Chapter 4
Organizational Structure Of
Indian Sports
CHAPTER IV

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE OF INDIAN SPORTS

There is no denying that the administrative set-up plays a very important role in promoting and developing sports. In this chapter an attempt has been made to present a comparative picture of India and other countries to gain an insight into the matter concerned.

"Administration is conceived as the necessary activities of those individuals (executives) in an organization who are charged with ordering, forwarding and facilitating the associated efforts of a group of individuals brought together to certain defined purposes (Tead) 1951." ¹

The importance of administration in general is well expressed by Dimock: "I believe that institutions largely determine the kind of life society is going to have and the administrators as a class largely determine the quality of the institutions". ² Katz has indicated that the skills of effective administrators are: 1) technical skill, 2) human skill, 3) conceptual skill. He further defines technical skill as "... an understanding of, and proficiency in, a specific kind of activity, ..." and human skill as. "The executive's ability to work effectively as a group member and to build co-operative effort within the team he leads"; conceptual skill
indicates, "the ability to see the enterprise as a whole ..."

Bucher recommends the following qualifications for the physical education administrator: 1) administrative mind, 2) integrity, 3) ability to instill good human relations, 4) ability to make decisions, 5) health and fitness for the job, 6) willingness to accept responsibility, 7) understanding of work, 8) intellectual capacity, 9) command of administrative techniques.

The philosophy of the physical education administrator grows out of at least three factors, namely, 1) his philosophy of life, 2) his philosophy of education, 3) his philosophy of physical education. Perhaps other considerations are also involved. But the administrative philosophy of the executive in physical education will be strongly affected by each of these aspects (Voltmer and Esslinger 1967). It has also been observed that successful leaders are the result both of nature (natural talents) and nurture (environment and skill acquisition). While administrative, interpersonal skills and techniques can be taught and learned (Campbell 1989), conceptual skills and mental quickness in assessing and solving problems are much more elusive (Lombardo 1982).

Each of the above statements defines administration,
specifically, sports administration, as a large involved field of specification with its own philosophy, principles and techniques. This has been an area which has never been dealt with, in respect of the Indian sports organization. Indian Sports administration even now remains an area not clearly distinguishing, defining or stating exact prerequisite essential and desirable for a sports administrator. This resulted in the induction of less qualified persons as administrators in most of the cases.

The Indian sports structure is based on a three-tier principle. There are District Sports Federations which combine into State Sports Federations. The State Sports Federation of each discipline from all the states then combine to form the National Sports Federation.

Over and above this, there are state Olympic Associations with the objective to maintain true Olympic Spirit among the different state associations. The apex body of Indian sports has been denoted as the Indian Olympic Association (IOA), which constitutes of all National Federations and all State Olympic Associations. The IOA, the supreme apex body controlling sports in our country, is a body elected by the members who have voting rights as per rules laid down in the constitution. Every National Federation has a right of three votes, whereas the State Olympic Associations can only cast two votes per
discipline. The non-Olympic games have lesser number of votes.

Under the Constitution of India, 'Sports is a State subject and as such Central Government has no locus standi to legislate on Sports'. While it is true that it is the National Olympic Committee (i.e. the Indian Olympic Association) and the various National Sports Associations/Federations constituted for different disciplines are in charge of participation in international events, it is the prestige of the nation as a whole which is actually at stake.

In view of the above, the Sports Authority of India (SAI) was set up in the year 1984 as a promotional agency and Central Legislation governing sports. The General Body of SAI with the Prime Minister of India as its president has 46 members, including Union Ministers, State Ministers in-charge of sports, sports promoters, sportspersons and physical education experts. The Governing Body is headed by the Minister of Human Resource Development as the Chairman and the Union Minister of State for Youth Affairs and Sports as the Vice-Chairperson, with 19 other members consisting of officials and non-officials connected with the promotion, administration of sports, and physical education.
SAI has set up six regional centres by restructuring the erstwhile Regional Centres of NSNIS (Netaji Subhas National Institute of Sports), where facilities are supplemented and created to help top class sportspersons who are trained according to international standards. A new Directorate, the Teams Wing in the SAI has been set up to provide management support for preparation of the National team.

"There is no more important phase of administration than that of selecting a staff, for it is the staff that puts the programme into operation and maintains its proper functioning. Wise selection requires a thorough understanding of the general and specific qualifications for each staff position, plus the ability to detect these qualifications, or their absence in prospective members (Voltmer and Esslinger). The members of a district, state or a National Federation cannot be selected. The question of verifying the qualities is therefore not applicable. Moreover they are amateur persons dealing with sports as a hobby and as pastime. When Sports was not a saleable product, the persons mostly involved were those that cared and loved the assignment for the love of it. Advent of media catalises mushrooming of people from all spheres of life who involve themselves in sports for getting
mileage out of it to serve their own interest, on many occasions, more than what sports benefit from them.

