CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Sporting industries is expanding and growing rapidly since from last few decades worldwide. More & more people are participating in sport and recreational activities throughout a wide spectrum of sporting activities. Indian sports goods retail industry had shown positive significant growth since past few years. The sports goods manufacturers are manufacturing more value-added products rather than the traditional sports products manufactured, resulting they had significantly benefited to sustain global challenges from this highly competitive and fastest growing speed of this sector. Use of latest technology by sports goods manufacturers benefited them to lower the cost of product also various incentives received from Government time to time has helped this industry to gain significantly. Sports goods retailers have to improve with time, with various organizations competitively vying for people interested in participating in sports & recreational activities.

Retail itself signifies selling of goods in small quantities directly to customers by making bulk purchase. In India retail sector is biggest and is continuously witnessing a great change and radical transformation since last few decades. Although still at a nascent stage, there is a large increase in the number of sports goods retails outlets all over India, which indicates a boom for this sector in the near future. As changes in life style, increase in Income of Individual family, highly disposable income are the main cause that retailing of Sports Goods Market in India is growing at great speed, also consumer preferences and choice plays an important role. In India, Jalandhar in Punjab and Meerut in Uttar Pradesh share major sports goods manufacturing destinations of sports goods and sports related products.
and its accessories. There has been an unprecedented increase in the number of suppliers of branded sports goods from India after the implementation of the liberalization policy by the Government. The major drawback sports goods industry is that it suffers from lack of talent, poor inflow of funds, some unfavorable regulations and policies of Government, lack of practical applications in the field by graduates of sports and physical education. Compare with the global retail sports industry, competent employers are paid handsome amount and retailers are offering value-added services to their customers for increasing the footprints in their outlets. Due to the changing consumer trends and liberalization policy there are new opportunities in sports goods retail sector in Indian market which presents a vast opportunity for physical education graduates in this business field rather than to opt for the traditional jobs. As competition in today’s retail market of sports goods is increasingly amongst sports goods retailers beneficiary will be the one whose employees have good communication skills and convincing power to consumers visiting the retail outlets.

In India Cricket is the most popular equipped sports after that the sports equipment market is extremely fragmented throughout and the demand of various equipments are as per the region and availability of sports infrastructures and surrounding sporting environment. Recently, the home fitness equipments markets have also grown significantly. Sports activities and sports goods retail market in 21st century is full of extremes throughout the world as it is becoming increasingly more competitive, market research is now on the main agenda of sports goods market, it means identifying customers and providing good and valuable services of uncompromising quality in return for an optimal profit on investments in sports goods retail sector.
Sports Goods

Sports Goods is defined as tangible, physical products that offer benefits to consumers. Conversely, services are intangible, non-physical products. Most sports products possess the characteristics of both goods and services. For example, a sporting event(s) sells goods (e.g. concessions) and services (e.g. the competition itself). Sports goods industry comprises of all types of health and fitness equipments, apparels/hosiery, sports shoes, various sports equipments and accessories which are sold by sports good retailers and whole sellers. It is axiomatic that consumers participate in the activities for which they need to buy various sports products; where as in some cases it may be in obverse condition people may not buy products for participation; e.g. Tread - mill may not be used by all Health clubs, Cricket Matting, Helmets may be shared by one or more teams, T. T. Table may be borrowed for a specific period, etc. When there is a direct and unambiguous connection between product and sports, relationship between participants and markets trends are clear due to various factors. The Indian sporting goods market show strong growth in 1980s. As demand for apparel and various fitness equipments too remain strong due to large interest of consumers and media coverage of various sporting events.

Scenario of sports goods Industry in India

Sports goods manufacturing industry in India is old by more than decades together. In India, Meerut and Jalandhar is famous for manufacturing sports goods and are having reputed sports industries. Foreign investment in sports goods in multi-brand has great impact on retail sector of sports goods. Indian sports products are emerging fast in the global market and also plays an important role in the global markets.
This Industry is rapidly adopting the latest available technologies for manufacturing the sports goods to keep pace with the fast changing global trends. With the increased and fast expanding overseas market the demand and presence of Indian sports products is rapidly increasing both in Indian and International markets. There has been an increasing concentration on optimal utilization of available resources for maximizing the returns on investments by proper marketing the sports goods. Entry from various countries in marketing their sports products has forced this industry sector to tilt towards mechanization and use the latest modern machineries for manufacturing the various sports goods.

Major changes has been seen in the retail market of sports goods products in terms of various factors since last few decades due to the rapid increase of media participation in sports. Traditionally the sports goods in India was sold through specialized sporting goods stores only, recently in the fast emerging market this distribution patterns of sports goods have undergone major important changes. Recently, large departmental stores, Malls, Toy’s Outlets etc. are also selling the sports goods that too the branded products as desired by consumers and as per the market demand of that region there by impacting the sales figures of traditional sports goods retail outlets. Due to this reason the exclusive sports goods retailers outlets has been decreasing in India and the local manufacturer of various sports products are finding difficult to secure their place for their products in this highly competitive market of sports goods segment. Also, expansion of existing outlets and upcoming of exclusive new franchisee for latest sports product had great impact on sales of traditional sports retail outlets. Also, concept of online booking, home shopping frequency through electronic media, use of Internet for searching the latest sports products are fast increasing their presence in the market segment of sports goods. Ability to provide after sales service, employee’s ability and
knowledge for convincing consumers for particular sports products, employee’s in-depth knowledge and aquatinted with the technical specifications for various sport products, behavior of employees, timely delivery of sports goods, reliability of sports products, etc. are the major key factors that are plays a major role in the sales of sports goods in retail category segments and that too in a recently highly competitive retail market of sports goods in India.

Indian sports goods manufacturers are seeking joint ventures and technical collaborations with buy back arrangements for those particular sports products that are not marketed in India but are having vast export potential in sports goods market. With the national economy reforms process underway & due to the country liberalized industrial policies the Indian sports goods industry is slated for unprecedented growth in the near future if the current pace continues.

Indian sporting goods market performed well in last few decades; currently growth in this sector has slightly slowed. The causes traced are due to changes in demographics, high prices of the newly innovated sports goods and frequent changes in consumer preferences. Some sports goods manufacturers in India are still associated with single line product, where as other carry a multitude and vast range of various sports products. As to sporting events which are the main market driver and media coverage for particular sporting events is far greater than it used to be, use of safety equipments in sports, improved quality of sports products etc. have positioned themselves in the sales figures in sporting goods market.

