeta and Babita Phogat that emphasises on how the entire society dismissed them and their idea of getting into *kushti* which is traditionally recognised as a male-dominated sport (Tiwari, 2016). Not just were they made fun of but the film portrayed boys and men getting excited about the fact that they were wearing short and tight suits while playing the sport as others made comments like “these girls have no shame, they are wearing such revealing clothes and playing with men” (Tiwari, 2016) which may indicate that stereotypical ideas regarding gender may be prevalent in certain parts of Haryana.

The participation of women in sports in Haryana shot up drastically in the 1970s. This was regarded as a consequence of feminism changing the dynamic of women in the world allowing them to enter spaces that, traditionally, were not “meant for them” (Kumari, 2017). Haryanvi culture is typically known to place women in a lower, submissive position that enable them to be exploited by the dominant heteropatriarchal power structure; this would make it difficult for them to break away from their ascribed roles and create a name or an identity for themselves in any field (Kumari, 2017). Kumari’s study looks at the three districts of Haryana - Kurukshetra, Rohtak and Sonapat - in which girls have participated at the state, national and international level, which were further divided into the ones playing at the school level and the others at a college or university level; this totalled up to 55 respondents. These girls played across a wide range of sports, which included judo, football, hockey, wrestling, kabaddi, kick-boxing, *kho-kho*, yoga, and handball (2017). Out of these, 20 were into combative sports. Most of these girls faced criticism and demotivation from their families and the society, which mainly disapproved of their participation in these combative sports (Kumari, 2017). Though this data is fairly recent and relevant, this theme should be further researched upon to observe if the participation of women in sports and the attitude towards this has changed.

Institutionalisation

Institutions are essential in the development of society. Sports institutions have a larger role in society over and above their basic role of developing and promoting a particular sport. Sports clubs themselves are enterprises. Sports institutions are not isolated,



they interact with other institutions to influence policy and the economy. In the case of football in Turkey, sports clubs are institutionalized focusing on an institutional approach rather than an individualistic approach. The sports industry is bigger than Hollywood with a value of USD 1.6 trillion. Sports institutions end up diversifying into commodities such as clothing, education, tourism, and gambling. Sports clubs organisations use corporate social responsibility as a means to find purpose and legitimize their roles in society (Ekmekci & Yeter, 2016).

Although sports funding falls into the category of corporate social responsibility as it assists in education, healthcare, and poverty alleviation, large corporations have not heavily contributed to the same. There are exceptions such as the TATA foundation, and Jindal South who have established their sports coaching centres to promote sports. One of the reasons for this are the attitudes and interest of upper-managements of these corporations. Thus, funding for sports activities is solely based on the level of interest the managements have in sports (Gokhale, 2019).

Politics and sports go hand in hand. Governments usually sponsor sports that are used in the military and police training (Coakley, 2017). Regions such as South America, especially true for countries such as Brazil and Argentina, sports such as soccer or football developed as a result of European influences on culture. Soccer in the above mentioned regions are not only part of their lifestyle, rather their influence stretches to politics as well. “Football is a political temptation, especially to Argentinian nationalist” (Mason, 2018). Examples of the same include the use of football telecasts to keep people indoors, to General Pinoche’s decisions to save sports clubs from mismanagement. Similarly, Cuba, a socialist republic, has been noted to use sports as a means for national development wherein the accessibility to sports is cited as the “right” of the people and it indirectly promotes the health of individuals within the state. (Pye, 1986).

The intertwining of sports and politics in Haryana is largely due to the institutional mechanism and interactions between individuals and authority. The growth of sports in Haryana is a result of institutionalisation and collectivism rather than the individualisation. Sports in general has globally come to become a phenomenon due to its commodification supported by mass channels of communication.

Commercialisation

Haryana is a state that does not majorly partake in heavily-commercialised sports such as cricket; most of its athletes engage in sports such as wrestling, *kabaddi*, boxing,



athletics, etc. (Duggal, 2018). However, with a commercialisation wave sweeping over the domain of sports, it is close to impossible to avoid the monetisation and media campaign sports are subject to. Commercialisation of sports can be simplified and defined as the heavy involvement of money in the sports sector in the form of sponsorships, sports goods, etc. as well as the mass media campaign essential to most sports. There are both negative and positive aspects to the commercialisation of sports. Commercialisation of sports allows for large participation of people in otherwise “unaffordable recreation sports”, and also allows various businesses to support sports teams, etc (Critelli, 2011). This mass exposure could influence the youth to choose to pursue sports instead of study, which would mean that parents spend more money on sports than on academics; the money spent on sports activities could have been used to admit their child in a private university, but they are instead forced to pin their hopes on their child excelling at their sport to get on an Olympic team or receive a sports scholarship at a major college (Reed, 2016).

Commercialisation, with its root in money, also twists the inherent meaning of sports, which is rooted in the spirit of play (Reed, 2016). The mass-media campaign evident in commercialisation also encourages and advertises youth-centric sports; the regular practice of advanced sports techniques causes wear and tear on young bodies (as young as 11 years of age), which detrimental to the physical well-being of the individual (Critelli, 2011). Another negative aspect regarding the commercialisation of sports would be the use of performance-enhancing drugs during sporting events in order to ensure victory; this is due to the large investment placed in sports (Critelli, 2011). All of this follows the “pro-profit” trend that has taken hold of sports as a result of commercialisation.

Drug Abuse

Many athletes indulge in drug abuse, and it has been known to be a serious issue globally. The reasons that have led athletes to seek such alternative methods usually lie in the athlete’s desire to increase their physical performance to ensure better results. This practice of using substances to enhance one’s physical and mental performance has been in practice for a long time. The formal term for such a practice is doping, which is defined as “the assumption of substances or the recourse at particular methods which can artificially increase an athlete’s performance during a sports competition, contrary to sports morals and despite physical and psychological health” (Reardon & Creado, 2014, as cited in Mazzeo, 2016).



The World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA), alongside the International Olympic Committee and the International Sports Federation are responsible in ensuring that the use of performance-enhancing drugs and methods by athletes - recognised as doping - is forbidden in order to maintain the well-being of the athlete and a fair competitive environment where every sports person has a chance of winning (Mazzeo, 2016). Within India, the National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) is responsible for carrying out the guidelines established by the WADA. According to the 2015 WADA doping violation report, India ranked third for three consecutive years, with the number of athletes testing positive for banned substances being equal to 117 (Chauhan, 2017). Among the sports, the weightlifting category contained the highest number of offenders with 56 offenders, followed by athletics with 21 offenders, then boxing with eight offenders (Chauhan, 2017).

Athletes consume drugs and use methods to enhance performance due to: suspecting or knowing their competitors are doping, in order to attain success through any means necessary, due to pressure from coaches or family, pressure from governmental authorities, low access to facilities that would allow natural and legal enhancement in performance, monetary incentives, media influence, and various other expectations from the community (Emran, Hossain, Salek, Khan, Ahmed, Khandaker, & Islam, 2014, p. 47). Haryana produces a large number of athletes who perform exemplarily; the reason behind that might be unique to the training and nutrition provided within the region. However, drug culture is said to be prevalent in Haryana and the effects of this - which are assumed to be negative in nature - should be explored through further research.

Food and Nutrition

Food is heavily intertwined with culture; it is an important representation of the uniqueness of various cultures around the world. The people of Haryana embody simple living; they believe in simplicity and eat simple, *desi* home-cooked food (Malik, Kadyan & Balyan, 2013). Milk, butter, *ghee*, *lassi*, *thandai*, buttermilk and vegetables are found in abundance and are heavily consumed in Haryana due to the region's propensity for agriculture and cattle-rearing (Malik et al., 2013). The people of Haryana consume lots of grain products, specifically in the form of *rotis*, such as wheat, *bajara*, barley, gram flour, etc. As such, Haryana is well-known as the "land of *rotis*" (Malik et al., 2013, p. 17). Due to its propensity for cattle-rearing, the murrh buffalo and Haryana cow are the main reasons Haryana has a profusion of milk and milk products. It is understood that milk is an important part of Haryana's cuisine (Malikk et al., 2013). Another well-known component



of Haryanvi cuisine is *chutneys*; *chutneys* are habitually eaten in Haryanvi meals. “*Chutneys* can be spicy, sweet, bland, sour, pungent or a combination of tastes” (Malik et al., 2013, p. 18). It was found that Haryanvi people prefer food that is low in spice content, thus following that they have a preference for simple food.

Haryanvi people are said to consume simple and healthy food in order to perform physical work to the best of their ability. They also do not believe in overeating (Malik et al., 2013). This summarises Haryanvi cuisine to an extent; what is important to explore is how this translates into the field of sports, and whether athletes also have similar consumption patterns, which is to be done through further research.

In the Indian context, non-specific to Haryana, many top Indian athletes follow a strict diet that is often uniquely suited to their preferences (eg. non-vegetarian vs. vegetarian). Boxer Shiva Thapa follows a light diet that ensures minimum weight gain, with a light breakfast, no lunch, regular intake of fruits and electrolytes, and an early, simple dinner of either boiled chicken or a protein shake (Kuenzang, 2017). Sprinter Dutee Chand has a slightly heavier meal plan, with breakfast, lunch, and dinner consisting of *idli*, *upma*, etc. and rice, *roti*, *dal*, and curries made with limited oil (Kuenzang, 2017). Khushbir Kaur, a sprinter from Amritsar, also follows a light diet with lots of lentils and vegetables, as well as curd; moreover, it consists of a low oil and butter content (Kuenzang, 2017). These anecdotes give a general idea of what athletes would typically eat and are expected to eat: food with low-fat content, high protein content and lots of vegetables and lentils. Haryana boasts a cuisine that heavily relies on *ghee*, milk, and milk products, etc. which contain a higher fat content. Thus, it can be observed that perhaps Haryanvi athletes would follow a slightly modified diet and nutrition plan that stays true to the culture as well as benefits the athlete’s development.

Psychology and training

Psychology plays a significant role in the realm of sports. Sports have the incessant need for participants to engage in competition with each other, leading to anxiety and stress over the kind of performance that is brought out. To help sportspersons cope up with a constant edginess experienced throughout the course of the sport played, and explore their various motivations and driving factors, sports psychology is an imperative aspect that should be studied.



Athletes are said to suffer from higher levels of stress compared to non-athletes as they need to strike a balance between multiple facets of their life such as schoolwork, family, practice, and general everyday life (Fullerton, 2010).

Biological manifestations of the stress experienced by athletes may include “muscle tension, increased heart rate, indigestion, stomach spasms, pains, and headaches” (Fullerton, 2010). While cognitive signs would include feelings of “frustration, worries, distortion, exaggeration, unrealistic expectations, and self- defeating statements” (Fullerton, 2010).

The pivotal point to focus on during any athlete’s training is identifying their unique differences, and tuning them to suit the sport. In fulfilling this endeavour, sports tactics are employed. Ideally, there are two aspects under sports tactics- technique and style (Zahradník & Korvas, 2012). Technique is a more standardized pattern of rules laid out for different sports, and style is the personal manner in which the techniques are employed by athletes.

Not all athletes are well equipped to deal with the kind of stress they experience. Hence, they prefer seeking professional or external help. In most cases, trainers and coaches are the first point of contact for them. Hence, it is essential that coaches have enough knowledge and resources to help athletes deal with such a situation. If the coach feels that the level of stress experienced by the athlete is too high and unmanageable, it is advisable to suggest they seek counselling so that they can get the appropriate help and support required. The counsellor will then help determine the cause of stress and suggest changes they can make in their lifestyle to help deal with the stress (Fullerton, 2010).

Relational Data

While sports has not been central to the development of the nation in India, it has been a part of policy at the national level through the recruitment of sportspersons from state-owned institutes such as the army or the railways. Certain parts of the Indian sub-continent have recorded active participation in sports, these regions include Haryana, Maharashtra, Kerala, and the North-Eastern corridor (Alter, 1992).

The drive for sports in current day Haryana is present from the pre-colonial era. Mughal rulers of the region have been noted to sponsor and support active *pehelwans*. Like today, sports was also a matter of entertainment historically. Games such as *dangal*, and/or *kushti* have been popular in the northern regions of the sub-continent. Within Haryana, agricultural Southern regions nearing the districts of Bhiwani, Sirsa, and Hisar have a



higher rate of sports participation in comparison to industrial Northern regions. The above trend extends to regions close to Southern Haryana in neighbouring states of Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh (Personal Communication, V. Khanna, 13th February 2020).

Assam, a northeastern province in India is “sports-friendly”, and is able to promote sports tourism (Economic Times, 2017). In the Northeastern regions of India, sports and physical education has been on the rise, and individuals see sports as an opportunity to curb drug culture, HIV, alcoholism, and terrorist activities (Pandhare, 2018). What is important to note is the fact that sports culture in India is always complimented by policy, whether it be in Haryana or in other regions like the Northeast.