The administration of sports in India goes back to the pre-independence era when sports in the country progressed as a voluntary effort with the patronage of the Princely States. The club culture in the Presidency towns in games in which the British rulers were interested also contributed significantly to the development of sports. Talents were already there and with proper encouragement notable achievements followed. The examples of the great hockey players, the footballers and the cricketers can be quoted who made India proud in the pre-independence era. After independence the limited number of athletes patronised and supported by the Princely States and the clubs in metropolitan towns gradually declined, specially after the integration of Princely States, and the abolition of privy purses. The absence of corresponding support and financial provisions by the Union and State Governments in their plans for development of sports and physical education left something of a vacuum in the area of sports promotion, compounded further by absence of emphasis on sports and games in the education curriculum.

In the Annual Report of the Department of Youth Affairs and Sports 1988-89 it has been observed that there
were various complaints against lacuna in the functioning and effectiveness of not only the National level Federations but also the State-level Federations. The development of sports being a five-pronged affair, there is a definite and precise role which the Central Govt. State Governments, the National and the State Federations, Sportsman and the general public, respectively, have to play. Essentially, therefore, what is aimed at, is a collaborative exercise, with the sole objective of providing the most cost-effective and result oriented structure in the country for the overall development and promotion of sports and sportspersons.

In view of all the above considerations the Govt. had introduced in the Constitution the Sixty First Amendment Bill 1988 in Rajya Sabha on November 14, 1988 with a view to transferring 'sports' from the State List to the Concurrent List of the Constitution of India. This is yet to be accepted, which, if effected, will change the administrative structure of India sports.

The XXIV Olympic Games were held at Seoul from Sept. 17 to Oct. 2, 1988. The Indian Contingent in the Seoul Olympic Games consisted of 47 competitors, 18 team officials, including 4 foreign experts, 9 IOA Officials and supporting staff. Not a single medal was won by the Indian
contingent in the 1988 Olympics.

The contingent of Seoul Olympic Team inducted the services of - a doctor, a masseur, two cooks, a psychologist, to assist the them. According to the report of the Department of Youth Affairs and Sports, "The performance of the Indian sports persons, barring a few individual exceptions, was as expected". Which means that all the preparations for participation were only for improvement of their timings or the positions/rankings compared with the previous Games, and not for competing for a medal.

The Department of Youth Affairs and Sports prepared a scheme analysing the Seoul Olympic Games results, for achieving excellence in international sports competitions. There were 12 disciplines which were given priority status in the hope of 'fair possibilities of medal winning in Asiad 1990', with further addition of Tennis, Golf, Swimming, and Shooting. According to the same report, the training schedule was carefully worked out in accordance with the advanced countries of sports, that is, in consultation with Soviet experts and the specialists of India in the fields of Sports Science, like Sports Psychology, Physiology, and Biomechanics. A monitoring committee to review the progress was also set up for
assessment at the end of the training cycle in March 1989, October 1989, and then again in March 1990 and September 1990, before the final selection of sportspersons and teams. The report states that under "Operation Excellence", campers received the highest quality nutritional input, had access to the best training equipment, and received reasonable travelling and living comforts."

With all the above facilities being extended to the sportspersons of India, only one gold medal could be registered in the medal tally against India's name in the Asian Games of 1990. There were two full years of organised practice - the schedule prepared by those that were considered to be the best by the administration for achieving the target set for India in the Asian Games of 1990.

It can automatically be deduced that the planning was incorrect and ineffective. Planning is the process of deciding the course of action in advance. It is an intellectual activity involving facts, figures, ideas, and principles; testing, measurement and evaluation serve as planning aids. Knowledge, logical thinking and good judgement are essential components in planning if it is to be effective. In most of the cases it is the lack of planning or poor planning that results in failures,
mistakes, and shoddy performances. This applies equally to
the teacher-coach or administrator." In administration,
measurement frequently utilises a test or a standard to
elicit qualitatives scores. Evaluation refers to the
translation of test results into meaningful information
that will aid ... in making judgements and objective
decisions ... (Hastad and Lacy)."  