**Indian Retail Sector of Sports Goods**

Sports goods retail market of India is highly unorganized due to lack of proper Government policies. Maximum sports goods retail outlets functions in less than 40 sq.mtr. of shopping space and it was a traditionally family business for
maximum retailers of sports goods. Due to the space constrictions display of certain sports goods cannot be done as per the demand from consumers. Recently, latest branded sports goods are preferred by the urban consumers in India due to rise in their income sources and affordability for the desired sports product by their children’s resulting these branded sports products are slowly becoming lifestyle products for the sports lovers. Indian sports goods retailers need to take advantage of this growth and diversify by adopting the latest trends to overcome and get a respectable place in the highly competitive market. Some retailers have still been able to maintain their position in the current market in spite of the arrival of new entrants in this sector but are very few in numbers. More over Indian sports goods market is not running after the branded sports goods which have their presence globally but sports goods manufacturers work for these global brand companies and export goods to them in large quantities, although many of these brands may not be available in Indian market. Also many of the reputed Indian branded sports goods are not available in the Indian sports goods retail market directly, due to the policy of manufacturing companies and Government policies these brands are either sold through dealers’ or distributors of that particular region only. Researcher found that most successful foreign branded sports products have tactically and skillfully planned for their brand positioning of sports goods, sponsorship of various sports tourneys and players, pricing of their products and selection of Indian distributors for their products to be sold in Indian markets had achieved good results by adopting proper timely marketing strategy. As male sports persons are the main consumers of sports products in Indian market the companies are also trying their best to attract women consumers for their branded sports goods too. Also, planogram are developing to optimize sales of a retail outlet. Planogram is a visual representation that depicts how products should be placed on various types of retail displays. The whole idea behind this is achieved
by maximum utilization of shelf space in the outlets. Different types of planograms are utilized at different segments for sports goods in the retail sectors. In few cases, suppliers send the planograms to the retailer even before they deliver those particular sport products. Researcher quotes that consumers of sports goods in India purchase sports goods only when they feel necessity and left with no choice, hence they are having more and ample choice and these consumers traditionally search for the discounts / schemes launched if any, by the manufacture and after complete satisfaction the consumers finally purchase the desired sports goods.

**Sports Retail Management**

Due to rapid urbanization and increase income sources the consumers also opts for window shopping with special interest on the new arrivals of sports goods which influenced the new generations and had totally altered the concept of buying behavior for purchasing the sports goods. Recently, Indian cities are witnessing rapid changes at an ever increasing speed imagined! With upcoming Malls, shopping centers, huge shopping complexes, departmental stores, new opening of franchisees, etc. in allmajor upcoming cities has boomed the sports goods retail market. Due to these major changes occurring in the sports goods retail market the contribution is also high in every sector related to economic growth of the country. The concept of sports goods retail is selling the various sports goods to the consumers as per their choice for their individual use or for the use of their family. The sports goods business has expanded mainly after 1980’s due to live telecast of various sports tourneys and fast involvement and vast coverage by media of various sporting events worldwide.

In India sports retail industry which accounts for around >3% of GDP is expected to grow at rate of more than 10% in coming years. To maintain this growth proper coordination with the sport goods consumers, healthy relationship
with retail customers and appointment of proper employee having skills of marketing can help the retailers to secure respectable place in the market and can play an important role. Retailers of sports goods has to deliver and assure services as desired by the consumers. Retailers must employee the dynamic young physical education graduates having talent and knowledge in this field to achieve the desired target in current market scenarios. As for the graduates in Physical education this field also offers vast affluent employment opportunities. Using good communication and personal skill and having technical knowledge of the products may enhance the chances of these graduates to outshine in this profession.

As for the graduates in Physical education this field in the beginning can offer their career in sales and marketing of sports goods, operating retail store, administrative and field work, enhance design of traditional sports goods, etc. The sports industry is flourishing speedily in India and due to huge expansion being done in this sector may enhance their career and feel them secure as compare to the traditional jobs opted by these graduates. Due to vast competition in the sports goods retail sector; departmental stores and shopping malls are providing more space for sports goods and are also displaying these products at large to attract sports goods consumers. Hence for graduates in physical education who adopts career in this field should be creative and must promote new ideas in this business to get fruitful results.

Retail Marketing

Basically there are three main phases in the life of sport goods.

1. Entry of newly innovated sports good,

2. Trading of particular good launched
3. Exposure to the newly innovated sports good.

In earlier or entry stage, retailer comes with the newly innovated sports good with new price tag and purchase that specific product in its monopoly power edging out others and tries to take price advantage, i.e. retailers may also keep the lowest price for that product to get a competitive edge over its competitors. In the trading stage, the retailer starts expanding. It expands in terms of product offering, better services, etc. Given desire benefits as per the retailers demand by the manufacturing firms, retailer’s starts charging higher prices for that particular sports product. In the exposure stage for the product, there comes a gap in market for sharing space for the new players to come in. This is due to increase in the prices by the retailer.

Sports goods Retail market of Vidarbha

In Vidarbha region sports goods retail has developed a lot and sports goods market is growing rapidly at the rate of more than 12% annually. The reasons being young educated sports consumers are having higher disposable income; rapidly growing urbanization, fitness awareness, easily availability of desired foreign sports products, good performance of players in various sports tourneys in major International sporting events, media coverage, etc. had given boost to sports goods business in the region. Although, in Vidarbha major sporting tourneys are not frequently held as compare to other regions in the country or the players from this region has won a significant number of medals in major sporting events organized worldwide. But maximum participants had actively participated in all types of sporting events, also the educational level has increased in the region and also media coverage all major sports tournaments organized in the region has help to increase the level of awareness amongst the sports goods consumers in the region which is working rapidly and effectively. Also, people are more health
conscious in Vidarbha region. Number of health clubs, gyms and fitness centers has risen significantly. Consumers of this region spend more on sportswear / sports hosiery rather than on sports equipment. Maximum consumers purchase sports apparels / hosiery for fashion. Formats of retailing of Sports goods in Vidarbha have completely changed in the last few decades from the basic marketing policy as adopted in the region. Formally as in past decades retailing of sports goods was through traditional family business from single outlets which also keeps toys for sale along with sports goods in their outlets. Also sports hosiery / kit were sold traditionally sold from the outlets of apparels and the sports shoes from the retail outlet of foot wears. There was hardly any outlet providing all these above mentioned goods under one roof. But in coming few years sports goods retail business in Vidarbha has undergone a massive change due to presence all type of foreign brands, availability of all sports goods under one roof, etc.