There are a number of other indigenous prevalent in other regions. However, it is important to mention that indigenous sports in other parts of the subcontinent include traditional animal games. These include *Jallikattu* (with cows), cock-fights, and *Kambala* (with buffaloes) in Southern India. Bulbul fights, and Camel racing in the northern parts. These sports survive till date, however have received criticism for violating animal rights (Kutubuddin, 2017).

The development of sports in India however in a formalised structure can be traced back to the colonial rule with the introduction of cricket. Cricket is the among the first few sports introduced in the subcontinent which gained national popularity to the extent to which princely states themselves built their own teams. Similarly, sports such as cricket have developed in commonwealth countries due to their colonial British legacies (Mason, 2018).

As seen in the 2019 State elections in Haryana, sportspersons like Sandeep Singh, Yogeshwar Dutt, and Babita Phogat have also contested reflecting the growing influence of sports in politics as well (Sethi, 2019). Additionally, in places such as Cuba and Haryana, the development of sports is closely associated with the development of the army. Both Cuba and Haryana have a high drafting rate, joining the army in Haryana is seen as a viable career, this influence of the army and the necessity for a fit body enabled Haryanvi and Cubans alike to develop an attitude that indirectly promotes sports culture (Pye, 1986).

Topics as identified above are very clear markers of the culture followed and practised in any region. The food consumed, ideologies maintained and carried forward, lifestyles followed (training and even consumption of drugs, etcetera), curates a distinct culture that also gives the people an identity to attach with. ‘Culture’ and ‘Identity’



together is a structural reason for the peculiar contribution of Haryana to sports and will be delved into extensively in the next chapter.





Chapter 3: Culture and Identity



Gender

Historically, sports and games have been tools to showcase the masculinity of a culture. Sports activities have served to “legitimise and reinforce gender dichotomy” (Tolved, 2013) wherein men embody masculinity through physical strength and endurance; in contrast, women were excluded due to the notion of their femininity. Women have been known to face a lot of struggles in the arena of sports. The upsurge of participation of women in sports post the 1980s, i.e. from the “soviet amazon” (Tolved, 2013), has led to the creation of an athlete driven “female masculinity” (Tolved, 2013) in western society. In recent years, increased research in the discourse of sports feminism, contributes to the development of “policy and practice” (Flintoff & Scraton, 2013) with regards to gender (Flintoff & Scraton, 2013).

The development of sports culture for women, and its struggles with regards to representation, and equity are prevalent globally as well as in India. The participation of Indian women in sports till the 19th century could be considered insignificant (Kumari, 2017). With emerging reforms and prioritisation of women’s education discussion and debates on the curriculum took place. The introduction of physical activity to the academic curriculum, led to an increased awareness and importance of physical culture for women in the Indian subcontinent (Prakash, 1990). Consequently, the arena of sports was introduced to them.

Around the 1930s, women’s entry in India in the field of competitive sports was observed. The first women to participate in these events were Anglo-Indian women. With the establishment of NSNIS in 1961, a rise in the rate of women’s participation was witnessed. Even with the introduction of certain government schemes and establishment of sports institutions, a general lack of infrastructure and equipment still prevailed. This affected women more than men as development of physical culture as a construct for women was still under-way. Thus, the preferential resource allocation for men encouraged their participation in this domain (Prakash, 1990).

Position of Women in Haryanvi culture

In recent years, the government has introduced a number of schemes and policies such as *Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao* to uplift and develop the position of women in India. Societal changes towards the position of women are obvious when they are instigated by policy. The Haryana government’s sports policy treats men and women alike, the schemes and provisions are non-discriminatory (R. Gupta, personal communication, February 14,



2020; K. Pal, personal communication, February 12, 2020). The social experience of women is determined by their positionality and colliding intersectional identities in society.

In the sports domain, the participation of women has drastically increased in recent years (M. Kaur, personal communication, February 10, 2020). Traditionally, in Haryanvi culture, women especially from rural regions are expected to abstain from activities in the public sphere (Kiran, personal communication, February 12, 2020). However, this dynamic is undergoing changes with families slowly opening up to the participation of women in public activities such as sports (A. Singh, Kiran, Karishma, Komal, personal communication, February 12, 2020). Since, sports was traditionally considered to be a masculine activity, one can observe an increase in the autonomy granted to women at home with an increase in women's participation in sports (Kiran, personal communication, February 12, 2020).

To facilitate and promote their participation, development of infrastructure and access to resources could be observed. "Earlier participation of women was low. But now you can find more female coaches and physiotherapists. Hence, women feel more comfortable to take up sports especially those that involve a lot of physical contact" (Komal, personal communication, February 12, 2020; Singh, 2020). Many women have also been found to take up sports as means to ensure their safety and the safety of other women (Kiran, personal communication, February 11, 2020). The "Crime in India" report by the National Crime Record Bureau (2016) has stated that Haryana is the seventh least safe state for women in India. "I have always had an active lifestyle but took up sports so that I can protect myself. I also wish to join the army once I grow up" (Ananya, personal communication, February 14, 2020). This seemed to have given rise to a domino effect wherein women in sports serve as role models and inspirations for other women to take up sports.

Contrast Between Rural and Urban Landscapes

As mentioned above, the social position of women in Haryana is changing. The agrarian nature of rural Haryana vis-a-vis its strong cultural grounding makes social change slow but has a long lasting effect. This changing dynamic in society is largely because of the exposure that rural men and women have had with urban dwellers. One common theme amongst the women that we interviewed was the fact that most women did not have the responsibility of earning money to run their households as compared to men (D. Dagar, M. Kaushik, S. Siwach, personal communication, February 10, 2020).



Figure 3.1. Gauri Sheoran, national level shooter (left) and Mann Kaur, 102 year old athlete (right).

There is a stark difference between the position, needs, aspirations, goals, and values of rural and urban female athletes. Urban female athletes in cities such as Chandigarh, Yamunanagar, Kurukshetra, and Bhiwani have mentioned that their families have supported them in taking up sports as a profession (J. Momi, personal communication, February 10, 2020). Female athletes from urban regions stated that they undertook sports to win laurels for the nation without looking at the incentives that the government and/or other institutions provided them with (G. Sheoran, personal communication, February 11, 2020). Women from high socio-economic backgrounds and urban regions take up sports as a hobby (A. Mann, personal communication, February 11, 2020). Similar to men, women from high socio-economic backgrounds participate in light sports such as archery, and shooting (G. Sheoran, personal communication, February 11, 2020).

In comparison to this, rural women have received criticism due to participation. As stated earlier, familial support is essential, however in rural regions female athletes are criticised by their extended family (Kiran, personal communication, February 12, 2020). Their participation in sports starts mostly at government-run schools where sports policies are strictly abided by provision for sports infrastructure and coaches (Kiran, personal communication, February 12, 2020). Our on-field observations also suggest that women who take up sports on a professional level come from a low socio-economic status, this is because of the job security that the government ensures for athletes (J. Kaur, personal communication, February 11, 2020).



Media Influences

Media has very often lauded sportswomen on an international scale, resulting in the increase of women participation in sports on a global level. This has also resulted in many movies being produced in India which showcase sports women, like the famous Indian boxer, Mary Kom. Media portrayals have subjected women into the small mould of being housewives, which is inevitably also reflected in some parts of Haryana (Kiran, personal communication, February 12, 2020). There were multiple views that we came across during our research, some of which included the fact of women in Haryana who are not accepted in the cast of sports (Karishma, personal communication, February 12, 2020) and are often looked at, with degrading eyes (Trolan, 2013). It is a long journey for a woman, when she enters the sphere of sports, to make space for herself in a bitingly competitive environment. Yet, the comparison of a male and female sports person is not considered at par (R. Gupta, personal communication, February 14, 2020; Anshul, Kashi, Rahul, personal communication, February 12, 2020). An example to indicate how the media influences our minds towards the gender stereotype of women not being suitable for sports is portrayed in the movie, *Sultan*. The movie encapsulates multiple instances portraying the downgrading spirit of women's sports, wherein Salman Khan asks Anushka Sharma how is it that she is a wrestler, yet so beautiful (Chopra & Singh, 2016) and wherein she leaves behind her aspirations towards wrestling to become a full-time housewife, only to see *Sultan* see his dream come true (Chopra & Singh, 2016).

On the other hand, we also came across sportswomen in Haryana who, although coming from rural backgrounds, never faced the lack of support and motivation from their family and community to pursue their dreams (J. Momi, personal communication, February 10, 2020). The families of such girls were seen giving up their comfort for the purpose of moving their daughters forward in this realm. Here is where we see the dichotomy between what we believe the scenario, in Haryana, to be versus what it actually is on a wide scale. There may be instances, portrayed in the media, that have pulled down the thought of women in sports. However, there are double the quantity of media references that uplift the role of women in sports, for instance the movie, *Dangal* which portrays two rural girls from Bhiwani, Haryana who make it big in women's boxing, only to go on to win India's first gold medal in the Commonwealth Games 2010 (Kapur, Khan & Rao, 2016; Singail, personal communication, February 10, 2020).



Army Influences

Historically, the Haryana and Punjab region has been a point of invasion and battle in India. Panipat, a city in Haryana, has seen three of the biggest battles of Indian history. Mythologically also, the Mahabharata that was fought in Kurukshetra history has proven that Haryana has been a centre of conflict for centuries (M. Singh, personal communication, February 9, 2020). Even today, the states of Haryana and Punjab are near the border and their population makes up a large part of the Indian army. The influence of war and conflict still exists in these states (M. Singh, personal communication, February 9, 2020). It is believed that their tendency to keep fit is something which has been passed down from generations (A. Mann, personal communication, February 11, 2020). It is due to this influence that the people of Haryana mainly excel in combat sports, such as kabaddi, boxing and wrestling that have flourished in this region. They believe in keeping fit for the purpose of always being prepared, and generally as well (R. Aneja, personal communication, February 11, 2020)

Agricultural Influences

Haryana has always been an agrarian state, with most of its population working outdoors in fields. Agricultural work is extremely labour intensive and requires hours of heavy lifting and other physical tasks (A. Singh, Ravi, personal communication, February 12, 2020). Haryanvi people have grown accustomed to such work on the fields, over the years, with children helping at home since their early childhood (Ravi, personal communication, February 12, 2020). Constant hard work and exercise automatically increases stamina and builds their bodies in a certain physique (K. Pahel, personal communication, February 11, 2020) that provides them with a competitive advantage over sportsmen from non-agricultural backgrounds.



Figure 3.2. Ajmer Singh, farmer from Yamunanagar

Agriculture provides Haryana with another major competitive advantage- food. Many in Haryana, assume that sports is something one can only think of as a career, after attaining a certain level of financial stability, something Haryana is able to achieve due to its physically intensive agriculture (V. Khanna, personal communication, February 13, 2020). Haryana is an agriculturally self-sufficient state, with its crops feeding the whole state and still leaving surplus to be able to export to other states (R. Aneja, personal communication, February 11, 2020; V. Khanna, personal communication, February 13, 2020). This indicates that food has never been a problem in the state - enabling them to focus on sports (A. Singh, personal communication, February 12, 2020). On the other hand, many other states have struggled economically and otherwise, to gather food for their families, forcing the people to find means of earning for food, first and then focus on sports as a secondary career option (R. Pehelwan, personal communication, February 13, 2020).

Haryana's major agricultural production includes wheat, bajra, jowar, among other crops, which are abundantly available in the state, resulting in the better nutritional value of the Haryanvi sportspersons (R. Aneja, personal communication, February 11, 2020). There is also the famous line that almost every one of our interviewees in Haryana stated the state's diet as to being dairy intensive - "*Doodh Dahi ka Khana, Pradeshon mein Pradesh Haryana*" (R. Aneja, personal communication, February 11, 2020; R. Pehelwan,



R. Gupta, personal communication, February 14, 2020). The quote is proven true even statistically. Haryana is the most milk consuming state in India with an average family consuming 14.7 litres in a month, more than three times the Indian average of 4.3 litres (Vij, 2014). Haryana is known for the Murrah Buffalo and its high milk yield (Parveen, personal communication, February 10, 2020). Haryanvis prefer to produce and consume milk in their households itself which is organic and perceived to even be healthier than the packaged milk consumed in urban areas of other states (A. Singh, personal communication, February 12, 2020). Most families we came across consumed self-produced food and there were rarely any households that produced food for commercial sale (Komal, Karishma, personal communication, February 12, 2020). Haryana's milk consumption patterns indicate the socio-economic status of the state, which is higher than the other states. Milk is expensive and so is the maintenance of cows and buffalos. However, Haryana doesn't seem to struggle with either, owing to its large and widespread agrarian livelihood, which has led to them breeding cows and buffaloes for commercial and domestic purposes, anyway.

