CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Asian Games have come to occupy a place of prominence in the realm of regional as well as international sports. There is exaggeration in calling Asian Games as the most popular sports event at the continental level which has come to hog limelight in the regional and international media as the most important sports event after Olympics Games. The regularity with which Asian Games are being held and the number of countries represented in it and sports events included in each Asian Games are peculiar developments that add to its glory and make it an event worth watching. The glory, pride and sports spirit intertwined with Asian Games make every country represented in it as the special one.

Despite political and socio-cultural as well as economic differences between and among various Asian countries, the countries represented in the Asian Games tend to overcome these differences and show a spirit of oneness, Asianism, transparency and brotherhood. Israel and Arab countries having political differences participate with equal enthusiasm. North Korea and South Korea have been represented in many Asian Games despite their mutual political differences. There are similar other examples where countries having mutual differences have come together on one platform. Thus participation in Asian Games by countries having political differences is a testimony to the fact that international sports transcend the physical boundaries. Another notable feature of the Asian Games is the inclusion of former Soviet republics of Central Asia. Inclusion of China and Central Asian Republics have added

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glamour to sports events of the Asian Games and the records set in different sporting events match the Olympics standards in many respects.

Asian Games, as a subject of academic research as well as topic of debate in many and journalistic circles, have attracted considerable attention. There exists a plethora of literature on different aspects of Asian Games in the form of books outlining its history, providing statistical data and analysis of different sports events, newspaper reports covering different Asian Games held from time to time. However, there was a paucity of in-depth research on India’s performance in various Asian Games, particularly in the light of the fact that India has been one of the founding members of Asian Games and had the honour of hosting the First Asian Games at the outset of the 1950s. The present research work is a humble attempt to present the performance of Indian players in the Asian Games from 1974 to 2002. The entire study is divided into six chapters.

It is noteworthy that during the early decades of the post-independence period, sports and physical education in India remained the part and parcel of overall education policy and did not receive proper attention which it should have received. Lack of financial resources was attributed as the main cause for the slow development of sports in the country. It is further observed that there was also lack of proper perspective on sports. It is equally interesting to observe that the Tarachand Committee (1948) and University Education Commission (1948-49) mainly dealt with the education policy and whatever little attention it could pay was focused on physical education with minimal emphasis on sports as such.

While appraising the activities of the All India Council of Sports (AICS) established in 1954, it also reveals that many Members of the Parliament (MPs) were
not satisfied with the functioning of the AICS. It provides a detailed analysis of the views of the MPs articulated by them in the Lok Sabha on 27 September 1955. It also takes into account the attitude of the Government of India in this regard. The Ad-Hoc Enquiry Committee on Games and Sports, constituted in 1958, had recommended for making available more facilities and better opportunities for training in sports in the country. This chapter also deals with the concern expressed by the MPs in the Lok Sabha in February 1959 with regard to deterioration in the standards of sports in India.

An appraisal of the detailed discussions on the motion of sports in India that took place in the Lok Sabha on 21 November and 8 December 1960 revealed a growing sense of awareness among the parliamentarians as well as the Government of India. The Union Government seemed to be aware of the drawbacks like lack of trained sports personnel, inadequate playfields and stadia etc., in the country. As sports federations/associations were autonomous, hence government could not interfere in their day-to-day functioning. The Union Government declined the demand for taking over sports federations. However, paucity of financial resources was considered to be the main impediment in the development of sports in India at that juncture.

It is observed from the analysis of the debate on sports policy that took place in the Lok Sabha on 8 December 1970 that majority of the MPs expressed serious concern about deteriorating standards in the country. Lack of financial resources, in adequate sports facilities like proper playfields and stadia etc.; frequent political interference, induction of non-sports persons in national sports organizations,
indiscipline and nepotism were seen as drawbacks from which sports in India suffered.

The analysis also takes into account the draft National Sports Policy formulated by the All India Council of Sports in 1980 which had laid emphasis on mass participation in sports, raising the standards of sports and the need for providing necessary facilities and infrastructure for sports in the country. While dealing with the fact of establishment of a separate Department of Sports under the charge of a Minister of State, in 1982, the chapter also delves into the salient points of the National Sports Policy-1984. Highlights of this policy inter alia included priority by the Union as well as state governments to sports and physical education in the process of overall development, promotion of traditional sports, availability of sports facilities, incentives to sports persons etc.