Sports goods retailing segment itself means sales of sports goods, sports equipment, hosiery, shoes and sports related accessories from retail outlet. Retail was invented from the French word retailer, which means to break bulk quantity into small fractions. Researcher pointed out that sports goods retailers in Vidarbha region also keep high cost sports goods of various types along with regular medium to low cost sports equipments and foreign brands sports equipments for sell. Having sufficient stocks of sports goods helps retailers of the region to increase footprints of consumers of sports goods in their outlets. Also, various Departmental stores are also increasing space for sports goods sections, health equipments, etc. which enables them to display various sports brands available in their store. The non-store format is also growing rapidly i.e. internet retailing. The major drawback related to sales of sports goods in Vidarbha is the non availability of Sports Infrastructures and accessibility due to which the branded sports goods
could not penetrate in region as desired by these manufacturing / marketing companies due to this reason the retailers could not afford to keep these goods in their outlets.

Services desired by sports goods retailers

The general and essential services which a sports goods retailer should provide are as below:

- Sports goods retailers make consumers buying easy & convenient as possible.
- The wants of the consumers is anticipated by sports goods retailers who supplies the sports goods to consumers from their outlets.
- Retailers purchase goods from whole sellers and sell the sports goods dividing the large quantities into small units as per the appropriate need of consumer for their use.
- Retailers purchase and store the sports products in off seasonand make available to the consumers when needed and also delivers these sports goods to the places where the consumers desired.
- Retailers also help sports goods manufacturers by advertising and displaying their particular sports goods in their outlets and taking personal interest in selling and for promotion of sports goods.
- Retailers apply various policies to increase sells by offering free delivery of sports goods at the destination of consumers, gives credit facilities on purchase, free alteration and exchange facilities, etc.

Also there are various possible types of service that retailers give are as below:

1. Friendly environment in Outlets: Sports goods retailer must provide a clean, efficient and well designed retail environment, which helps consumers shopping
experience more pleasurable. Also for security purpose checkouts and clear instructions displays, rapid computer scanning of the sports goods purchased by consumers helps to improve the shopping experience of consumers.

2. After-sales service: Many sports goods retailers may offer exchange policy or refund policy to customers who are dissatisfied with the sports product they have purchased. The concept of after-sales service is very less in this sector. As sports goods are supplied by the manufacturers and they do not gives guarantee for majority sports goods.

3. Product promotion: In sports goods retail outlets promotions of many sports products is very crucial related to the sales. The type and location of shelf space allocated to particular products in retail outlets can have great impact on sell of particular sports goods. Also, sports goods manufacturer’s gives higher discounts to retailers who carry out in-store promotions or gives preference and display their sport products in their retail outlets.

4. Retailer Reputation: Where the product quality is not immediately observable, the retailer reputation in the region plays an important role related to quality assurance for that particular sports products. In some cases branded sports goods may be strong and may be almost impossible to challenge it. For this effectiveness of brand name for sports goods as a barrier to entry the effect of advertising will depend which is strongly recommended for this sector to gain handsome profits effectively.

A Sports Goods Retailer is often faced with various challenges as stated below:

- Sports Goods Retailers must be acquainted with the latest sports products launched worldwide and must always be in touch with the sports industry to ensure proper service to the consumers.
• To keep proper combination of the equipments, models and sizes in their sports goods retail outlet.
• Assured to provide after sales services to consumers.
• Manage stock of sports goods as per the demand in the region.
• Frequently run various types of promotions, sports campaigns and sponsor various sports events in the region.
• Remain in touch with the consumer and analyze his preferences and choice of sports products to overall increase the sales from outlet.
• To employ the graduates in these field who can be in touch with various academic research activities so as to satisfy the consumers for particular newly innovated sports equipments.

Barriers in Sports goods retailing in Vidarbha

The growth in business of sports goods retailing in Vidarbha is mainly due to increased level of sports participation in the region. Also, the role of media in highlighting the various sports events in the region plays an important role. But after consideration of these factors sports participation is not very satisfactory, researcher found various barriers in business of Sports goods retailing in Vidarbha which are as follows:

• Like western culture where sports is given major importance Vidarbha region does not have that particular type of sports culture where the younger generations are also associated with a particular sport activity.
• In Vidarbha, major participants adopt sports activities for entertainment, fitness and leisure and not taken as career options. Salaries of Coaches / Trainers are also low and due to this inclination towards sports in the region are low.
Participation in sports activities is not compulsory at any level of education. As the main focus is on education related to marks obtained in the mark sheets. Also maximum education Institutions does not have basic and adequate sports infrastructure and training facilities in their campus.

With presence of maximum physical education training Institutions the consumer’s size is restricted due to lack of basic sports infrastructures and other academic factors.

The government funding is much lower than required. Also, the existing sports infrastructure available is also not well-maintained and update. Major cities of Vidarbha region are now developing the essential sports infrastructures in their campus to increase sports participations.

Team or individual participation in major sporting tourney i.e. badminton, lawn tennis, squash, Softball, etc. is beyond the reach of the greater part of sports loving people of Vidarbha are as it is very costly.

Major sporting tourneys are dependent on the Govt. funding for organizing and conducting the tourneys in the region due to lack of sponsorships.

Also totally lack of specific training in for various games and sports has direct impact on player’s performance in major sporting tourneys. Maximum sports and games are played in the region but without proper coaching or training facilities.

Due to inadequate level of training, participation in sports activities is restricted which has great impact on the market of sports goods retail. Researcher found that sports goods retailers in the region has to face lot of problems when they work with various Clubs, Coaches, different types of Government organizations, etc. related to price and quality of sports goods as the budget is restricted for purchase of sports goods. Many federations and organizations are
not professionally managed and are often run by ex-bureaucrats or by office bearers having political connection.