Food and Nutrition

Food is an integral part of culture and an essential factor for the growth and development of the human body. This is especially true for athletes, as they dedicate their lives to increase the performance their body is capable of. Primary and secondary data found suggests that one of the reasons Haryana is a sports powerhouse is due to the rich diet available in the region which is also consumed by sportspersons.

There has been a long-standing debate about whether a vegetarian or non-vegetarian diet is more beneficial to the human body; in this context, which one is more beneficial for the sports person? A study by Kaur and Singla compares data between vegetarians and non-vegetarians (2017).

The study found that intake of cereals, legumes and grains were higher in vegetarians than in non-vegetarians, and that the consumption of fruits, leafy vegetables and roots were higher amongst the vegetarians (Kaur & Single, 2017). A group discussion interview conducted in Yamunanagar yielded that almost everyone, from rural to urban societies, follows a diet that consists of greens, *roti*, which is made from grains, and *sabzi*, which can be a vegetable dish of any variation (personal communication, February 12, 2020). A focus group in DAV college revealed that sportspersons eat a lot of sprouts (personal communication, February 11, 2020).



The study also found that the intake of milk and milk products was higher in vegetarians (Kaur & Singla, 2017). An oft-mentioned and important part of their diet is *ghee*. The diet in Haryana is said to be very pure, and uses lots of *ghee* and milk (M. Singh, personal communication, February 9, 2020). Manish Kaushik, an athlete at NSNIS, Patiala states, “our diet has a lot of *dudh*, *dahi* and *ghee* throughout all the villages in Haryana” (personal communication, February 10, 2020) and claims that Haryana is unique due to the fact that most can afford a good diet - it can be assumed that he is alluding to the majorly local and self-sufficient production of food in Haryana.



Figure 3.3. Pail of fresh milk

Dairy products and fruits are an essential part of a Haryanvi’s diet. Milk, curd and *ghee* are often the main components in food consumed by people belonging to Haryana (Yadav, 2010). A majority of those within the region keep domestic milching animals, thus maintaining the culture of self-sufficient food production. Moreover, *ghee* is said to help athletes maintain strength and vitality; it’s such an integral part of the culture that, during the Commonwealth Games, gold medallists were awarded 101kgs of *ghee* while the other participants were awarded 21kgs (Yadav, 2010).

Haryana is known for its excellent quality of milk and curd, as well as its healthy upkeep and quality of domestic milching animals - the *murrah* buffalo (A. Mehta, personal communication, February 11, 2020). The reason behind athletes in Haryana, who are primarily vegetarian, consuming milk products could be that milk - especially bovine based



milk and milk products - is a source of proteins, lipids, amino acids, vitamins and minerals (Roy, 2008). It contains carbohydrates in amounts similar to many commercially available sports drinks, and it provides for a slower digestion and absorption of casein and whey proteins - in a ratio of 3:1 - which results in sustained elevations of blood amino acid concentration; these large chain amino acids play an important role in muscle metabolism and protein synthesis (Sethuram, 2019). Exercise results in production of sweat, through which electrolytes are also secreted; milk is a natural source of these electrolytes, and helps replenish the fluid lost during exercise (Sethuram, 2019).



Figure 3.4. Process of making almond milk by Pehelwan at Hanuman *Akhara*

A recipe unique to Haryanvi sportspersons is a beverage called *badam dudh*, literally translated to ‘almond milk’. The recipe includes almonds, sugar, peppercorns, cardamom, sesame seeds, pumpkin seeds and poppy seeds. First, almonds are added to a large mortar and grinded by hand. At Hanuman *akhara*, the *pehelwans* tend to do this themselves, which acts as a form of strength training, and make around twenty glasses of *badam milk* to consume after practice (R. Pehelwan, personal communication, February 13, 2020). One wrestler has stated that stamina is built by drinking this milk on a regular basis (personal communication, February 13, 2020). This recipe is also made at various other wrestlers’ homes, often made by members of the wrestlers’ family, which indicates the amount of effort they are willing to contribute in order to provide budding athletes with the required



nutrition to pursue sports successfully (S. Bharadwaj, personal communication, February 11, 2020). Athletes also mentioned that local, home food specific to Haryana is rich in its nutritional and energy value. These athletes prefer having *pinni* - a large laddoo made with *ghee*, *besan*, and nuts over more commercially produced energy bars (M. Kaushik, personal communication, February 10, 2020).

The study found that protein intake was higher in non-vegetarians, and so was the overall daily consumption of energy (Kaur & Singla, 2017). A wrestler at Hanuman *akhara*, Yamunanagar, has said that even vegetarians can become *pehelwans*; they eat *chana*, fruits, etc. and eat extra in order to reach the required body weight for wrestling (R. Pehelwan, personal communication, February 13, 2020). Vegetarian athletes consume additional vitamins and mineral supplements in order to compensate for their non-consumption of meat products (M. Kaushik, personal communication, February 10, 2020). Vijender Singh, the first Indian boxer to win an Olympic medal, follows a light diet based on carbohydrates and proteins. It consists of eggs, milk, chicken, vegetables, and daily doses of multivitamins and supplements (Rana & Sahni, 2012). In contrast, Sushil Kumar, the vegetarian wrestler, follows a 'pure vegetarian diet'; he eats light, such as cereals, seasonal vegetables, *chapattis*, alongside protein-rich supplements and multivitamins (Rana & Sahni, 2012). These two hail from Haryana and regions close to Haryana, thus are exposed to a similar kind of culture and diet.

Though it may seem like following a vegetarian diet is detrimental to a sportsperson's overall performance and stamina, that is in fact not the case. Both primary and secondary data indicates that even following a pure vegetarian diet, as a majority of our on-field sample has, they are able to become capable and strong athletes due to the purity of Haryana produce, and the mineral intake is up to standards due to their heavy reliance on *ghee*, curd, and other milk products. This dedication to a milk-based, *ghee* heavy diet to achieve spectacular performance results is a part of what makes Haryana sportspersons unique and capable.

Community-based Culture

Haryana has a strong sense of collectivism. Most people in the state, especially in the rural areas, know each other (S. Shourie, personal communication, February 11, 2020). Families are known by their head patriarch's name, mostly their grandfather or their surname (A. Singh, personal communication, February 12, 2020). Along with a strong sense of living in a community, comes a strong sense of shame and a certain expectation



of behaviour in the community. “Here, kids do not smoke and indulge in drugs because a main reason is that they are scared of people spotting them, indulging in such activities, and complain to their parents” (M. Singh, personal communication, February 9, 2020). The sense of community in Haryana acts only as a positive influence for the state (R. Aneja, personal communication, February 11, 2020).

This sense of community continues in the field of sports. The presence of a neighbour, cousin or family member in the field of sports is observed to be one of the key motivating factors for aspiring sportspersons (D. Dagar, M. Kaushik, N. Dev, Parveen, S. Siwach, personal communication, February 10, 2020; A. Mehta, S. Kumar, personal communication, February 11, 2020). Most sportspeople we interviewed agreed to being heavily inspired by an already successful sportsman (M. Kaushik, personal communication, February 10, 2020; Kiran, personal communication, February 12, 2020), an immediate member (D. Dagar, S. Siwach, personal communication, February 10, 2020) or their community (R. Gupta, personal communication, February 14, 2020). The best example of the same is Bhiwani, a town in Haryana often referred to as the “Little Cuba” (N. Dev, personal communication, February 10, 2020). Bhiwani already had a large boxing population (Verma & Verma, 2016), however, post Vijender Singh’s success at the Olympics in 2008, the town saw a sudden upsurge in the number of aspiring boxers. They were all heavily inspired by the success of their community member, Vijender Singh (M. Kaushik, personal communication, February 10, 2020).

Most Haryanvi sportspersons have a close family member who is into the field of sports, and the conditioning begins at childhood (S. Shourie, personal communication, February 11, 2020). Children in Haryana are generally less interested in formal education, and they do not face a lot of pressure from their parent’s side too (A. Mehta, S. Kumar, personal communication, February 11, 2020; R. Gupta, personal communication, February 14, 2020). The parents, instead, encourage their children to go out of the house and play a sport (Ajay, Amit, Sahil, personal communication, February 13, 2020), and provide them with a heavy diet on a daily basis, so that the children can build up a physique that is compatible with combat sports. Elderly sportspersons in the family are also enthusiastic of the younger ones doing well in sports and often participate in training them in the early years (R. Pehelwar, personal communication, February 14, 2020).



In conclusion, family influence and a strong sense of community, combined with its historical and agricultural background makes Haryana the perfect breeding ground for budding sportspersons in the country.

Drug Culture and Doping

Drug Culture in Haryana and Punjab

Drugs have become a prevalent issue in Haryana, and is close to becoming more widespread than it is within Punjab itself (Choudhry, 2018) since Punjab reportedly has a large number of drug users. The increasing drug abuse within the youth has led to a proportional increase in deaths due to overdose and an increase in HIV cases (Bhatnagar, 2019). Political campaigners claim that this issue has arisen due to Haryana's proximity to Punjab: "Fatehabad, which shares a long border with Punjab, is among the worst hit," says Ravi Karwasa, Congress' media representative (Bhatnagar, 2019). This appears to be a well-accepted reason for the growing drug abuse problem in Haryana. The problem has grown to the extent that political candidates are promising the eradication of such issues in their political campaigns, which is an occurrence that has not transpired for past elections - it is a first that the candidates are even considering this as an issue (Sharma, 2019).

According to a United Nations report in the early 2010s, Haryana and Punjab follow a high trend of drug addicts, being the second highest in India in terms of the number of addicts within each region, following Nagaland (Tripathi & Arora, n.d.).

Youth as early on in age as nine years (Dheer, 2019) and those who are 14-15 years of age (Sharma, 2019) have been indulging in rampant drug use prevalent in Haryana. The Rohtak district within Haryana in particular appears to be wrought with the issue of drug abuse (Dheer, 2019). The problem has become so rampant that there are numbers for rehabilitation centres scrawled on the walls (Sharma, 2019). Unregulated centres in Delhi serve as a hub for addicts from Gurugram - which seems to be Haryana's most suffering district - who want to undergo rehabilitation but avoid stigma. These unregulated centres in Delhi also increase the risk of a relapse within the patient. As such, relapse rates are very high in addition to the rising number of new addicts (Choudhry, 2018).

According to one study, out of 3.4 million drug abuse victims, only 0.3 million have registered themselves in these rehabilitation centres. There are eight rehabilitation centres in general hospitals at Ambala, Hisar, Gurgaon, Karnal, Kurukshetra, Sirsa, Narnaul and Kaithal (Tripathi & Arora, n.d.).



Doping in Sports

Drugs are defined as “substances that alter the physiological processes of the body which is used for the diagnosis, prevention and treatment of disease” (Kumari, 2019). Doping is defined as “the use of such drugs by an athlete or player of prohibited substances or methods in order to enhance his/her sports performance” (Kumari, 2019). PEDs improve performance in athletes by enlarging muscles and increasing the oxygen-carrying capacity of blood (Kumari, 2019), the latter of which is possible through prohibited substances such as erythropoietin (EPO) and methods like blood transfusion (Mishra & Singh, 2018). Anabolic agents, stimulants, growth factors and beta-2 agonists are among the most commonly seen prohibited substances in sports (Mishra & Singh, 2018).

Sports psychologist Dr. Shruti Shourie from DAV College, Chandigarh has speculated that possible causes for athletes or other individuals to resort to drug abuse / doping may be due to negative motivation, which includes a fear of failure or the fear of playing a bad game on part of the athlete (personal communication, February 11, 2020). Drugs are frequently used for training rather than competition - the physiological changes incited by these drugs lead to an improved performance within the athlete. These drugs also speed up recovery and stimulate protein synthesis - these features are especially compelling to those athletes who are on the last leg of their professional careers (Mishra & Singh, 2018). Doping is prohibited because it undermines the spirit of sport, is competitively unethical, and hazardous to the athlete’s health (Kumari, 2019).

The institution that regulates doping within the country is the NADA. It is responsible for “promoting, coordinating and monitoring the doping control program in sports in all its forms across the country. It works for a vision of ‘dope-free India’” (National Anti Doping Agency, n.d.). One of their primary functions entails the implementation of anti-doping policies established by the WADA.