In its analysis of sports provisions in the National Education Policy-1986, the study shows that the recommendations made in the new policy are primarily based on National Sports Policy-1984 and the Revised Programme of Action for the National Policy of Education-1986, made public in 1992 contained some concrete suggestions for effective implementation of the objectives of the sports policy.

It presents an analysis of the objectives of the National Sports Policy-2001 or NSP-2001, as well as draft National Sports Policy-2007, which aim at broad-basing of sports and achieving excellence in sports at the national and international levels. It is revealed that the NSP-2001 tried to overcome the drawbacks and snags found in the implementation of NSP-1984 over the years. The new Sports Policy 2007, while enumerating shortcomings in previous policies, has come out with more concrete and pragmatic measures. It also envisages government’s attempt to bring the
subject of sports from the State List to the Concurrent List of the Constitution so that the Union Government can legislate on matters pertaining to sports. However, the success of all these measures depends on implementing the provisions of the policy in letter and spirit so that the standards of the sports in the country are elevated.

Nevertheless, there has been a growing interest in India towards sports since independence but at the operational level, India’s performance in intentional sports meets, particularly the Olympic Games and Commonwealth Games does not commensurate with India’s size, resources, population and its standing in the international arena. On certain occasions, India had shown, to some extent, good performance in the Commonwealth Games, but on an average, India’s performance on the whole has been below the level.

In Olympic Games, India’s overall performance has been more than dissatisfactory. India’s show in these international sports meets reflects on country’s overall image in the international comity of nations. Even smaller countries have considerably improved upon their sports standards, which are amply demonstrated in their sterling performance and rich haul of gold medals they make. This is a sad commentary on the state of affairs pervading the realm of sports in India. It needs to be addressed in totality, with particular reference to raising the standards of sports in the country.

Efforts for bringing Asian countries for participating in sports activities under a common platform had been there right from the early decades of the twentieth century. However, these endeavours were in piecemeal because majority of the Asian countries were under the colonial rule of western powers and as such they could not respond to any piecemeal efforts for participation in sports activities under
one banner. Despite these odds, some countries which were free made trials in this success and organized sports competitions under the banner of Far Eastern Championship beginning in 1913 and such endeavours continued until the latter half of the 1930s when the outbreak of the Second World War thwarted this ongoing process. A notable feature of the Far Eastern Championship process was that only limited number of countries – China, Philippines and Japan – had been the main participants in the sports competitions.

In the post-Second World War period, the decline of colonial powers paved the way for decolonization and many former colonies of Asia gained independence during late 1940s and in the 1950s. India, which was on the cusp of getting independence in August 1947, facilitated the organization of first Asian Relations Conference in early March 1947, which was attended by many Asian countries. On the sidelines of this conference, the idea of organizing sports competitions for Asian countries was also discussed and there was born the idea of Asian Games, though in embryonic form. The formation of Asian Games Federation (AGF) helped this idea sprout into seedlings and on the sidelines of the Olympic Games in London in 1949, some representatives of Asian countries, including India, decided to hold first Asian Games in New Delhi in 1950, a proposal to which India agreed.

It is further revealed that India hosted the first Asian Games in March 1951, instead of 1950 as agreed to earlier. In the first Asian Games hosted by India in 1951, 11 countries had entered 489 competitors. At the second Asian Games held in the Philippines in 1954, 18 countries of Asia were represented by 1021 competitors and at the third Asian Games hosted by Japan in 1958, 20 countries had sent 1422 competitors. While in the subsequent fourth, fifth as well as sixth Asian Games held
in 1962, 1966 and 1970 respectively, the number of participating Asian countries varied between 17 and 18, but there was increase in the number of competitors particularly in the fourth and fifth Asian Games, with slight decline in the number of participating competitors in the sixth Asian Games. This showed that the Asian countries had been enthusiastic about taking part in the Asian Games which seemed to have become institutionalized. The holding of Asian Games after an interregnum of four years had become almost an accepted phenomenon and participating countries were willing to host the next Games. The spirit of Asian Games was gaining momentum and it was a happy augury for the future of the Games.