- Also, there is no availability of skilled workers at the graduate level opting to work in retail outlet of sports goods and retailers have to unnecessary waste time in training the unskilled employee in their outlets. The major cause is the outdated curricula taught in Physical education Institutions.

- Sporting activities in the region is not considered as an essential activity to be done every day, hence consumers buy sports goods only when they feel necessity of and are left with no options.

- There are regional variations in sports goods consumer preferences also have great impact on sales.

- Related to few fast selling sports products the consumer awareness level is limited related to the use for that particular sports product.

- The income source of sports goods consumers in the region is limited in Vidarbha they are price-sensitive and not brand conscious. Brand loyalty for sports product is now increasing with time as sports consumers are testing with various types of sports brands available in the market.

- As lack of understanding and information of various types of brand in sports goods it makes difficult to pierce and convince the consumers in the current market trends. Branded sports products needs to spend large amount on marketing and promotion for their sports products. Also, advertising costs are also high in Vidarbha.

- Most sports goods retailers in Vidarbha region cannot give clear view whether they should place the sports hosiery products in outlet as a sports wear or in the rank of casual wear. As some Imported Sports hosiery goods which retailer had
tried to position as casual wear has not attain good outcome in the current market scenario and vice versa.

- Due to lack of knowledge sports goods retailers of Vidarbha sells sports goods to the consumers by adopting various business tactics and after that they can assure about the type of sports goods consumer prefers.
- As only a few strong Indian brands in sports are there retailers are left with no option but to sell the foreign branded sports products.

Other Dimensions of Competition in Sports Goods Retailing

**Geographical location**

Sports goods consumers of Vidarbha are not quite sure what type of particular sports products they desire for purchase and are habitual to make comparisons among a number of different retailers related to sports goods. Importance of geographical location in this concept means that sports goods available in the local market is as per consumer preference but its consumer inability to find an appropriate sports products they desire from appropriate retailer in the region.

**Product selection**

Display / space for particular sports products in outlet tend to be very important in retailing. Today, the sports goods consumers do not have the time or ability to look at all products available in the market, they prefer retailers to carry out some selected sports goods on their behalf. Consumers then select the desired product sorted by retailer of various brands as per their choice.

**Level and quality of sports goods retailer**
Retailers decide and select which sports products to keep in their retail outlet. In addition to the physical characteristics of the sports products chosen by the retailer he has to decide the various forms of services they can provide to consumers.

There are a variety of opportunities to market sports products within this sector, as quoted marketing is not as hunting but a form of gardening. Minds are like parachutes, they only function when they are open. Many sports goods manufacturers have formed their own wholesale and retail networks. Also a new marketing strategy the in- house retail system is being applied by various manufacturers to achieve consumers loyalty and strengthen their competitiveness, ultimately leading to greater market share, because instead of "make and sell" philosophy rather than being product centered, the sports products marketing concept is a customer centered.

Marketing of sports goods

The term marketing is often most confused and misunderstood when used in the field of sports goods business. Many of us are often confused between marketing and selling and tend to equate this terms, as if they are synonymous. However, these two concepts have exactly opposite connation. Marketing is existed in the world of business and commerce. In general, marketing means satisfaction for wants and needs of desired product. The two can be differentiated as (1) The designers or manufacturers create a product, which is given to sales representatives to find a customer and sell that product; where as in marketing approach the manufacturer is informed to develops and manufacture the desired product. Thus, the sales for the products approach begin and end with the demand from customers. (2) The second major difference between sales and marketing
approaches is that the sales approach almost must focus on volume; while the marketing approach should focus on profit. An understanding of marketing is important for success in all business fields & occupations; as it focuses on the lifetime value of the customers.

Market of sports products is composed of potential consumers with the desire and ability to purchase a specific selected product having all features as per the need of consumers. There are evidences and also studies have suggested that some typical feature in sports goods consumers’ market affecting consumer must be taken into account. The major factors influencing consumer purchases are product, pricing, positioning, and placement, known as 4P’s in marketing circles (Johan, 2005).

As selling sports goods is to create a successful mix of:

1) Having specific products
2) Selling the goods at reasonable price
3) Keeping the product at suitable place
4) Promotion of those specific goods.

To create the right marketing mix, businesses have to meet the following conditions:

**Product**

The sports product must have all the specified features, appearance, function, price must be right. The goods must be displayed at proper place in the outlet as per the market demand at the right time. The product feature must be
focused as it is the central point of marketing strategy. The product range must be in sufficient quantity as it a function of the marketing mix.

**Price**

Price is an important aspect of the marketing mix, it generates revenue and all various costs involved. The price of product is an important determinant of the value of sales made. Theoretically, price is determined by the discovery of what customers perceive is the value of the item on sale. Price that retailers charge for their retailing activities is an implicit price.

**Place**

'Place' means various methods of transporting and storing of goods and selling the goods to the consumer when desired. Getting the right product to the right place at the right time involves the distribution system. Selection from various distribution depends on type of circumstances arising.

**Promotion**

Promotion is the skill of communicating with customers. It means to provide information that may convince them to take decision to purchase that particular product. Successful promotion may help to increases sales so that advertising and other costs are included for promotion of that specific product (Gandhi, 2009).

As Peter F. Drucker quotes, “The aim of marketing is to know and understand the customer so well the product or service fits him and sells itself.”

**Growth drivers for sports goods retail market in India**
- Increased incomes sources, availability and improved sports infrastructure are enlarging sports goods consumer markets and are changing as per the consumer tastes and choice.
• Liberalization policy adopted has boomed the Indian economy & increased in expenditure by consumers.
• Shift in consumer demand to foreign brands.
• Maximum family members of both genders are earning in India which has given the boost in growth of sports goods retail sector.
• Changing preferences of shopping patterns of sports goods consumer in new environs.
• Increased participation of youngsters in various sporting activities.

Innovations and Role of Technology in Retail Market

Latest sports equipments developed with the help of technology helps for accurate judgments / decisions which has benefited for compiling results with more accuracy is the result of application of technology in sports field. Technology has great impact on design and manufacturing of sports equipments. Prior research has shown that users that develop new sports product typically profit from their own in house of their innovation. This is because users that seek to benefit financially from diffusion of an innovated product to other users in a market place must obtain some protection for product. The sports product manufacturing industry must invest more time, effort & money into building competitive advantage on both price and quality through relatively low cost and high investment in the new innovated sports products In the modern era the International recognized sporting events i.e. Olympics, use of technology has also played an important role. This has been exhibited and revealed in maximum sporting events in which participants had used various latest sports equipments in various sporting games. These advances of technology and its usage in improving the sports facilities & manufacturing equipments is generally an expensive proposal. Due to of the expenses involved in
developing the technology the benefits experienced to those participants who can afford as initially but it tends to be more expensive.