The Sports Development and Improvement Commission of
the India Olympic Association was formed on 9th October
1985 and was entrusted with the task of improving the
sports environment in the country, and making
recommendations to help upgrade India's performance both in
the National and International levels. A study group was
formed and a report was presented to the Commission who
came forward with valuable suggestions, in the year 1986.
The weaknesses chalked out include 1) weak organisational
framework, 2) multiplicity of sports bodies, 3) bodies
monopolised by a few, 4) no co-ordination, 5) no
accountability.

The structure of Indian sports as described earlier
also includes autonomous bodies besides those that have
been mentioned like the National School Games Federation,
University Sports Control Board. The Development Commiss-
sion after a close study observed that, a) with so many
bodies mostly independent and autonomous there was lack of
direction and overlapping of work; b) though the district set-up down to the village/town is the most important, it was found to be the weakest link in the system; c) no co-ordination existed between the bodies at the various levels or between the rural centres, the district and the regions; d) there was need for a grievance cell to check the malpractices and redress the grievances of sportsmen; e) office-bearers of Federations were honorary members and as such were not able to devote as much time to administration as they should; f) no training courses existed for sports administrators and as such, sports officers/office-bearers in many cases were not fully conversant with the current affairs of sports and associated problems.

Keeping the above in mind, some amendments in the organisational structure were proposed to streamline the administration. Co-ordination between the different sports bodies was stressed upon and a detailed plan was laid down where there was a unique proposal as to 'run an employment exchange/information centre for sportsmen'. Proposals, mainly for NIS, included training courses for technical officials for various games conducting of training and refresher courses for coaches, office bearers of federations, sports administrators, umpires, referees etc.
Among the proposed responsibilities for the Sports Authority of India were - talent hunt for sports persons under 12 years; selection from the school games for grooming up talents, and setting up of an information bureau where up-to-date statistics on all sporting activities, and achievement of sportsmen and coaches will be maintained. Another very important aspect pointed out for improvement of sports administration was to enable young administrators to take a keener part in the development of sports, a basic course in the administration of sports could be introduced in the IAS Academy, so that all probationers were made more aware.

There were proposals also on a) inter-school and college competition b) sports promotion c) sports infrastructure, centres of excellence and medicine d) coaching management e) 7th Five Year Central Plan, f) short term plans g) long term plans. The above proposals was separately discussed during personal interviews with sports administrators, sports journalists, and ex-sports persons of repute in the course of this study.

The journalists expressed that they are as much concerned over the development of Indian sports as any administrator, sports person, or a coach, for they are also citizens of India. They are mostly critical, and want
remedial measures to be adopted. In fact, the President of the Sports Journalists Association of India (1992) Mr. Shyam Sunder Ghosh expressed that those who represent India in the International arena besides the sportsmen, are always exposed to the questions of the journalists of other countries, where giving a reply has always been an unpleasant job. "We are treated in a special manner whenever an Indian sports person performs well. When India won the World Cup in Cricket in the years 1983, the journalists (Indian) were automatically included as a part and parcel of the episode. And so had been the few occasions when India won the Hockey in the Olympics, and P.T. Usha glorified the country with her performance".

Suggestions offered by the sports journalists shall be discussed in a later chapter. There were sports administrators who believed that a priority list of games should be stressed upon after analysing the prospects of the Indian sports persons, based on the previous results. The existing facilities should be channeled for the improvement of the few selected games, according to priority, which would necessarily mean preparing not only for a respectable result but for qualifying as one among the world class.

Another major flaw in the administrative structure of
Indian sports was pointed out by the administrators of some federations and the Bengal Olympic Association, through interviews. They expressed that while in all the medal winning countries the schools and colleges were the take-off Platform, in India the School Games Federation and the University Sports Board do not work in unison with the National Sports Federation and the Indian Olympic Association as per the structure of the sports administration in India. This may be considered as the major deterrent factor for sports development and nurturing of the talents from the minimum age group where improvement in performance may be possible.

Nevertheless there was an elevated status in the 7th plan for the Central Schemes in the field of games and sports to the tune of Rs. 200 crore. India fielded a large contingent in the 1986 Asiad at Seoul and returned dejectedly with 37 medals (5 golds, 9 silver and 23 bronze). After that with all the plans for promulgation of sports the new bodies, new duties, and massive funds, the result of the Asian Games 1990 at Beijing was the worst ever India could bargain for. There were overlapping explanations and positive reasons floating in the air with no recommendations for the recovery. The immediate reaction was an effort to pass the responsibility of the failure to the next person or his department and that too in an incoherent manner.
This was a juncture when an iron-rod journalism might have been the balancing factor pointing out defects and the proposals to be accepted as the remedial measures for the forthcoming international meets. It was evident that the establishment cost of the new department of sports with its highly paid officers and coaches did not commensurate with the results of the Asian Games of 1990.