It becomes further discernible from the analysis of the performance of Indian players in various Asian Games that with the exception of two or three Asian Games, the performance of Indian players in general could not be said to be satisfactory. On the other hand, new entrants like China and some of the Central Asian Republics not only displayed excellent performance but continued to improve upon their performance after each event. India's praiseworthy performance was in the 1951 Asian games while it was placed second by winning a total of 52 medals, of which 15 were gold medals, 16 silver medals and 21 bronze medals. In the subsequent Asian Games, India's position ranked between seventh and tenth.

There followed a deterioration in India's performance. Athletic events contain highest number of medals as compared to other sporting events and whenever India's overall medal tally witnessed increase of decrease it was mainly due to Indian athletic contingent's performance. Besides, the selectors seemed to ignore the warnings that came after each Asian Game and continued to follow the beaten track instead of reckoning the new ground realities and accordingly make improvements in
the India teams to be sent to the Asian Games. Other countries sent their players to
the Asian Games as preparatory to the ensuing Olympic Games so that they could
pre-judge the performance of their players and make suitable amendments before
sending them to Olympics. However, this sort of policy and far-sightedness was
missing in case of India because of India's more miserable performance in the
Olympic Games held during that period.

Hypothesis have been tested in this study. The first hypothesis that 'other Asian
countries like Japan, South Korea, China etc., are far ahead of India in terms of their
performance in international games, particularly in Asian Games', has been tested
and found valid. This can be judged from the number of gold medals won by these
countries in each Asian Games vis-à-vis India. The validity of second hypothesis that
'these Asian countries have a well-concerted national sports policy with specific
emphasis on International Games and Asian Games is a part of it. Whereas, India
has no clear cut sports policy with regard to International Games, inclusive of the
Asian Games', is also proved.

The third hypothesis that 'as compared to India, other Asian countries allocate
sufficient financial resources for the promotion of sports while India allocates
meagre financial resources for the sports', is also found valid. Similarly, the validity
of the fourth hypothesis that 'there is lack of better sports infrastructure like training
and stadia facilities, sports equipment and other paraphernalia for its sportspersons
in India', is also authenticated by the present study. In view of poor and dismal
performance of Indian players in most of the Asian Games the validity of hypothesis
that 'there is a dire need of reorienting the training facilities, making more incentives
available for the players, and better coaches to motivate the players', is also attested
to. The final hypothesis that mutual cooperation between India and other Asian countries like Japan, South Korea and China in the realm of sports is advantageous for India to learn from them and thereby help improve its performance in international games is true.

Suggestions

The following suggestions are offered to improve the performance of Indian players in international games:

1. Sports, which is currently a State subject, should be brought on the Concurrent List, so that it becomes easy for the Union Government to formulate a uniform sports policy for the entire country and sports are not left to the whims and fancies of the State governments alone;

2. Once the subject of sports is brought on the Concurrent List, the Union Government should make arrangements in the budget to allocate adequate funds for the development of sports.

3. Identical measures should be adhered to by the states in allocating separate funds for developing sports in their respective jurisdiction.

4. The Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) should be authorized to scrutinize the accounts of the Central and state governments in this regard.

5. The Sports Ministry at the Centre should work as nodal agency to coordinate, plan and monitor implementation of objectives envisaged in the National Sports Policy.

6. The sportspersons showing excellence should be provided sufficient incentives so that they can keep up their spirit and zeal and become role model for others as well.
7. India has hosted Asian Games twice and is hosting Commonwealth Games in 2010. Hosting such international sporting events provides ample opportunities for having new experiences in different aspects of sports. Such experiences should be utilized for the improvement of domestic sports.

8. Sports infrastructure facilities laid down for hosting international sporting events should be made permanent facilities for training local sportspersons.

9. Performance of Indian players in each international sports meet should be reviewed and shortcomings should be highlighted in order to be rectified. The persons responsible for dismal performance should be brought to books.

10. A national level committee of experts drawn, from different fields, should be constituted to oversee the planning, implementation, monitoring of progress of different sports schemes mooted by the Centre and various state governments from time to time.