The WADA code “works in conjunction with six International Standards aimed at bringing harmonization among anti-doping organisations in various technical areas” (World Anti-Doping Agency, n.d.), which include the following: one, the prohibited list, which consists of banned substances and methods that are prohibited from being used by sportspersons both within and outside of competitions (World Anti-Doping Agency, n.d.). Second, international standard for testing and investigations (ISTI), which entails testing the sportspersons and maintaining the samples, transporting the samples and notifying the athlete of their results (World Anti-Doping Agency, n.d.). Third, the international standard



for laboratories (ISL) which verify test results and evidentiary data, as well ensure all laboratories are up to standard (World Anti-Doping Agency, n.d.). Fourth, the International Standard for Therapeutic Use Exemptions (ISTUE) which ensures that the process of granting TUEs - which are granted on the basis of any physical or mental condition the athlete may have - is uniform across all countries (World Anti-Doping Agency, n.d.). Fifth, the International Standard for Protection of Privacy and Personal Information (ISPPPI) which ensures that all the stakeholders involved, such as the organisation and persons involved in anti-doping in sport administer appropriate privacy protection to personal data they hold (World Anti-Doping Agency, n.d.). Sixth, the International Standard for Code Compliance by Signatories (ISCCS), which ensures that the Code is implemented effectively across all countries (World Anti-Doping Agency, n.d.).

Media influence plays an important role in the probability of an athlete resorting to doping. Due to extensive media coverage on the exceptional improvement in performance offered by doping, athletes are misled into consuming such PEDs in order to gain exemplary results. Moreover, athletes are influenced by their fellow sportspersons into consuming such PEDs; this may happen through hearing of such drugs from their peers, or being offered so directly by their peers. These athletes are also offered and pressured to consume such drugs by their trainers, family, and healthcare professionals in order to improve their performance by any means necessary (Kumari, 2019). Athletes and others are also able to obtain PEDs from online sources. The labels on certain 'safe' supplements may be inaccurate and may contain traces of prohibited substances that the athlete may be unaware of, which would lead to them unintentionally consuming them (Kumari, 2019). The Indian female contingent had won successive gold medals at the 2010 Commonwealth Games and the 2010 Asian Games in the 4X400m relay event. Members Ashwini Akkunji, Mandeep Kaur and Sini Jose of the relay team tested positive for banned substances. They were banned for two years by the Court of Arbitration for Sport. Their coach, Yuri Ogorodnik, claimed that he was the one to give them the prohibited substances, reasoning that it was because they had run out of supplements provided by the Sports Authority of India (SAI) (Mishra & Singh, 2018). This is clearly a case of how sportspersons may be coerced or even forced to consume such substances without their knowledge.

Dr. A. Mann, a sports psychologist in DAV college, has stated that Punjab is victim to drug abuse due to its history of terror attacks, which has led its citizens - mainly youth - to either emigrate or resort to drugs in order to cope with their trauma (personal



communication, February 11, 2020). Milkha Singh, known as the ‘Flying Sikh’, is an accomplished athlete that hails from Punjab; he reasons that “drugs will lead to the downfall of India” (personal communication, February 9, 2020). He claims that the low number of athletes hailing from Punjab is due to the use of drugs, which can be classified as ordinary, non-PED drugs that are consumed for the sake of recreation, as well as PEDs. When Indian athletes are caught using such PEDs, they lose the medals and achievements they have won; he states that “they bring dishonour to themselves and their family, but also to their nation. They are then looked at as cheats” (personal communication, February 9, 2020). It can be inferred that Haryana is heading in the same direction as Punjab, where the use of drugs has led athletes astray.

India ranked 3rd behind Russia and Turkey in a 2013 WADA report. Over 91 Indian athletes from various different sporting events have failed dope tests. While the vast majority are track and field athletes, the other sports involved included weight-lifting, wrestling, power-lifting, bodybuilding, judo, boxing, and even cricket (Mishra & Singh, 2018). Following Akkunji, Kaur and Jose’s ban that was a result of their unintentional use of prohibited substances, there are athletes specifically from Haryana who have faced similar judgement. Dharambir Singh, a 200m runner from Haryana, tested positive for a banned substance - anabolic steroid - by the NADA during the Indian Grand Prix meet in Bangalore on 11 July, 2016. He was the first Indian male runner to qualify for the Olympics in 36 years, and due to testing positive for doping, was handed an eight year ban by the NADA (PTI, 2016). Nirmala Sheoran, who hails from Haryana, is the 2017 Asian champion and one of India’s top 400m runners. During the Inter-State Athletics meet in Guwahati in June, 2018, she failed a doping test (Cyriac, 2019). Sheoran’s disqualification has led to India losing the 400m gold she won in the 2017 Asian Championships, and the 4x400m gold (Cyriac, 2019). The Indian Weightlifting Federation faced the risk of suspension in 2015 due to a doping hazard within the organisation, and as a result imposed a year-long ban on Delhi, Haryana, Punjab and Manipur “for returning the highest number of dope cases since the beginning of the year” (PTI, 2015).

Adding onto this, athletes have a tendency to avoid NADA officials with zeal, which may be indicative of them indulging in doping. Haryana’s Anjali Devi, sprinter who beat Hima Das’s record (Deep, 2019), and Haryana’s Amit Dahiya, javelin thrower (PTI, 2020), have both escaped inspections by the NADA and no further news has been heard from them. This could imply that they are using PEDs. Dr. Suresh Bharadwaj, a sports

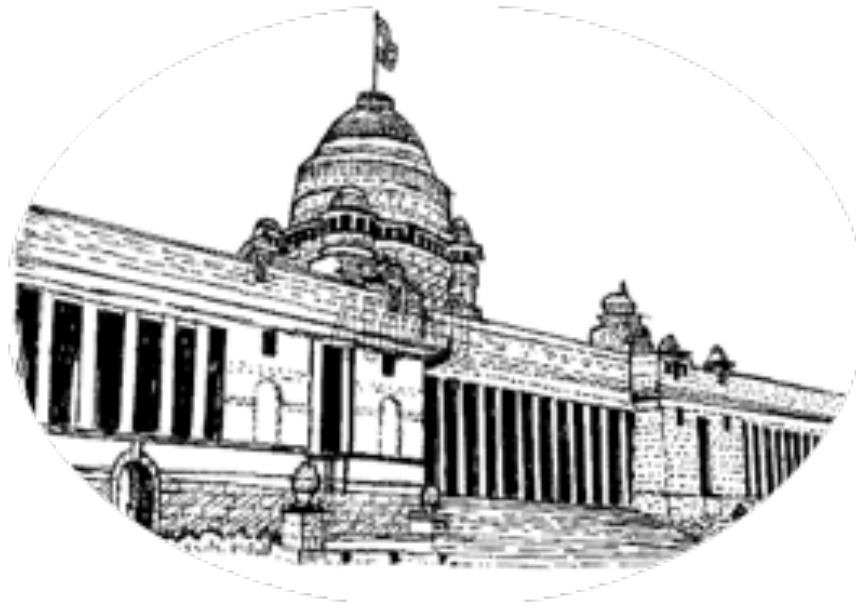


psychologist in DAV college, Chandigarh, has mentioned that if universities competing in world university level championships do not submit doping reports of their athletes, they are disqualified from the tournament (personal communication, February 11, 2020). Both Dr. A. Mann and Dr. Bharadwaj maintain that very few Haryanvi athletes are indulging in doping (personal communication, February 11, 2020), however secondary data indicates otherwise.

These examples of Haryana's athletes being caught doping, coupled with India's overall high percentage of athletes doing the same, leads to the conclusion that doping is an integral part of sports culture that has shaped performance and public opinion within the sports domain, and represents the lack of integrity that can also be present alongside sportsmanship.

Doping or consumption of drugs also brings institutionalisation into relevance. It becomes a reflection of not just the sportsperson then but from what backgrounds they come and if the institutes they represent are not scrupulous enough about these issues. Different sports develop differently and it all comes down to the institutionalisation of each sport. The next chapter deals with institutionalisation of sports to facilitate a clearer understanding of how sports develops, changes, improves, and contributes as a crucial part in the cultural context of Haryana especially.





Chapter 4: Institutionalisation



Institutions and their Social Role(s)

Economies around the world are grounded in the core philosophy of institutionalisation. Institutions are created to meet specific functions in society. Various individuals come together to form alliances to meet a certain goal that is based on shared and cultural history. Nations today are institutions by themselves. Actors within these nations take up specific roles to complete a function that is determined by the skill set that individuals possess (Ferini, 2012).

All actors act through the framework of an institution, this allows them to take advantage of resources that otherwise are unavailable to them as individuals. Through this approach, institutions, both private and public, create a chain of dependency to fulfill their certain respective functions (Ferini, 2012). In Haryana, for instance, the government, an institution on its own, has multiple secondary institutions such as the Department of Youth Affairs to ensure the realization of their sports goals. Again there are some secondary organisations such as the Haryana Olympic Association (HOA), universities, and sports clubs, to name a few, that are crucial in achieving the government's vision.

The mix of private and public institutes is essential in the same, as both have their advantages and disadvantages. Public organisations enable sportspersons to achieve and move to higher levels in the hierarchy through better training facilities and representation. These organisations are vital on a national level as the stakes are higher. On the contrary, private institutions play a primary role in performing the government's functions for the masses. Due to the efficient bureaucracies of private institutions, the output of work is greater, thus enabling a more active and smooth route for the achievement of goals.

In Haryana, policies are created by governments, whereas the grassroots implementation is performed by decentralized offices such as the District Sports Office (R. Gupta, personal communication, February 14, 2020). Private institutions like wrestling clubs and local *akharas* provide game-specific training. Sports associations, additionally, play a complementing role to the aforementioned institutions. It is important to note that private institutions relevant to this research such as the DAV College, Chandigarh, due to their institutional structure, allow for sportspersons to participate in sports through flexible coaching and exams, etc. (G. Sheoran, personal communication, February 11, 2020).

Haryana's sports policies enable sportspersons to participate in sporting events while being employed under the state government. These are among the many benefits that



sportspersons get due to an institutional framework. At a national level, the army, and the railways, for example, also provide such incentives to promote sports culture.

Institutionalisation

Government

Institutions are essential for the process of national development. In democracies such as India, the decentralisation of power enables government units to find localised answers to issues that they are facing. This, to an extent, enables governments to take up various interests that they have. Governments are formal and almost universal institutions available to take up the management of resources (human and natural) to promote and/or achieve a certain common goal.



Figure 4.1. Newspaper article featuring Mr. Kanwar Pal's interview with our team

Source: 'Haryana Sarkar Ne Khel Ke Sath Siksha Ko Bhi Diya Mahatva: Kanwar Pal'

[News Clipping].(2020, February 26). Dainik Saveratimes.

www.epaper.dainiksaveratimes.org/c/49422600

The case at hand, i.e. the Haryana government, as a decentralised unit of the Indian government, has inculcated a certain structure to enable the promotion of a particular kind of sports culture. Federal systems such as in Haryana tend to create an individualistic



approach to governmentality wherein individuals at power positions shape the course that the government takes. The validity of a government is determined by the individual in power. For instance, the positionality of the current sports minister, Sandeep Singh, as a former national hockey captain sanctions him more authority to undertake his role as a sports minister. Thus, giving the perception of better governance due to personal interest and experience.

While the above can be contested, the interdependence of government units is important to achieve a certain goal. Haryana in comparison to other states is cited as academically weak (R. Gupta, personal communication, February 14, 2020). The importance of sports in bringing out a lifestyle change is evident, respondents have mentioned that sports participation ensures good health, and thus a healthy mind - *swasth sharir, aur swasth dimaag* (K. Pal, personal communication, February 12, 2020). With this said, the Haryana government in its current 2020 budget has increased its spending for education, and health services to facilitate the academic growth and understanding of the population alongside sports.

The government's bureaucratic structure by itself acts as a means for "checks and balances". The sharing of power within these institutions gives way to feedback and an opportunity to upgrade policies with time. However, this structure leads to a limited flow of information as the institute needs to prioritize some issues or grievances over others. For example, this has led to the underestimation of resources required for both, the direct distribution of funds to athletes (S. Siwach, personal communication, February 10, 2020), and the development of sports infrastructure (V. Khanna, personal communication, February 13, 2020).

Additionally, this structure has only allowed for the development of certain organized sports. Games such as wrestling, boxing, and badminton, for instance, have been successfully promoted (R. Gupta, personal communication, February 14, 2020). However, group games still lack the level of development in comparison. This is also true for relatively unorganized games as traditional kushti wherein the government has not met the needs of these individuals, rather this sector solely functions based on private initiatives (R. Pehelwan, personal communication, February 13, 2020).

Sports Associations

Sports associations in India play a vital role in the nurturing of sports. Officially, sports associations are autonomous bodies that are linked to the Indian Olympic



Association. These sports associations work near athletes and the central government's Olympic association. Other duties of associations include the qualification of athletes, ensuring no illegal practices are taking place, and ensuring a link between athletes and the government through a formalized channel (A. Mehta, personal communication, February 11, 2020). Legally, all sports associations in India are registered under the Indian Trust Act as societies (R. Gupta, personal communication, February 14, 2020).