As sports goods consumers opt for the "best & newest", market economics to play an important role. The cost of those particular innovated sports product declines when manufacturing quantity is increased as per the demand in the market. Thus the technological advances benefits to those consumers of sports who can afford the price of that particular sports product. Many sports product manufacturers feels that cost in innovation of new sports product being highly expensive and if the particular innovated product to give returns in terms of sales their reputation in the existing market would fails as "Shakespeare have couple of great line of reputation which boiled down to the basics, acknowledge that the there or loss of property is more or less word vise compared to the that or loss of reputation".

There has been a radical change in sports goods retailing over the last few decades. Also there been vast changes in the size, location, display and scope of sports goods retail outlets. A latest strategy adopted by sports industry is to go online and try innovative ways to search the consumers so as to achieve their target. E-commerce is a common techniques adopted by sports goods manufacturing companies as it is the easiest way to reach and target the consumers for their products that is supported by electronic means. As most E-commerce activity is divided into business to business (B2B) or business to consumers. (B2C). Manufacturers, Innovators expect benefits from their innovated products by selling them to others, user innovators expect to benefit by direct use of that product.

Also use of Bar-coding and electronic scanning of products is the advance techniques and technology adopted by the retailers and manufacturers of sports
goods in order to have fast verification of stocks available and prompt delivery services to the consumers.

**Effect of Branding and Packaging of Sports Products**

In today’s highly fragmented market of sports goods which are nearly dependent on the role of media in telecasting the sporting events possess a great change in consumer behavior related to the availability of various brands in the market. As the customer engagement that influences purchasing decisions of branded sports products is mostly affected by the power of advertising of that product plays an important role in the marketing strategy of sports products. When a marketer opts for branding his product, he intends to use the brand as an asset. As a firm grows, it normally creates more and more brands. Consumers are demanding that brands which give them personalized attention based on real-time behavior. The purpose of branding is to differentiate the products from the competition. The objective of the branding process is to develop brand equity. Once the brand exhibits high level of equity, consumers are prone to become brand loyal or purchase only that brand. Due to increase in brand awareness which shows the increased probability of choice for sports products in the current consumer’s trends. It is hard fact that if consumers are aware about the various brands, then brand image and attitude for that product can be easily assessable in the market. Generally two types of brand awareness are there in sports goods sector which are as follows; a) brand recognition and b) brand recall, and which of these types plays an important depends on the consumer choice and selection of product depending upon the situation and its necessity for that product. The sports goods consumer selects and identifies a brand by its features and its packaging style.
In modern days in a highly competitive environment, the packaging is the last option for retailers to influence buyers of sports goods. Packaging Attractiveness involves the cover design and quality of the wrapper used for packing that particular sports product. Packaging of sports goods generally includes primary cover (Cricket bat covers etc). Also, a secondary package is used for packaging purpose of sports goods which is to be tear and thrown before use of that particular sports product (skin packaging of Cricket bats, T.T. racquets, etc.), coding, printed information about the product which can seen on or can be inside the package, is also considered a part for packaging of sports goods. Using innovative packaging of goods can boost a particular product giving an advantage over competitors. A good package expresses personality of a product in a dramatic, easily recognizable way. But like people packages also grow old and tried. Yet unlike people, they can be renewed. The following functions are must for the sports products 1) Protecting the product from damages; 2) Adapting to production line speeds; 3) Promoting the product; 4) Increasing product density and 5) Facilitating the use of the product.

The successful package is not the one with an intriguing shape or design, but the one whose over-all design, shape, colour and printed message delivered an impact that resulted in a personal relationship between the consumers and the package on the shelf, as package must come alive at the point of purchase. A good innovative design of package is always eye-catching for the consumers and is not a strain for consumers who examine the product. Thus creating, developing, implementing & marinating successful brands with innovative packaging are frequently at the heart of marketing strategy.

Importance of Advertising for Sports goods Retailer
The most basic challenge in advertising is using the right words for conveying the sales message to the consumers. Advertising is important and can help make firms and brand leaders to lead the market, provided they have just that products & provide services that the market requires and to reach to the consumers by convincing them for purchase of the products manufactured by them.

Advertising plays a significant role in awareness creation and attitude formation. In sports goods retail market government rules regulations and electronic media policies play a dominant role in the advertiser's decision making. (Jain,2012)

Role of Media in Sports goods market

In Advertising terms, media is a channel of communication such as newspaper, magazines, radio, T.V., etc. The sports sections of newspapers are growing. There can be no denying that commercial thinking has definitely has an influence on the sports goods retail market. It is fact that few sports have gained immense popularity, e.g. Cricket, Tennis, etc. through the efforts of media and support from the sponsors. Also sponsorship seems to be the most visible variable aspect of sports products marketing strategy. An important application is that sponsorship might be aimed at increasing loyalty amongst fans, spectators and even participants of the teams & individual players.

Product LifeCycle of Sports Goods

Although after launching the new sports product, manufacturer desire that their products should last long in the market & must have monopoly status in market, even though their product launched may not sell forever is expected by the manufacturer but the manufacturing company desires to earn handsome profits in
order to cover all the expenses & risk while launching the product. Sports Goods manufacturing company are aware that each of their products will have a lifecycle but the life and shape may not be predicted by the firm known in advance. The following Figure No.1 represents product life cycle, which signifies the product's sales & profits take over its life time. The PLC has five distinct stages are:-

1) Product development begins when a company finds and develops a new Product idea. During this stage the sales are zero and the company investment costs mounts up.

2) Introduction is a period of slow sales growth as the product is introduced in the market. Profits are nonexistent in this stage because of heavy expenses of product introduction.

3) Growth is a period of rapid market acceptance and increasing profits.

4) Maturity is a period of slow down in sales growth because the product has achieved acceptance by most potential buyers. Profits level declines because of increased marketing outlays to defend the product against completion.