A similar situation arose after the Olympic Games of 1992. In line with all other programme declared and accepted immediately after a shabby performance, another instant sports policy was declared. The then Union Minister of State for Youth Affairs and Sports, Ms. Mamata Banerjee declared a programme of action (Aug. '92) as the latest National Sports Policy (NSP).

In the introduction it has been accepted that sports is a high media exposure activity, and after important sporting events like the Olympics and the Asian Games the criticism that is meted out is partly valid. The reasoning noted 'the playing population being small, and not fully equipped to meet the challenges of modern day international competitions'. Administration dealing with Sports policies are yet unable to decide whether the limited resources available should be utilised for pursuit for excellence or for increasing the playing population of the country. To
achieve both at the same time so far has not produced desired results.

A review of implementation of the schemes revealed that (i) poor co-ordination between different Government and non-Government agencies, (ii) financially weak and poor management structure of sports bodies at various levels, (iii) inadequate media exposure to promote physical education and sports were some of the causes for poor standard of sports in the country. The NSP (National Sports Policy) pointed out that "In Parliament also a large number of speakers have pointed out problems in our sports management system and have also made suggestions to rectify and remedy these problems."

Even after the Seventh Five Year Plan was complete "management of sports in the country" declares the NSP, "is not very sound to-day". The structure from clubs to districts to states and finally at the national level was identified to be weak and largely on paper.

The management of sports in the country does not seem to be in able hands since the increase of budget failed to produce encouraging results in the international competitions like the Asian
Games of 1990 at Beijing and the Olympics at Barcelona in 1992. In fact, in comparison to the previous results the achievement in terms of medal tally was below that of 1986 Asian Games. It may be mentioned that Olympic Games being a much superior level of competition the question of performing 'creditably' in the Games of 1988 and 1992 does not arise.

'Mass sports as a popular means of recreation for all age groups has probably never been part of the Indian milieu. In the quest for international success, Indian sports planners and administrators - have aimed high enough, without the least comprehension of the competitive syndrome in sports.

"It is difficult to explain to those well-meaning mortals that sports is not merely a question of training teams. It is not a matter of coaching camps and diet money that one keeps hearing about. It is to do with encouraging the young and the old, the rich and the poor, to spend time outdoors everyday, in the open air, in regular and occasionally competitive sport. This implies the development of playing fields, of subsidising sports equipment, and of providing trained personnel to guide young people towards the attainment of a reasonable standard of play - not necessarily geared towards
championship status. The base has to be strong enough before champions emerge.” - Laments Ranjit Bhatia the ex-Olympian Athlete.

How often one hears of camps, coaches and food in Indian sports. The lack of success is invariably blamed on one of these. The want of proper facilities has always been considered the main drawback for the desired progress. Every discussion in the media appears to centre on what is wrong with Indian sports; whereas it should read, where is India sport? 23

It may thus be concluded from the nature of present administrative structure that the budget was spent on schemes and projects in the Seventh Plan, without any proper administrative control. The management was not accountable for the product - the result, which proved to be the least effective, when medal tallies were compared against international participations. That management of sports should be cost effective and result oriented, and that management/administration of sports need to be reorganised, reshuffled, reoriented may now be placed as an established fact.

In India the concept of professional managers has not been introduced. Sometimes in tennis there may be short stints of coach-cum-managers but other than this game no manager to organise the training programme as well as chalk out the entire routine of the player, has been there. The
manager appoints and changes the coach and training schedule as
per requirement of the player. He takes the responsibility
of the diet, physical training, recreation, selects
the competitions to participate, solace in depressions and the
partner to share the joy. There should be training for this particular
type of profession where the player after attaining a certain level
can leave the entire burden on to the professional person.
There may be cases where parents of a particular child
would than like to appoint a professional manager to make
the child a top class sports person if found to be talented.

The example of P.T.Usha could be one of the burning
instances, where the coach even saw to the food and the
press, the coaching, the job she will take and the clothes
she would wear. It was the farsight of her coach Mr. Nambia
which motivated him to take on the additional
responsibility essential for all sports persons who may not
be born with the ideal set-up for sports in domestic as
well as in the social context.

Then there are instances where administration has
never thought of resolving difficulties of the sports
persons who are talented and dedicated to sports and
practice. More often than not it becomes sports for
administration rather than administration for sports. There
has to be flexible and innovative part of administrators
respond as per need of the particular situation. As all human nature is unique, and psychology plays a major part in sports there cannot remain a common fixed pattern of treatment for different cases. The guidelines may be laid down but the administrators of sports require the application of common sense and practical experience in most cases specially where the age-group of players is below 19 years.