The Haryana Olympic Association (HOA) located in Panchkula, Haryana has played a vital role in the development of the region's sports culture. Successful sports policies implemented in the state were originally developed by the association, eventually to be adopted centrally as Khelo India (A. Mehta, personal communication, February 11, 2020). Regardless of the above formal functions of the association, the HOA plays an essential role in the achievement of Haryana's vision of "Sports for All" (Government of Haryana, 2015) through various competitions, and tournaments that it promotes, and/or holds under its banner.

The role of associations in the context of Haryana has changed over time. They are reflections of a close private-public partnership to promote certain common agendas. It is important to note in this case is the fact that they are autonomous bodies recognised by the government. In many ways, the Government of India is outsourcing its duties to associations. One can argue that privately-run institutions such as the HOA are more efficient in being able to complete the required tasks without having the limitations that government-run institutions might have due to complex bureaucracies, and sanctioning systems.

This system of private-public partnership was exploited by the then Hooda government to "promote" sports as a means to provincial development. This era has been cited as the "golden era" for Haryana's sports culture (A. Mehta, S. Kumar, personal communication, February 11, 2020). Nonetheless, the Haryana government's private-public partnership at the time was not limited solely to higher bureaucracies, in fact, associations received special status in decentralised units of the government (R. Gupta, personal communication, February 14, 2020). Thus, enabling association and government representatives respectively to act as "checks and balances" for each other, furthermore increasing the number of resources available, and ensuring efficiency of policy implementation.



While the above is true, there are a number of variables that count in the creation of this dynamic between private and public institutions. Interpersonal relations among members of associations and the government are crucial. For instance, the Hooda government capitalised on the HOA's interest and availability to develop, nurture, and promote the state's sports culture. This dynamic worked till the extent to which government officials, and HOA representatives worked "hand-in-hand" (P. Kumar, personal communication, February 14, 2020). However, with the changing of power within the state of Haryana through democratic processes, the relations between the association and the government have halted to bare minimum. Reasons for the same are unclear, however, primary findings suggest that the strain in interpersonal relations among officials, and favouritism to certain groups (and associations) are among the few (A. Mehtra, S. Kumar, personal communication, February 11, 2020).

The question arises when such incidences occur within a formal framework. The private and autonomous status of association enables them and the government's to alienate from each other. However, the extent to which the common goal of realising Haryana's sports potential and efficiency is possible with these institutional changes is unclear (due to the wastage of resources etc..)

Sports Academies

In Haryana, there are two distinct kinds of training institutions – local privately owned (like Hanuman *Akhara*, and Bhiwani Boxing Club) and professional training academies usually set up by government bodies (like the National Institute of Sports, Patiala). Most athletes at the grassroots level start from a local academy in their vicinity, eventually graduating to bigger, more professional and specialized training institutes set up by government bodies like the Sports Authority of India (SAI) (Singail, personal communication, February 10, 2020).

The local academies are inexpensive to enroll into, without specific criteria to join, unlike bigger academies which either are expensive to join or, in the case of government institutes, are very selective about admission. This creates a virtual filter on the kind of people who get into bigger institutes, i.e. professional athletes. *Akharas* on the other hand, due to Haryana's strong sports culture is integral to the local community wherein families encourage participation for fitness and recreation (R. Pehelwan, personal communication, February 13, 2020). However, it is at these stages of training, that young sportspersons realize their sports goals, and move to more professional institutions for training. Policy



incentives do remain a significant motivator for the same (Vishal, Ravi, personal communication, February 13, 2020).

The NSNIS is a government institution that has been committed to nurturing generations of sportspersons since its conception in 1961. It is a sporting body and a sister extension institute managed by the Indian Government's sports authority. NSNIS provides professional training to budding sportspersons, and is the authority to train and authorise coaches nationally. As an institution, NSNIS has never failed to mould sportspersons in the best way possible, so much so that these sportspersons are lauded internationally for their skill and techniques. NSNIS is one of the best sports training academies in the world, with their students participating in all national and international tournaments (like the Olympics) (Singail, personal communication, February 10, 2020).

At smaller academies, coaches are also the owners. Many students in these academies come for fitness and recreation, both of which have to be taken care of by coaches more than the game itself. A sportsperson's diet is very general (R. Pehelwan, personal communication, February 13, 2020) and not specific unlike larger academies, where the diet is tailored by nutritionists as per each athlete's body needs (Parveen, personal communication, February 10, 2020).

At Hanuman Akhara, a local community backed academy, there existed a substantial lack of equipment and infrastructure vis-à-vis the NSNIS, a government institution. These *akharas* use *mitti* and not Olympic style mats, although the government has sanctioned funds to these smaller academies to buy the same (R. Pehelwan, personal communication, February 13, 2020). Local academies like Hanuman akhara, promote indigenous sports, and *pehelwans* strongly believe in their heritage and traditions. These *akharas* promote a strong sense of community, patriotism and a reluctance to western ideology (R. Pehelwan, personal communication, February 13, 2020). Due to a lack of funding and/or support from the government to these private institutions, owners-coaches and their families find it difficult to cater to the heavy needs of the sport (S. Singh, personal communication, February 14, 2020). Such families usually rely on a non-athlete member of their family to manage or break-even their household expenses (R. Pehelwan, S. Singh, personal communication, February 14, 2020).

At NSNIS, training is influenced by scientific and western norms. Coaches are internationally trained and among the best in the country. NSNIS ensures the use of modern technology to produce internationally acclaimed athletes (M. Kaushik, personal



communication, February 10, 2020); which necessarily aren't among the priorities of the *akharas*.

Pehelwans at *akharas* train through their learning with experience rather than formal education in sports. They have practiced indigenous sports like *kushti* for decades, and hence have a better understanding of the same. They often however lack specific technical know-how and rely solely on their training, and environment. This is reflected with their lack of basic sports knowledge such as the weight of *mugdars*, contrary to the specific training regimes at the NSNIS (R. Pehelwan, personal communication, February 13, 2020).

NSNIS is under constant supervision, ensuring diligence, specificity and training of sportspersons, keeping in mind international standards of games (N. Dev, personal communication, February 10, 2020). Specificity in regards to their strict schedule and routine pertaining to training and diet, to name a few. Diet, an important component of effective sportsmanship and physical fitness being followed on a rigorous schedule (Parveen, personal communication, February 10, 2020). NSNIS takes utmost pride in stating that their key for excellence lies in its specificity, when it comes to making a good sportsperson through the incorporation of a healthy-suitable lifestyle and training (N. Singh, personal communication, February 11, 2020).

However, a country of India's magnitude with a population of over 1.3 billion people, only has one national sports institution which is inefficient in accommodating India's talent pool. The significance of local institutions here for training purposes is high. Respondents criticized the unavailability of more government-backed sports institutions (J. Momi, Manpreet, personal communication, February 10, 2020).

We received major institutional feedback that was filled with praises for the institute narrating various stories, anecdotes, and facts about the coaches, facilities, etc., but within those applauds, we heard a few concerns being raised about the standards of living in the residences of NSNIS. Multiple sportspersons who lived on campus stated that the hostels were not up to the mark and needed to be upgraded to match the levels of NSNIS's national appeal (M. Kaushik, N. Dev, Parveen, personal communication, February 10, 2020).

Universities and Colleges

Universities are essentially known for their role in the process of knowledge production, propagation, and contestation. In recent times, sports have become an integral part of university culture. Sports is a factor of social status and standing in universities, and



universities such as the DAV College, Chandigarh promote themselves through their sports achievements.

DAV College is a public institute in the city of Chandigarh which has an esteemed reputation owing to its wide sports culture and the number of states, national and international athletes it has produced. Being of such prime importance in the sphere of sports, DAV College and the Haryana government can be seen as having imperative interdependence and communication which eventually gives birth to the adoption of government policies into the educational dynamics of DAV College (S. Bharadwaj, personal communication, February 11, 2020). Some examples of these policy emulations can be witnessed in the flexible exam dates provided to their students (K. Pahel, Namrata, personal communication, February 11, 2020), which is completely supported by the Haryana government (A. Mann, personal communication, February 10, 2020).

In order to uplift the sportspersons and develop sports culture within the college, the management and the government support, and motivate students to partake in sports without any additional stress pertaining to their academic performances. When we visited DAV College, we interacted with 6 girls who were state, national and international athletes in various sports ranging from swimming to volleyball and to something as uncommon as rowing. Respondents mentioned the ability of their college to support sporting activities with due regards to their coaching, psychological pressure, attendance and absenteeism. (Anjali, P. Chaudhary, personal communication, February 11, 2020).

Athlete Training

Coaches play the most significant role in the life of athletes. The concept of exhaustion comes from the interaction between the trainer and the trainee. When the interaction between the athlete and coach is positive, learning becomes more effective (Arnold, Fletcher, & Daniels, 2013; DeFreese & Smith, 2014; Fletcher, Hanton, & Mellalieu, 2006; Isoard-Gauthier, Trouilloud, Gustafsson, & Guillet-Descas, 2016).



Figure 4.2. Haryana coaches at All India Masters Athletic Meet

Trainer influence on the athlete can be positive or negative, depending on their attitude towards the athlete, and reaction to mistakes, or errors (Bruner et al., 2011). The relation between the coach and the athlete determines the nature of the influence as well (Rhind & Jowett, 2010). The positive relationship encourages trust between the trainer and the trainee, which is an essential element for unbiased learning.

Mr. Milkha Singh stated that there is a stark difference in the coaching styles of today in comparison to when he took part in national and international level games. He discussed that coaches back in the day trained with the athlete, this boosted his motivation while practicing for athletics. Thus, enabling the better performance of athletes. Singh praised Coach Gopichand for the interest that he takes in his athletes as he trains side by side with them. “This allows him to gain deeper insights into the strategies employed by the competitors, so that he can formulate his strategies for his athlete the next day” (M. Singh, personal communication, February 9, 2020). Re-watching recordings of his athlete, Gopichand comes across details that give away strengths and weaknesses for him to work around (M. Singh, personal communication, February 9, 2020).

Respondents at NSNIS, Patiala also stated that coaches, and or trainers play an important role in enabling them to undertake sports (D. Dagar, M. Kaushik, S. Siwach, personal communication, February 10, 2020). Current coaches at almost all sports institutes have themselves been athletes at some or the other point in their lives. This enables coaches to understand the needs and frustrations of athletes that they train. For instance, Parveen, a



basketball coach at NSNIS suggested that he understands a player's motivation at a particular time based on their behaviour, to develop this understanding, coaches need to give one-to-one attention to athletes under them (personal communication, February 10, 2020).

Some athletes may suffer from psychological disturbances such as high levels of stress and anxiety when faced with failure. While smaller amounts of anxiety aid better performance, higher amounts impair motor and cognitive skills (S. Shourie, personal communication, February 11, 2020). The role of sports psychologists in such cases is very crucial. Techniques such as mental imagery, music therapy, self-talk, arousal control, and dissociation are often used to reduce high levels of stress and anxiety (Reynolds, 2010). The technique of mental imagery helps especially in identifying and rectifying problem areas during performance. This technique is also often used by players before a match to plan their moves and strategies beforehand. Experienced athletes are more often found to use the technique of association. This technique allows the players to use their stress or discomfort as a source of motivation and works well for individuals who are mentally strong. Hence, besides the use of psychological techniques to deal with stress related to performance, an individual's own mental strength plays a crucial role in facilitating performance (Reynolds, 2010).

The way an athlete perceives stress and discomfort during performance is heavily influenced by the method and kind of training employed by the coach. One effective method of training is model training which looks at situational factors which may negatively influence the performance of an athlete (Zahradník & Korvas, 2012).

This is especially not true at more localised sports academies wherein the coaches themselves guide their athletes. However, localised coaches at *akharas* at times do not have adequate knowledge for training as inferred through the lack of knowledge the coaches had at the Hanuman akhara at Yamunanagar (R. Pehelwan, personal communication, February 13, 2020).

Policy

Sports as a means for National Development

Sports in many parts of the world are an integral part of day-to-day life. The participation of citizens in sports and/or games is cited as a marker of national development, and a status symbol in more recent times (Somaiah, 2019). Countries around the world have recognised the value of sports in enabling and allowing for overall societal development



and economic upliftment. This is especially true for the third world and/or developing countries such as Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia, and Somalia (Somaiah, 2019). Sports are beneficial for societies as it promotes holistic health, i.e. physical, mental, and emotional (and discipline), especially among the youth. The growth of a nation's sports culture has economic benefits for the players, the economy, and for the government as well (Deshmukh & Jadhav, 2018). In first world countries such as the United States of America, sports participation, and victories at international events are a marker of their society's development, and is a symbol of national pride and stature.