5) Decline is the period when sales are off & profits drop.

(Kotler et al. 2009)
Due to huge competitiveness in the retail market of sports goods the life cycle of specific brands can quickly change because of the fear of various marketing strategies adopted by competitors & due to the response for the product in the market. In sports goods retail market, using the concept of PLC for forecasting the performance of specific sports product various marketing strategies applied and presents in the current market scenario may face some practical problems, as it is not possible to forecast the sales level of the product at each and every stage of PLC because of various marketing strategy applied for the particular
product and a result gained for that product may change the life cycle of that product.

The 2 main factors leading to changes in PLC are

1) Changing customers need, 2) better, efficient and user friendly products. The most fundamental factors that shape the PLC over a period of time are the customer’s needs. These needs change as customers becomes more aware and have higher disposable incomes leading to a change in their life styles and aspirations due to wider reach of technology.

In order to be successful, the trained physical education graduate employed in retail outlets of sporting goods must be acquainted with the present market competitions and must have a vision as to develop the sales from the outlets in competitive market and create a helpful atmosphere for the increasing the footprints of the customers. They must be able to grasp the weak hole in the outlets in the market area.

Career Options in Sports

For many people, sports are an area of life for many people through which great memories are attached. Although the majority of these careers are not on the playing field, these core values are built into the many careers that help to bring professional sports to life and play an important part in ensuring success in this industry.

The business of sports industry is expanding rapidly. An amazingly high level of job satisfaction can be found in sports related careers, from the salesperson selling various sports products to the agent insuring players and playing fields. For the sports enthusiast, their passion and interest in the sport makes them want to be involved at some level. Characteristic for this profession is hard working and
dedication in the field. Other profession people often only see the glamour of sports careers but do not always consider that sports related careers require working long and too in odd hours also. The sports industry continually requires an increasingly diverse group of professionals to successfully fill the wide range of technical jobs that are always available. These careers are interdependent on one another to achieve desired success and this emphasizes that proper teamwork and coordination is necessary to achieve the success. A successful route for getting top position in the sports industry involves integrating an existing skill or specialty with sports along with hard work and dedication in the work. e.g. A lawyer could refocus toward becoming a sports agent. A nurse may take additional course work in athletic training to enter the profession. A computer specialist may wish to assist in the operation of the centerfield scoreboard or team website. A writer might cover a local sports team. An accountant might serve as a business manager for a college athletic department. The possibilities are limited only by one’s imagination! There may be different routes to secure a top position in the sports industry, but one ingredient remains critical; interpersonal skills. Sports are a people business. For a successful career it is not always based on monetary status but is rather a combination of all these elements.(Lanys et al. 2009)

Who Employs in the Sports Industry?
There are different organizations that offer various sports related careers, with varying levels of sport specific knowledge required for success. The sports industry is so large and requires so many diverse competencies (business, health related, communications etc.) that a comprehensive list of further education options would be nearly impossible to create. Having a specific career or area in mind makes the process of researching and evaluating further educational options becomes easier. Bear in mind that some occupations will also require specific skills
which may be just as or more important than education, so it is important to research specific careers or areas to obtain a detailed understanding or hoping to get desire achievements and what the important educational elements that may lead to future success! (Lanys et al. 2009)

**Statement of the Problem**

As India is a vast country having different types of traditions, cultural, dynamic conditions, social environment, economical status, geographical location and a various other differing factors related to sports goods retail market. Currently Physical Education curriculum prepares students for professional positions in their fields where as focused must be to prepare graduates for developing leadership expertise, current knowledge, physical skills and technical competencies as per the demand in the job market. As maximum research is done in traditional academic subjects i.e. In the field of mathematics, arts, in various streams of science, physical education were left to develop their own parallel research studies that were specific to their context. The major research studies in physical education involving effectiveness has been done in areas related to participation, student interest, curriculum time for physical education, various teaching methods and teacher perceptions, but have not applied in research findings identified by researcher. As researcher must be on cultivating the professional skills and the practical ability of the students, strengthening the students careers, expanding the scope and effective changes in curriculum taught and offering courses which is necessary for the study to identify the area of improvement in retail marketing of sports goods. Hence the statement of the problem selected by the researcher is “Status of Sports Goods Retail Market of Vidarbha.”
Objectives of the Study

Vidarbha region in Maharashtra comprises of 11 Districts in and consist five major Universities, nearly 5k students pass exams in various courses of Physical Education, with more than 1k colleges, more than 5 lakhs students, more than 300 reputed retail shopkeepers of sports goods and infinite number of consumers of sports goods, focus will be how Physical Education Graduates get the job opportunity related to their professional career paths, as all students cannot get job as Professional Academic [Physical Education Director / Teacher] in Vidarbha region. The retail sector provides a great diversity in the millions of various jobs that it provides to the global workforce but currently sports goods retailer sector is lagging.

Objectives of the study are cited as below:

- To study the present position of sports goods / equipments being sold from retail outlet in Vidarbha area.
- Sports goods manufacturers will get help to develop new sports goods and features that aligns with consumer preferences.
- To find various areas of business opportunity and give best services to consumers.
- To understand product pricing and marketing channels in the sport industry.
- To get acquainted with product life cycle of sports goods in retail segment.
- To strengthen manufacturer/retailer professional relationship to improve sales and business in the region.
- To identify changes and latest technology use which may help for the growth of sports good retail business and quality of sports products.
➢ To understand the consumer retail markets requirements in the region.
➢ To develop an understanding of the 4 P’s of marketing in the sports goods sector.
➢ To make optimum use of professionals graduates in sports goods retail sector.
➢ To pursue research of international standing both within subject disciplines and collaboration across disciplines.

**Delimitations**

The study was delimited to the following aspects:

1) The study was delimited to retailer’s selling sports goods in Vidarbha Region of Maharashtra State.
2) The subject was also tested to players, coaches, physical education graduates, Consumers of various types of sports goods, etc.
3) The subject was delimited to sales of all sporting goods, health and fitness equipments, apparels or hosiery & sports shoes.

**Limitations**

The study was limited to the following aspects:

1) The study is restricted to Vidarbha region, of Maharashtra State only.
2) The study is focused on physical sports goods sold from retail outlet only & other elements of sports goods services (Infrastructure's facilities, Capital, etc.) are neglected.
3) The study is limited to sports goods sold from retail outlets of Vidarbha region.
4) The study is focused on effect of various difficulties faced by the sports goods retailers for sales of sports goods in the region will be analyzed.