Practical experience gained by virtue of occupying the berth of a sports administrator in the SAI a plethora of examples can be quoted where administration was only a part of bureaucracy. There was a particular Regional Director (R.D) of Eastern Centre during the period 1992 to Sept. 1993 who did not permit decision to be taken by officers unless he was at the station. There was a boy of around 16 years of age who came from Siliguri Sports Hostel for medical treatment at the Eastern Centre and could not be provided any facility for the R.D. was out of station.

There was the case of the best woman Basket Ball player of India who was asked to submit the entire amount of Rs. 150/- for three months for the use of the multigymn of SAI Eastern Centre for 15 days or so. She also requested for the timing which would suit her to commute from office, college and practise. The international was refused any
facility other than those offered to any other normal non-sports person. Achievement in sports was thus being of no consequence at a sports Institute supposed to cater to the need of the potential and the top class sports persons of India. In the same span of time some Govt. Officials were offered all facilities free of cost. That only proves the social difference between a successful sports person and a successful person of profession approved and acknowledged by the society. If a sports Institute does not give due respect to the sportsman/woman in the same rank as any other profession, it cannot be expected of others who treat professional requirement as the priority.

This is an area where administration will have to change their attitude. The social approval is first and foremost that motivates a child to take up the subject, and parents to initiate the off shoot into something worthy in life. This awareness has to be cultivated like a product to be introduced in the market, through careful survey and sports campaign. Administration in collaboration with the media can be most effective in creating this sports consciousness by informing common man about the unique status of a sportsman, and the process to reach to that goal. It's like becoming a gold medalist engineer if the capability and the desire is there, or a doctor, by
choice and not by accident.

With the introduction of the govt. machinery for talent scouting and coaching of potential as well as proficient sports persons, the federations and State Govt. have been trying to assist the schemes with little or no programmes of their own, excepting states like Kerala, Punjab and to some extent U.P. The reason mostly may be attributed to shortage of funds and other departments needing prior attention.

There are various academies being established for a particular sports, sponsored by industrial houses of repute. This was a suggestion which came from the then Minister of Sports Smt. Mamata Banerjee. But even before the official proposal there were academies like the TATA Football Academy, and the Britania Amrithraj Tennis Academy, and a few others. The officially proposed academies by the then Minister of Sports have not progressed sufficiently after her resignation.

The Chef-de-Mission of the Olympic Games of 1992 states that according to him the major reasons for the poor performance were due to i) less international exposure, ii) lack of training facilities, iii) lack of motivation and sense of pride, feeling for the country. He also stressed
the point that "... professional approach was needed, persons who could devote their time, have a positive approach and be accountable; only they should be involved with administration".24

One very important and possibly the most crucial aspect pointed out by the Chef-de-Mission on return from the Olympic Games 1992 should form the basis of administration. The administration has to inculcate this, and realise that it is not the diet, the infrastructure, the equipment, the sports science back-up, the training of the foreign coach but it is the attitude of all concerned. It is the basic requirement of the administrators to develop an attitude of themselves to infuse the same all around. The Chef-de-Mission states; "No success is possible unless there is an inner urge or sense of pride felt by the sports persons participating in the international competitions. Indian sports persons are lacking in this spirit. It is suggested that special efforts are made to motivate sports persons to develop their sense of belonging to their country and sense of pride in their achievement".25

Unfortunately this statement remains unpublished and unknown to the mass even after 11 months. And the media are not eager to know. Not a question has been raised. The sports journalists seem to have lost their 'fact finding'
instinct. Possibly the entire set-up of "letting things their way" has also affected the sports journalists of this country. Reports therefore are to be written and submitted for unknown "further action". Can the media help educating the mass regarding the various aspects of Indian sports scene? Can the media try? It's a subject where the entire country is involved. It's 'the' subject which everyone would like to be knowledgeable about.
NOTES AND REFERENCES

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7. Lombardo, M. (1982), How do leaders get to lead? Centre for Creative Leadership: Issues and Observations,


11. ibid, Page 17.

12. ibid, Page 19.

13. ibid, Page 20.

14. ibid, Page 21.


17. ibid, Page 7.

18. ibid, Page 23.

19. Ghosh, Shyam Sunder - Interview with the writer in person.

20. Administrators of Central Govt Sports body as well as National and State Federations who were interviewed for the purpose of this study, as well as replies collected through questionnaire.


22. ibid,