Governments must recognise that development and/or change in society is not possible unless and until enabled by complimenting policies. The need for laws is equally essential in enabling opportunities for all citizens. However, the overarching approach towards policy making is solely based on the objectives of the governments. It is by far a known fact that the sports industry is a significant contributor to the state's economy. Similarly, sports as a cultural variable has been successful in creating unity among citizens. This is evident in the case of cricket.

Different countries have employed sports for national development in different ways. In Jamaica, for instance, sports is a tool to encourage harmony amongst individuals, and for conflict prevention. Similarly, the state of Cuba has employed sports as a means to promote Neo-Marxist ideologies. In contrast to popular belief, Castro saw sports as a potentially unifying tool for the Cubans and believed that the context of the sports being promoted is more significant than the nature and historical implications of the sport. The Cuban model ensures that sports are a constitutional "right of the people" (Pye, 1986). This was implemented through the labor reforms of 1966 to ensure "free time" for recreational activities in conglomeration with sports infrastructure and development coaching-services (Pye, 1986). These steps allowed the Cuban state to establish its military presence and economic independence in opposition to the United States (Slack, 1988).

In India, however, sports have not been an integral part of life disregarding certain specific regions. Post-colonial trauma forced the newly established Indian Union to undertake security and basic-need issues such as poverty, hunger, economic rehabilitation and re-distribution, and education (Somaiah, 2019). Although structures for sports regulations were active since the early 1960s, the need for a literate workforce overpowered the need for development through sports. There were not any efficient, and equitable sports policies established then. The same was reflected as mismanagement and corruption



amongst officials and sportspersons. Such as doping, lack of selection systems, lack of physical education, lack of trainers and coaches, and insufficient financial support for current and retired athletes. As a consequence, Indian sportspeople are not able to attain skills required for international standard games, thus they have not won “enough” medals in comparison to other countries such as China, and South Korea (Somaiah, 2019; Deshmukh & Jadhav, 2018).

While the above is factually accurate, it is vital to note that one-third of all athletes representing India at international events are domiciled in the Haryana province (Basu, 2018). The province is famous for producing star-athletes such as Vijendra Singh, the Phogat Sisters, Yogeshwar Dutta, and Sandeep Singh, to name a few. The region has a history in kabaddi, and Kushti, two famous indigenous sports of India (Somaiah, 2019). Among other factors, the Haryanvi lifestyle facilitates the growth and propagation of sports. Our primary findings and observations suggest that sports participation is due to psychosocial conditioning, integral to Haryanvi culture. Nevertheless, this approach towards sports in the province is an outcome of the circular nature of policies (implementation, and feedback mechanism) formalized by the Hooda government in 2005, and onwards.

Hooda Government Legacy: Development of Sports Policy in Haryana

Bhupinder Singh Hooda, the ex-Chief Minister of Haryana, has laid special emphasis on the promotion of sports in the state of Haryana. As per our primary findings, the period (2005-2014) under Hooda’s leadership is considered as the golden period for the sport’s development of sports in Haryana. It was also mentioned that Hooda himself prioritised sports due to his likings (A. Mehta, S. Kumar, personal communication, February 11, 2020). The sports policy implemented by the then government focused on three focus areas, namely infrastructure, talent hunt, and future assurance. The Sports and Physical Aptitude Test (SPAT), a major achievement of the Hooda government (A. Mehta, S. Kumar, personal communication, February 11, 2020), launched in 2010 aimed to identify young sporting talent. Hence, guiding them professionally under the “Play for India Programme”. The scheme gave scholarships to select children between the ages group of 8 to 19. Thus, essentially incentivising sports (Chopra, 2012).

Sports Physical Aptitude Test (SPAT)

The state of Haryana adds to only 2% of the Indian population, it contributes nearly 40% of the Indian medal tally (Basu, 2018). Again, scholars suggest that the above mentioned is the legacy of the Hooda government’s SPAT policy that mandated students



to play a minimum of one sport at school, thus providing a “field” for successful participation in national and/or international sports events (Bharadwaj, 2010). The primary purpose of SPAT was “to identify the young potential and sports talent of Haryana and increase the participation rates at the state government” (Kumar, 2013).

Additionally, the government focused on the development of sports infrastructure for training purposes in rural and urban clusters across the state. These changes enable students to get coached under government-appointed coaches. The biggest beneficiaries of this scheme remain to be rural Jaats (as suggested in government reports stating that 67% of recipients out of 3179 were from Jaat dominant regions). Contrarily, urban centers such as Gurgaon, and Panchkula recorded low participation in SPAT, reasons for the same remain unclear (Chopra, 2012). Findings show that rural dwellers engage in heavy sports, whereas athletes from cities engage in sports such as badminton, archery, and shooting. This could be linked to the difference in their socio-economic status (R. Gupta, personal communication, February 14, 2020).

The above changes in Haryana’s sports frameworks created a tendency for the youth to (1) participate in sports and games, and (2) opt for sports as a career. These prompted Haryanvi youth towards a healthy and active lifestyle, and also avail the benefits of competitiveness through the policies based benefits and assistance(s) to athletes (Kumar, 2013).

A study analysing the attitude of the parents of SPAT holders suggests that the policy has been crucial in identifying and realising the sporting talent of their wards (Kumar, 2013). The SPAT policy is mainly directed to rural regions of Haryana and has received mass support as it is an opportunity to showcase their physical strength, and hence avail the government-sponsored benefits (Kumar, 2013).

Before the introduction of the SPAT policy, findings suggest there was a lack in sports infrastructure, insufficient coaches especially for female athletes, and most importantly the lack of parental support for athletes opting for sports as a career (A. Mehta, S. Kumar, personal communication, February 11, 2020). The SPAT policy has initiated a change to address the above-mentioned grievances through efficient and strategic planning by the Department of Sports and Youth Affairs (Government of Haryana, 2015). This facilitated the fast-track processing of systems to identify sports talent and provisioning of resources like coaches, and infrastructure. Hence, enabling policy makers to inculcate the



then desired impact (physiologically, and psychologically) and in turn the sports culture (Kumar, 2013).

Sports Policies

The Haryana government in its sports policies stated that “Sports for All” is their vision for the state. To realise the same, a comprehensive report puts forward a list of minimum sports provisions and/or facilities required for urban and rural areas respectively (Government of Haryana, 2015).

The government attempts to normalise sports in schools, and other educational institutions with mandates for compulsory physical education classes, and sports facilities. Additional government-run programmes include the State Physical Fitness Programme, Sports Talent Hunt, SPEED Test, and SPACE Programme in association with the Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS), National Social Service (NSS), Bharat Scouts and Guides (BS&G) and NGOs (Government of Haryana, 2015).

Within the state, the Panchayat has the autonomy to create sports facilities as it feels necessary under the ‘Vyayamshala’ programme. Similarly, there are arrangements for the same at the block, and district levels (Government of Haryana, 2015).

The state government empowers athletes to continue playing sports through reserved government employment for athletes based on their achievements in the sports industry (Government of Haryana, 2015).

Incentives

Sports has a customary tradition wherein winners receive rewards for their performance in sports. On similar lines the Haryana government has incentivised sports through various benefits for players, coaches, and state-government employees. This includes cash awards ranging from Rs. 20,000 to Rs. 6,00,00,000 for athletes (Government of Haryana, 2015).



Figure 4.3. Photo of cash award poster

Analysis

Policy Adaptation: SPAT to Khelo India

In a democracy, provincial governments have a level of autonomy to undertake the creation of specific policies for certain topics while central governments have jurisdiction over remaining policies. In India, the central government has the power to establish laws applicable under the headers of citizenship, defense, and agriculture, for instance. Provincial governments employ their autonomy to localise policies to cater to the needs and wants of their respective citizens or populations. They are thus enabling governments to promote respective interests and create implementation techniques specific to regions.

The decentralisation of power in the above manner has enabled government units to “try” and create solutions for localised problems. Many times these problems are not limited to that region or unit itself and have applicability in larger geographic areas due to close cultural relations. Eventually, if the localised policies have initiated the preferred change in society, they are adapted into a broader framework and thus become formal legislation applicable to larger areas.

The above is true for the Khelo India policy, a national sports policy introduced by the Indian central government in 2018. The Khelo India policy is perceived to be a successor to the Haryana state’s famous SPAT policy. The successful implementation of the Haryana government of the SPAT policy enabled the Indian government to employ a



nation-wide campaign to promote sports (A. Mehta, S. Kumar, personal communication, February 11, 2020; R. Gupta, personal communication, February 14, 2020).

The promotion of sports culture, and its' formalisation through policy as previously mentioned promote the social, and economic development of a nation. The priorities of the Indian government have changed with the progression of time, and the fulfillment of necessary basic needs has allowed the state to employ sports as a means to promote physical health.

The Indian model, however, in comparison to the Haryanvi model takes a different route towards the implementation and promotion of sports culture. In Haryana, incentives include the guarantee of employment in public sector institutions, cash rewards, cheaper land, and provisions to undertake sports and profession alongside provisions for academic scholarships (S. Sharma, personal communication, February 10, 2020). The SPAT policy, also, went one step ahead and guided students to take up specific sports based on their morphology, and body types (A. Mehta, S. Kumar, personal communication, February 11, 2020). Through this policy, government authorities empowered individuals aged between 8-19 from schools to the national level (with blocks and districts as mediators) (R. Gupta, personal communication, February 14, 2020).

While Khelo India replicates the implementation model of the SPAT, it lacks the incentives given to sportspersons. According to our primary data, a majority of our sample acknowledged that a sports person's interest and inclination towards sports was motivated by the security that the government provides (D. Dagar, M. Kaushik, S. Siwach, Parveen, personal communication, February 10, 2020). Additionally, an opportunity to represent the state at international events is provided (nationalistically) (N. Dev, personal communication, February 10, 2020). The fact that Haryana government agencies provide incentives to sportspersons has formalised sports into the mainstream narrative. The central government's attempt to absorb these policies is flawed. Firstly, because Haryanvi culture in itself is very activity-oriented in terms of agriculture, and lifestyle in general (V. Khanna, personal communication, February 13, 2020). Most respondents mentioned “*khel yaha ki mitti mein hai*” (A. Mann, personal communication, February 11, 2020), suggesting the fact that grassroots culture and policy (and infrastructure availability) correlate and complement each other. It is this intersectionality that has led to the success of Haryana in sports. Findings suggest that Haryana is the “*trial-and-error*” ground for the Indian state for sports policies. Most successful sports policies from Haryana are eventually adopted by the



central government in some of the other forms (A. Mehta, S. Kumar, personal communication, February 11, 2020).

This is not the case with the Khelo India policies which attempt to artificially inculcate sports culture across the Indian Union without ensuring the availability of cultural capital to ensure participation. However, central government policies have in recent times complimented sports culture in places such as Haryana and Maharashtra, wherein localised legislations and cultural capital, and an inert sports culture already existed.

Circular Nature of Policy

In democracies such as India, policies are framed by centralised and/or provincial governments through debate and discussions. While every representative in the house has the right to establish and take forward their interests through an introduction of a “bill”, only certain policies of interest, based on various socio-cultural factors. These are taken up on priority, and eventually are formalised as acts. Elected governments then have the duty to process and implement this legislation through various state mechanisms. They additionally also make sure to allocate the required resources for that purpose. The above is true for state governments such as Haryana.

Haryana government’s policies to incentivise sports to promote a certain cultural thread has enabled many individuals to take up sports as a career. Additionally, it has overall improved the various health aspects in the state, and also developed the province’s sports industry. The vital aspect to note in the Haryana government’s legislation and implementation is the prevalence of sports culture in the region unlike in other parts of India (K. Pal, personal communication, February 12, 2020). Thus, policy plays a supportive role.

Interviews at the HOA suggested that the Haryana government’s sports policies were designed to facilitate the growth of an already existing sports culture. The data recorded indicates that HOA worked closely with the Hooda government to create the SPAT policy (R. Gupta, personal communication, February 14, 2020). It is especially important to note here that the decentralisation and sharing of power among units led to the creation of a comprehensible law that facilitated social change in the state (A. Mehta, S. Kumar, personal communication, February 11, 2020). The SPAT policy eventually evolved into providing additional incentives to sportspersons leading to the creation of a holistic mechanism for sportspersons, and other stakeholders.



The policy cycle in regards to the Haryana government's sports policies is very interesting. As mentioned above, the Hooda government capitalised on the already present yet hidden sports culture in the region. Primary information suggests that sports in Haryana before the Hooda government introduced the reforms, was unorganised. For example, *malyug* which is a form of on-mud wrestling (K. Pal, Personal Communication, 12th February 2020).