**Hypothesis**

For this study following Hypothesis are made.

- **H1**: Display of sports goods by retailers in outlet has great impact on sales.
- **H2**: Different incentives offered to consumers; Technology Influence and innovation effectiveness of sports goods plays an important role in sales of sports goods.
- **H3**: Geographic location of the region is an important factor related to sales of sports goods from retail outlets.
- **H4**: Prices of sports goods is an important factor related to sales of sports goods in the region.
- **H5**: Qualified sports professionals are appointed by retailers.
- **H6**: Quality of sports goods has great impact on sales.
- **H7**: Packaging of sports goods plays an important role in sales of sports goods.
- **H8**: Branding of sports goods has great impact on sales of sports goods.
- **H9**: Government policies in the region had great impact on sales of sports goods.

**Definitions of Important Terms**

- **Actual Product**: May have as many as five characteristics that combine to deliver core product benefits.
- **Advertising**: Any paid form of no personal presentation of ideas, goods, and services by an identified business.
• Attitudes: A predisposition to respond toward an object, act, or situation in an evaluative way. An attitude is persistent over time, carrying cognitive (knowledge) affective (emotion), and co native (intention) elements. It also indicates intensity.

• Augmented product: Includes any additional consumer services and benefits built around the core and actual products.

• B2B (Business to Business): Using B2B trading networks, auction sites, online product catalogues, and other online resources to reach new customers, serve current customers more effectively and obtain buying efficiencies and better prices.

• B2C (Business to Consumers): The online selling of goods and services to final consumers.

• Brand equity: The value that a brand contributes to a product in the marketplace.

• Brand image: The consumers' set of beliefs about a brand, which shapes their attitudes.

• Brand loyalty: A consistent preference for, or repeat Purchase of, one brand over all others in a product Category.

• Brand: A name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of these intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors.

• Branding: Any combination of name, design and symbol that a sports organization uses to help differentiate its products from the competition.

• Broker: A wholesaler who does not take title to goods and whose function is to bring buyers or sellers together and assist in negotiation.
• Business Analysis: A review of the sales, costs, and profit projections for a new product to find out whether these factors satisfy the company's objectives.

• Channel of distribution: The existing institutions and functions that facilitate the exchange between marketer and customer. In the case of sports a distribution channel is any institution that permits the sport to reach an interested participant.

• Commercialization: Introducing a new product into the market.

• Communication: The sending and receiving of information.

• Competition: A contest among sellers trying to reach their market objectives by filling the same customers’ needs.

• Competitive market pricing: Based on what managers think the market will bear given the competitive environment. Competitive pricing is usually determined by what the sport organization has to offer and what is offered by other sports organizations.

• Competitive strategy: How a sports organization chooses to meet or stimulate consumer needs for its product. It entails setting goals, defining consumer needs, analyzing competitors, analyzing markets, selecting targets, and developing products.

• Concept testing: Testing new-product concepts with a group of target consumers to find out if the concepts have strong consumers appeal.

• Consumer Buyer Behaviour: The buying behavior of final consumers – individuals and households who buy goods and services for personal consumption.
• Consumer demand: The quantity of a sports product that consumers are willing to purchase at a given price.

• Core product: Is the core, problem solving benefits that consumers are really buying when they obtain a product or service.

• Decline Stage: The product life cycle stage in which a product’s sale decline.

• Demographic dimensions–grouping potential customers on objective factors, for example, age/ income/ gender/ ethnicity and level of education

• Demographic Segmentation: Dividing the market into groups based on demographic variables such as age, sex, family size, family life cycle, income occupation, education, religion, race and nationality.

• Department Store: A retail organization that carries a wide variety of product lines – typically clothing, home furnishing, and household goods; each line is operated as a separate department managed by specialist buyers or merchandisers.

• Desirable Products: Products that give both high immediate satisfaction and high long –run benefits.

• Distribution channel: The system of institutions used to deliver goods to the final

• Distribution: The movement of a sports product from producers to consumers.

• Early Adopters: This group serves as opinion leaders to the rest of the market.

• Early Majority: Some market that is the "typical consumer” but likely to adopt innovations a little sooner.

• **E – Marketing:** The marketing sides of e-commerce- company efforts to communicate about, promote, and sell products and services over the Internet.

• **E- Commerce:** Buying and selling process supported by electronic means, primarily the Internet.

• **Economic activity:** The flow of goods and services between producers to consumers.

• **Exchange:** A marketing transaction in which the buyer gives something of value to the seller in return for goods and services.

• **Fad:** A product life cycle characterized ably accelerated sales and accelerated acceptance of the product followed by a rapid decline.

• **Franchise:** A contractual association between a manufacturer, wholesaler, or service organization (a franchiser) and independent business people (franchisees) who buy the right to own and operate one or more units in the franchise system.

• **Geographic segmentation:** Dividing a market into different geographical units such as nations, states, regions, cities, or neighborhoods.

• **Global Firms:** A firm that by operating in more than one country, gains R & D, production, marketing, and financial advantages in its costs and reputation that are not available to purely domestic competitors.

• **Growth Stage:** The product life – cycle stage in which a product’s sale start climbing quickly.

• **Idea Generation:** The systematic search for new-product ideas.

• **Idea screening:** Screening new-product ideas in order to spot good ideas and drop poor ones as soon as possible.
• Innovators: Innovators help get the product exposure but are not often perceived by the majority of potential buyers as typical consumers.

• Innovations: New sports products that are continually being introduced to consumers.

• Innovative Marketing: A principle of enlightened marketing that requires that a company seek real product and marketing – improvements.

• Institutional Market: Schools, hospitals, nursing homes, etc. other institutions that provide goods and services to people in their care.

• Introduction Stage: The product life-cycle stage in which the new product is first distributed and made available for purchase.

• Laggards: This group is suspicious of change and adopts only after the product is no longer considered an innovation.

• Late Majority: This group is skeptical and adopts innovations only after most of the market has accepted the product.

• Licensing: An arrangement whereby a firm produces a product that uses an athletic platform tie-in. An athletic platform may give the licensee various kinds of rights-trade-mark rights, logo rights, and symbol rights.

• Market analysis: Evaluation of what is happening in the marketplace. It helps a sports organization determine consumer needs and demands and competitive threats. It is also concerned with what the overall aggregate market of consumers looks like and what changes and trends can be forecasted.

• Market Leader: The firm in an industry with the largest market share.

• Market Penetration: A strategy for company growth by increasing sales of current products to current market segments without changing the products.
• Market segmentation: dividing the market into different portions based on differences in customers.

• Market segmentation: Grouping consumers together based on common needs.

• Marketing Channel (or Distribution Channel): A set of interdependent organisations involved in the process of making a product or service available for use or consumption by the consumer or business users.

• Marketing concept: The ideal standard or philosophy perspective wherein a sports organization attempts to meet its own goals, satisfy consumers, and fulfill social responsibilities.

• Marketing mix: Generic tactics marketers can use to adapt to and influence responses in the marketplace. Also known as the 4P's (product, place, promotion, and price).

• Marketing research: The systematic process of collecting, analyzing and reporting information to enhance decision making throughout the strategic sports marketing process.

• Marketing Strategy: The marketing logic by which the business unit hopes to achieve its marketing objectives.

• Marketing: The set of activities concerned with the initiation resolution and/or avoidance of exchange relationships.

• Maturity stage: The stage in the product life cycle in which sales growth slows or levels off.

• New products: It consists of six types: new-to-the-world, new product lines, additions to existing product lines, improvements and revision to existing products, repositioning, and cost of reduction.
• New-to-the-world product: Brand new sports innovations such as the first in-line skates, the first sailboard, or the advent of arena football.

• Niche Marketing: The process of carving out a relatively tiny part of a market that has very special need not currently being filled.

• Packaging: The activities of designing and producing the container or wrapper for a product.

• Penetration pricing: Selling a new sports product at a low initial price relative to the competition in order to gain market share.

• Positioning: Fixing the sports product in the minds of the target market by manipulating the marketing mix.

• Price: A statement of value for a sports product.

• Primary data: Data gathered for the specific research question at hand.

• Product Concept: A detailed version of the new-product idea stated in meaningful consumer terms.

• Product design: The aesthetics, style, and function of the sports product.

• Product life cycle: A useful tool for developing a marketing strategy and then revising this tragedy as a product moves through the stages of introduction growth, maturity, and decline.

• Product mix: The total assortment of product lines that a sports organization sells.

• Product: Any offering actually or potentially desired by a target market of consumers. A product may include a physical object (equipment, term) service (personal trainer); idea (fitness, good health, excitement); or place (exercise facility). Products satisfy physiological, psychological, or social needs.
• Psychographic dimensions – grouping potential customers on psychological factors including personality, life-style, and motivation for purchases

• Publicity: Any form of non paid commercially significant news or editorial comment about ideas, products, or institutions.

• Quantity discounts: Rewarding buyers for purchasing large quantities of a sports product by lowering prices

• Retailer: A business whose sales come primarily from retailing.

• Retailing: All activities involved in selling goods or services directly to final consumers for their personal, non business use.

• Sampling: A type of consumer promotion whereby a brand is given to a consumer free of charge. The sample may be the normal size of the product as it is presented for sale, or it might be a reduced portion.

• Sporting goods: Tangible products that are manufactured, distributed, and marketed within the sports industry.

• Sports agents: A breed of commercial sales representatives who market the talents of the most highly skilled athletes. They have recently expanded into event production, television, and event ownership.

• Sports equipment manufacturers. Organizations responsible for producing and sometimes marketing sports equipment used by consumers who are participating in sports at all different levels of competition.

• Sports markets: Clusters of people who actually or potentially desire a sports product.

• Sports product: A good a service, or a combination of the two that is designed to provide benefits to a sports spectator, participant, or sponsor.
• Sports retailers: Channel members who are involved in all the activities of selling products and services to end users or final consumers.

• Statistical analysis: Procedures based on probability and used to summarize data, test hypotheses, and make predictions.

• Strategic plan: A detailed outline of your analyses; evaluation and selection of market opportunities so that you can reach your market objectives. It tells people what you want to do, the support your venture will need, the markets for your product, and how you will ensure profitability.

• Strategic Sports Marketing Process: The process of planning, implementing, and controlling marketing efforts to meet organizational objectives and satisfy consumers needs.

• Survey Research: The collection of responses from people through a questionnaire administered face to face by a researcher, over the phone, by mail, or by computer.

• Whole Selling: All activities involved in selling goods and services to those buying for resale or business use.

**Significance of the Study**

Sports goods retailers require talents, for cultivating their professional skills and their practical ability and expanding scope of knowledge in sports goods business. As this is new specialty in research field it needs to develop and by joint efforts of experts and retailers who are willing for the development of this specialty reach a higher level. As numerous sub disciplines have raised concerns about fragmentation and specialization of their field, varieties of employment options can
be available for physical education graduates. Strictly teacher education programmes in physical education need careful scrutiny to determine whether they have moved with the ‘new thinking’ and are providing these graduates with the latest necessary skills, knowledge and attitudes to implement new requirements. The modern retail industry provides a challenging arena for dedicated and multi-skilled managers, providing both financial and personal rewards to Professional Endeavour that is only limited by an individual’s ambition. Thus important significance of this study is cited below:

• The study would throw light on knowing all the aspects of market trends, including economic, demographic, geographic, consumption and the structure of supply chain mechanism.

• The study would be helpful in tracing more professional ideas, including local competitors and local distributors and retailers in the market.

• The study will explore in identifying employment potential for Physical Education graduates in Vidarbha.

• The study would be helpful in tracing out views of sports goods retailers and consumers of Vidarbha region.

• The studies will high-light on role of technology and effect of innovations in manufacturing sports goods.

• The study would be significant to explore various business and employment opportunities in sports goods retail market in Vidarbha region.

• The study would throw light on the role of media in sports goods business.

• The study would also be significant as it would wash out the misconceptions of sports goods retail market, regarding various marketing mix effects and about newly innovated sports goods.

• The study would be significant to study the brand value of sports goods.
• The study will explore the role of sports sponsorship for development of sports in Vidarbha.

• The study would be significant to develop curricula as per market trends of the 21st century for physical education professionals.