The introduction of sports policy enabled sports to grow uniformly from the grassroots with systematic selection procedures, and training criteria. The SPAT policy motivated the youth to take up sports as a career option (P. Kumar, personal communication, February 14, 2020). Eventually, policies such as the SPAT which have been successful in targeting and implementing by creating infrastructure etc. for necessary groups entered mainstream life, and today seem inseparable from Haryanvi lifestyle.

Today, this lifestyle or *mahol* is the driving force for continuous reforms of sports law in the state. Agricultural families have become very supportive towards sports as a career as expressed by Manish Kaushik (personal communication, February 10, 2020). This attitude can be primarily attributed to the success stories of the policies shared over mass media and elsewhere. The current policies are significantly different compared to the ones introduced in 2005. Current laws enable students or athletes to access sports from wherever they are in the state without having them to reach out for services and facilities elsewhere. This is seconded by Kanwar Pal, the current serving Education Minister of Haryana, who mentioned "*Haryana ke log fitness ke prati jagrut hai*" (personal communication, February 12, 2020). Existing sports culture itself mandates the creation of policies and in many ways the "policies have created the politics" (Pierson, 1993).

Feedback from Stakeholders

In the overall scheme of creating and implementing policies, the feedback stage is essential. This stage ensures that the reporting of the various effects of the policies if taken in the right spirit by governments or policymakers aid in the development of that policy. The feedback stage essentially tells policymakers of what is working, and which areas need more attention. However, complex bureaucratic systems such as the ones existing while the decentralization of power takes place tend to filter out what information passes to higher officials or lawmakers. While the localisation of power has its benefits, in federal or provincial systems such as in Haryana, laws are created by individuals higher up in the organisational hierarchy (R. Gupta, personal communication, February 14, 2020). Due to



this, only certain feedback tends to be recorded, out of which selective feedbacks are considered to meet the scope of a particular project. This is due to limited time and resources. Thus, there are several trade-offs in this process.

Our on-field research has provided several insights into the responses of various stakeholder's take on the policies introduced by the government. These provide insights into the shortcomings of the policies, and in many ways also attempt to answer the scope of the research. This helps explain the social-cultural factors that affect sportspersons and their motivations in Haryana.

The Haryana government has been successful in the commodification of cultural capital in the state. As mentioned by Dr. Nishan, the Dean of Punjabi University, Patiala, the Haryana government enabled the greater population of Haryana to invest their time and energy into sports (personal communication, February 10, 2020). This according to him is because the government empowered players, and other interested individuals by fulfilling their basic human needs of "*roti, kapda, and makan*" (N. Singh, personal communication, February 10, 2020). This makes sports a viable career option and not only a co-curricular activity (V. Khanna, personal communication, February 13, 2020). This brings out the desired outcome of increasing sports participation by influencing the cognition and behaviour of individuals through policies.

Additionally, the spirit of Haryana's progressive sports policies influences people outside of the province, in many ways, making individuals migrate to Haryana to utilise and to an extent exploit the policies (N. Singh, personal communication, February 10, 2020). For instance, in the case of Sahil, a trainee wrestler from Uttar Pradesh, and Chandani Mehra, a trainee boxer from Sikkim, who migrated to Haryana to make use of the state's resources and coaching services (personal communication, February 12, 2020).

While the "Crime in India" report produced in 2016 by the National Crime Record Bureau mentions that Haryana is the seventh least safe state in India. However, on-field observations and findings suggest that the participation of women in the sports industry is changing this dynamic (Kiran, Komal, Karishma, personal communication, February 12, 2020). Policies produced by state governments are non-discriminatory, wherein both male and female athletes are rewarded the same (A. Mehta, personal communication, February 11, 2020; R. Gupta, personal communication, February 14, 2020). These incentives that the government hands to athletes have additional benefits of empowering women. Kiran, an aspiring police candidate, and a rural dweller reported that schools and other institutions support male and female athletes equally. Furthermore, she mentioned that though policy-



based financial incentives and cash rewards had aided herself, and her family to invest in sports, her decision to take part in sports did not depend on the policy incentives (personal communication, February 12, 2020).

However, individual athletes at the DAV College, Chandigarh have stated that while policies are non-discriminatory (G. Sheoran, personal communication, February 11, 2020), the implementation through institutionalised structures is unable to break caste and class barriers (Paras, Prabhnoor, Yogesh, Z. Ali, personal communication, February 11, 2020) prevalent in the state's social hierarchy as also cited by Verma. This is especially true in rural regions such as in Bhiwani wherein the choice of sports, and the decision to participate is linked to the socio-economic status of the individual and their families.

Other factors affecting participation in particular sports include parent's education and occupation, family's history of sports, family beliefs, role models, individuals' physical fitness and aptitude, and access to sports infrastructure, and career perspectives. The study mentions explicitly that individual athletes from high socio-economic status in the sample opted for sports such as hockey, basketball, badminton, table tennis, and archery. Most athletes belong to upper-castes, hold a high household income, and are educated (secondary education and above). Contrarily, the paper also suggests that other sports such as wrestling, boxing, swimming, and gymnastics had a mixed range of athletes from different socio-economic status. Hence, mixed demographics of these individuals in terms of caste, educational background, landholding, household income, etc. were observed (Verma & Verma, 2016).

On the same lines, institutional structures like the Department of Youth Affairs in Haryana have failed to recognise the limitations of policy in the state. Athletes from the region have stated that there exists a delay in the bureaucratic mechanism for the distribution of cash rewards, thus demotivating players (D. Digar, M. Kaushik, S. Siwach, personal communication, February 10, 2020). Officials at HOA also mentioned the lack of transparency and communication between the decentralised units at the grassroots, and the administrators. Thus, leading to the release of limited funds, and underfunding for the distribution of resources (A. Mehra, S. Kumar, personal communication, February 11, 2020).

Kanwar Pal mentioned the intersectionality of functions within the state government (personal communication, February 12, 2020). Developments in the sports sector of the state promote a "*swasth sharir aur swasth dimaag*" that promotes education as well (R. Gupta, personal communication, February 14, 2020; R. Pehelwan, personal



communication, February 13, 2020). However, athletes from the grassroots face a tradeoff between their academics and professional sports training due to the lack of flexibility in the current education system (R. Gupta, personal communication, February 14, 2020).

On the contrary, Vishal Khanna, an industrialist, and sports enthusiast at Yamunanagar critiqued the current policy framework and called it inefficient due to the approach taken by the government towards incentivization for sports promotion. He said that for the individuals to reach the maximum performance threshold in the region, the government needs to further support budding athletes. In addition to only incentivising medals and achievements. He also criticised how the government lacks in providing the required infrastructure to enable athletes to reach their limits (personal communication, February 13, 2020). Furthermore, participants also suggested that the government is unable to assess, and promote group sports (R. Gupta, personal communication, February 14, 2020), and unorganised sports (R. Pehelwan, personal communication, February 13, 2020) to the extent to which it can do so for an individual sport.

Commercialisation

Marketing Sports

The commercialisation or commodification of sports “involves the sale, display or use of sport or some aspect of sport so as to produce income” (Dutta, 2017, p. 283). This utilisation of sports as an economic enterprise, came about after World War II, when there was an increase in time dedicated to leisure activities for the working class in western countries. Typical traditional leisure activities such as drinking, gambling, etc. had to be abandoned due to large-scale urbanisation that led people to live in entirely new environments. This led to them having to adjust to them. As such, the dominant class sought to replace such leisure activities with sports, which included baseball, horse-racing, boxing, etc. This occurred in the latter half of the 19th century, when organised sports was first introduced in America from across the ocean, in Britain. Sports as a commercial institution has grown rapidly over the past two decades, and has reached a point where it cannot survive in its current commercial form without sponsorship. The worth of the global sports sector is estimated to be around USD 480-620 billion and contributes about 1-5 per cent to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of various countries (Dutta, 2017).

Amateur sport consists of sports that are not played by professionals, and are not typically or even necessarily commercialised. Funding for such sports has been minimised by the government; as such, the prospective solution of marketing such sports has been



pitched to solve the mentioned financial issues. An “exchange relationship” is thus formed, wherein the sports person participates in sports while under the employment of an organisation by paying membership fees, competing on their name, involving themselves in social activities, etc. This suggests that the sports person has the liberty to choose where and who they want to play for in a “free and open market” (Dutta, 2017, p. 284).

“I feel that commercialisation and money being involved in sports is a positive initiative, because those who are not getting monetary aid do not have a driving factor to participate. Athletes spend a lot on their training and this is why money is important to keep them going,” states Suresh Bharadwaj, who is a sports psychologist in DAV College, Chandigarh (S. Bharadwaj, personal communication, February 11, 2020). As such, we can infer that commercialisation of sports provides a measure of opportunity for those who otherwise wish to avail such monetary support through sports. The heavy investment in sports as an economic venture allows individuals to see a future within that profession, and encourages participation in such activities.

However, the commercialisation of sports can be detrimental to participation as well. This commercialisation appears to be limited to individuals belonging to certain categories; specifically, those belonging to a certain socio-economic class, gender, race, caste and geographical location may have limited ability to take advantage of this initiative (Dutta, 2017).

“Nowadays, everyone wants a rich and luxurious life and sports is one platform that allows for this to happen. Once you win a medal, you become rich overnight. Hence, money plays a very important role. Many people join sports to earn money and fame” (N. Singh, personal communication, February 10, 2020). It can be inferred that the commercialisation of sports has influenced individuals’ reasons for joining sports - they may join for money-oriented reasons rather than playing for the nation, or for the spirit of the sport.

In 1983, India won the first world cup of cricket and gained prize money that was valued at INR 14.3 lacs. In 2011, the prize money amounted to INR 13.8 crores. The inflation in the monetary rewards in the span of three decades indicates the substantial advance in the commercialisation of sports (Dutta, 2017). Younger sports spectators are perhaps more acclimated to the commodification of sports and commercial products (Kapner, 1997; Wolburg & Pokrywczynski, 2001, as cited in Dutta, 2017, p. 290) when compared to older spectators due to the fact that they were more present for and involved



in the growth of commercialisation in sports (Bush, A. J., Martin, and Bush, V. D., 2004; Sukhdial, Aiken, and Kahle, 2002, as cited in Dutta, 2017, p. 290).

Marketing a sport occurs at two levels: the first consists of advertising such sports to potential participants, who are typically young and likely to take up that particular sport in the future. The second level is advertising the organisation's properties for the purpose of securing corporate sponsorship. Rights holders, i.e., those legal entities who hold a copyright over the mentioned organisations, are investigating ways to “repackage, relocate and reposition events to better suit the changing structure and behaviour” (Dutta, 2017, p. 292) of sports spectators, or fans. As such, it can be inferred that mass media plays an integral role in the larger success of sporting events and organisations.

Media Influence on Sports

“Commercialisation and media influence in the field of sports has helped a lot and also got recognition for certain sports that were not as well known earlier. Not just that, but this also helps people take up sports in a serious way and gives them a lot of motivation” (C. Mehra, personal communication, February 12 2019). Chandani Mehra, a young boxer based in Yamunanagar, has stated that people are inspired by movies such as ‘*Mary Kom*’, which is the reason she has decided to pursue boxing.



Figure 4.4. Chandani Mehra, female boxer from Yamunanagar

“Wrestling didn't really get much attention in other parts of the country before like it does now. People at least know that it is a sport and they can name a few players of it. This I think is because of the movies,” as asserted by a member of Hanuman akhara in Yamunanagar, Haryana (R. Pehelwan. personal communication, February 12, 2020). He



elaborates by discussing how many sportspersons are grateful for the depiction of sports in film, and the way these films portray the training and hardships that they face. He also elaborates on how these films have dismissed the notion that Haryana is a place that restricts women from playing sports, and claims the opposite. Moreover, he emphasises that the commercialisation of sports has played a major role in establishing wrestling as a sport across the country (R. Pehelwan. personal communication, February 12, 2020).

Sports biopics, i.e., biographical films, have played an important role in encouraging participation in sports; these include movies such as ‘*Chak De India*’ for hockey, ‘*Dangal*’ and ‘*Sultan*’ for wrestling, and ‘*Bhaag Milkha Bhaag*’ for athletics (Pundir, 2018). Sportscomm co-founder Abhoy Chattopadhyay has declared that these movies provide a medium through which ordinary audiences can witness the hard work and dedication that is required of athletes, and that sportspersons do not live a solely glamorous life (Pundir, 2018). Another sports executive has mentioned that as movies are a heavy influence in society, it serves as a channel through which individuals who wish to take up sports are supported by their family, who are likely to be influenced by the positive depiction of sports are a viable career option as shown in media (Pundir, 2018). ‘*Dangal*’ and ‘*Mary Kom*’ are two films that have encouraged more kabaddi and wrestling have become popularised with the advent of Pro-Kabaddi League (PKL) and Pro-Wrestling League, alongside others such as the Indian Premier League (IPL). This has enabled athletes, who were previously unknown, to be recognised for their contribution to the sport. For instance, Nizampur, located on the outskirts of Delhi and within Haryana’s jurisdiction, is a village well-known for its kabaddi players - the sport is said to be played almost religiously there. Many sportspersons who play in the PKL hail from this village. Rakesh Kumar, captain of the Patna Pirates PKL team, is of the opinion that the reason for this is the fact that other villages have given up on sports such as kabaddi for more ‘lucrative’ sports - such as those popularised by the media (Negi, 2015).

“Nowadays, the youth is obsessed with cricket. This has ruined the sports culture. I have won one Padma Shri and so has my son. This is the only house that has two Padma Shri winners,” claims Milkha Singh, also known as the ‘Flying Sikh’ who is hailed as an exemplary sports person and has won India many medals (personal communication, February 9, 2020). These words spoken by this famed athlete indicates that there is a certain bias present in the representation of media with regards to sports - only those sports which have a history of being heavily commercialised and are popular amongst sports spectators



gain majority coverage within mass media (Kumar & Priti, 2018). Though traditionally indigenous sports such as *kabaddi* are gaining popularity in the pro sports scene, cricket as a heavily commercialised sport is still viewed upon favourably by a majority of the population as compared to the former and is more likely to be played by youth rather than games such as *kabaddi*, *kushti*, etc.. To conclude, there are both detriments and benefits to the commercialisation and mass media influence of sport.



Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion



Data Analysis

Gender

For years together women have been considered to be inferior to men. Media portrayals have also restricted their roles in society to being a housewife and a mother. However, a change in this perception of women has been observed. Historically, sports which were considered as a purely masculine domain (Prakash, 1990) now have women breaking barriers and winning laurels for the nation. Sports has now become a medium for women to showcase their strength and capabilities. Haryana which was once perceived as patriarchal and discriminatory towards women has produced many female athletes breaking this long-held notion. Though such mindsets still prevail in certain parts, women, on the whole, feel more empowered both at home and professionally. Families have become more supportive of women pursuing sports (A. Singh, Kiran, Karishma, Komal, personal communication, February 12, 2020). Besides this, an increase in the level of autonomy granted to women has also been observed (Kiran, personal communication, February 12, 2020). With the increased participation of women in the sphere of sports, a positive change with regards to their safety has also been observed. Their active lifestyle has made them stronger and self-sufficient to ensure their own safety. Many women also take up sports for the same reason (Ananya, personal communication, February 14, 2020).

Family

Since the foundation of Haryana as a state, it has contributed to India's agricultural produce. Engaging in agricultural activities has made the people acquainted to physically strenuous activities. Thus, increasing their stamina and strength, a combination perfect for taking up sports (A. Singh, personal communication, February 12, 2020). Agriculture not only helps shape their physique but also provides them with good and unadulterated food which helps them maintain their health. Known for consuming dairy products like milk, *ghee*, and curd, food plays a major part in promoting the sports culture in Haryana (N. Singh, personal communication, February 10, 2020).

Though family was not a factor originally being considered within the scope of this research, primary findings suggest that it plays a crucial role in motivating people to take up sports. Countless examples of athletes who have had a family background in the sports have come up. Having had a family member who has pursued a career in sports serves as a major motivating factor for individuals. In the absence of a role model within the family, budding athletes turn to neighbours and their families who may have taken up sports. As



Dr. Shruti Shourie rightly mentioned that it is this strong sense of culture and community that the people of Haryana hold that encourages them to step foot in this domain (personal communication, February 11, 2020).

Food and Nutrition

Food is an imperative part of one's participation in sports, but it is also crucial to ensure that sportspersons get the right kind of diet and nutrition. As per A. Singh, a villager in Kheda, most rural households grow and consume their own food making it fresh and nutritious (A. Singh, personal communication, February 12, 2020). During our research, multiple interviewees stated that the body requires non-vegetarian food as a source of protein to build up a good physique and maintain good health (M. Kaushik, personal communication, February 10, 2020). However, we came across multiple athletes, mostly from the rural areas, who stated that vegetarian food was equally effective to provide the body with protein (Karishma, Bhupendra, personal communication February 12, 2020). Most Haryanvi wrestlers are also vegetarians. The cultural values upheld by a majority of athletes from Haryana may prevent them from following a non-vegetarian diet - which is said to be integral for athletes - which leads them to compensate for it and enables them to still become commendable athletes.

Drug Culture and Doping

Haryana is a state that is slowly being taken over by drugs and is close to surpassing the levels of drug abuse that takes place in Punjab (Choudhry, 2018). Doping, which entails the consumption of drugs that increase an athlete's sports performance by increasing the oxygen-carrying capacity of the blood, enlarging muscles, etc. (Kumari, 2019). Primary data indicate that the drug problem in Punjab and specifically Haryana has impeded the progress of individuals in becoming capable sportspersons. According to Milkha Singh, this is mainly due to athletes consuming banned substances and getting caught with them (personal communication, February 9, 2020). Though certain primary data and most of the secondary data indicate that drugs and doping are a relevant issue in Haryana, few that have been interviewed on the field believe that it is not so - for instance, Dr. A. Mann, who states that "Haryana is safe from drugs, as the youth of Haryana consume milk products, are fond of consuming ghee and other homemade products" (personal communication, February 11, 2020). The reasoning given by Dr. A. Mann is irrelevant to the statement he has made; it can be inferred that there is no real basis for his claim and that it is a constructed belief that Haryana is not being taken over by drug abuse and doping when it in fact is. Similarly, Dr.



Suresh Bharadwaj maintains that doping in Haryana is low, but multiple secondary sources such as news articles and research papers indicate otherwise; this could be due to the fact that either people are unwilling to talk about this truth or are unaware of it.

Policies and Government

The Haryana government for almost the past few decades has affirmatively taken efforts to promote the region's inert sports culture (Somaiah, 2019). Sports have been used as a medium of national development internationally (Pye, 1986; Slack, 1988), the Haryana government has taken a similar approach through the commodification of sports (Deshmukh & Jadhav, 2018). Primary findings suggest that government incentives such as jobs have successfully driven the commodification of sports in the state. However, this effect is limited, the team (R. Gupta, personal communication, February 14, 2020) and indigenous-unorganized sports (R. Pehelwan, personal communication, February 13, 2020) lack the extent of government support that organized sports receive. Stakeholders criticized the limited availability of resources and infrastructure to a particular region only (V. Khanna, personal communication, February 13, 2020), and also stated biases within the government in the policy making process (A. Mehta, S. Kumar, personal communication, February 11, 2020).

Institutionalisation

The institutional approach allows and enables societies to undertake various functions (Ferini, 2012). Haryanvi society employs institutional frameworks to bring about the collective goal of promoting its sports culture through the government, sports associations and clubs, and academic institutions. Primary data suggests that resources sanctioned through institutional frameworks have better facilitated the growth of sports culture in the state (R. Gupta, personal communication, February 14, 2020; K. Pal, personal communication, February 12, 2020). Levels of institutions and their funding decide the scope and relevance of a particular institution in their respective environments. In Haryana, however, public and private institutions are not working (A. Mehta, S. Kumar, personal communication, February 11, 2020) together with the way they did during Hooda's leadership (R. Gupta, personal communication, February 14, 2020), thus potentially reducing the efficiency of the development that a private-public partnership can achieve.

During our interaction with athletes at NSNIS, we learned from many athletes and coaches that the government has been providing monetary support and provision of facilities for the budding athletes (J. Momi, personal communication, February 10, 2020).



Although many rural athletes also had similar things to say, many students of NSNIS stated that the facilities (like residences, hostels) that were provided by the government were either sub-par or below. Some also mentioned how they did not get monetary compensation for their participation in their zonal and state-level competitions (S. Siwach, D. Dagar, personal communication, February 10, 2020).

Commercialisation

A majority of primary and secondary data indicates that the commercialisation of sports through sports sponsorships and mass media is a beneficial move since it provides a mass incentive for participation in sports and increases exposure. However, an interview with Milkha Singh has revealed that the commercialisation of certain sports, such as cricket, may lead to younger individuals to be more likely to choose such sports rather than those sports that are less commercialized and propagated by mass media, such as athletics, golf, wrestling, *kabaddi*, etc. A possible explanation behind this contradiction could be the difference in perspective between younger and older sports spectators/participants. Most of the people interviewed on-field were pro-commercialisation of sports. On the other hand, Milkha Singh, who grew up in a time where mass media commercialisation was not as relevant as it is now, was against the mass popularisation of sports such as cricket. “It swayed the minds of younger potential athletes into taking up such sports”, he said. Younger sports spectators are more acclimated to such commercialisation of sports and thus more accepting of it (Dutta, 2017), which could explain this contradiction provided by Mr. Singh. Overall, it can be inferred that though the commercialisation of sports has its pros and cons, the former seems to far outweigh the latter due to the benefits and incentives it provides athletes with.

Psychological Analysis

Findings suggest that societal and familial conditioning play a significant role in the facilitation of a pro-sports attitude in the region, as well as the development of budding athletes. On-field respondents have repetitively stated “*khel yahah ki mitti mei hai*”, and “*khel hamare khun mei hai*” (K. Pal, A. Singh, personal communication, February 12, 2020; R. Aneja, personal communication, February 11, 2020), thus implying that sports are a part of their lifestyle that has been ingrained within the framework of their society for a very long time.

Our study has identified a number of reasons that contribute to this culture, and have analyzed the same to understand a sportsperson’s motivation. These motivational factors can be categorized as intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation seeks for the will



to excel within the individual, while extrinsic motivation seeks inspiration in the surrounding environment (Hatch, Thomsen & Waldron, n.d.).

Haryana has always been a culturally rich state with people's interests bent away from the field of education (M. Kaushik, personal communication, February 10, 2020; Parveen, personal communication, February 10, 2020; V. Khanna, personal communication, February 13, 2020; R. Gupta, personal communication, February 14, 2020). Owing to its largely agrarian history, most people continue to channelize their energy into physically straining activities, such as sports. In the present day, people from Haryana still hold the underlying passion for sports as a part of their intrinsic motivation (S. Shourie, personal communication, February 11, 2020).

Dr. Shruti Shourie, a sports psychologist at DAV College, Chandigarh, has stated that students belonging to regions of Haryana as well as Punjab have an undying spirit and good humor that enables good sportsmanship, which makes them persevere in their field despite innumerable failures. According to her, it is this unbroken consistency that makes them well-practiced and professional at sports (personal communication, February 11, 2020).

The psychological perspective in sports is a less visible and yet very significant portion of studying sports, sportspersons, and the culture of the region. The underlying motivation of individuals is employed by psychologists to push them towards performing better. Overall, psychology does play a significant role in driving athletes towards success.

As rightly mentioned by many respondents, sports seem to be ingrained in their culture. It is this sense of culture and community that drives people to participate in this stream and win laurels for their state and nation.

The psychological perspective in sports is a less visible and yet very significant portion of studying sports, sportspersons, and the culture of the region. The underlying motivation of individuals is employed by psychologists to push them towards performing better. Overall, psychology does play a significant role in driving athletes toward success. Psychology has seen its blend with many fields, but its requirement in sports has seen a recent hike, owing to the popularity of sports as a recognized field of career. The underlying motivation of individuals is employed by psychologists to push them towards performing better. Overall, psychology does play a significant role in driving athletes to success.

Conclusion

Through the course of this research, we have discovered that in Haryana, various identities intersect to influence the level of participation and engagement in sports as



demonstrated by those living in the region. Gender, commercialisation, institutionalisation and family influence play an integral role when determining participation in sports. Drug culture, food and nutrition, and various psychological factors are important in an athlete's life, and determine how they progress as sportspersons. The majority of our primary data matched and added to the knowledge gained with the secondary data collected. However, there was some data found on-field that did not match our preconceptions and secondary data. As such, though the reasoning behind such a thing was unknown, most justifications have been discussed. As researchers, it put into perspective that though the media may present a particular point of view, most locals when interviewed may have a different view on certain aspects that were explored, which as mentioned previously included subjects such as gender, institutionalisation, family food, drug culture, and various psychological factors. In conclusion, all of the mentioned aspects contribute fundamentally and uniquely to the sports culture within Haryana.



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लेना मेने उरे जनम दुबारा, और ना कीथे जाना है,
भाई सच कहूं मेने इतना अच्छा इतना पियारा लागे मेरा हरियाणारे,
यो मेरा हरियाणारे,
यो मेरा हरियाणारे ।।
~ मानव मलिक

