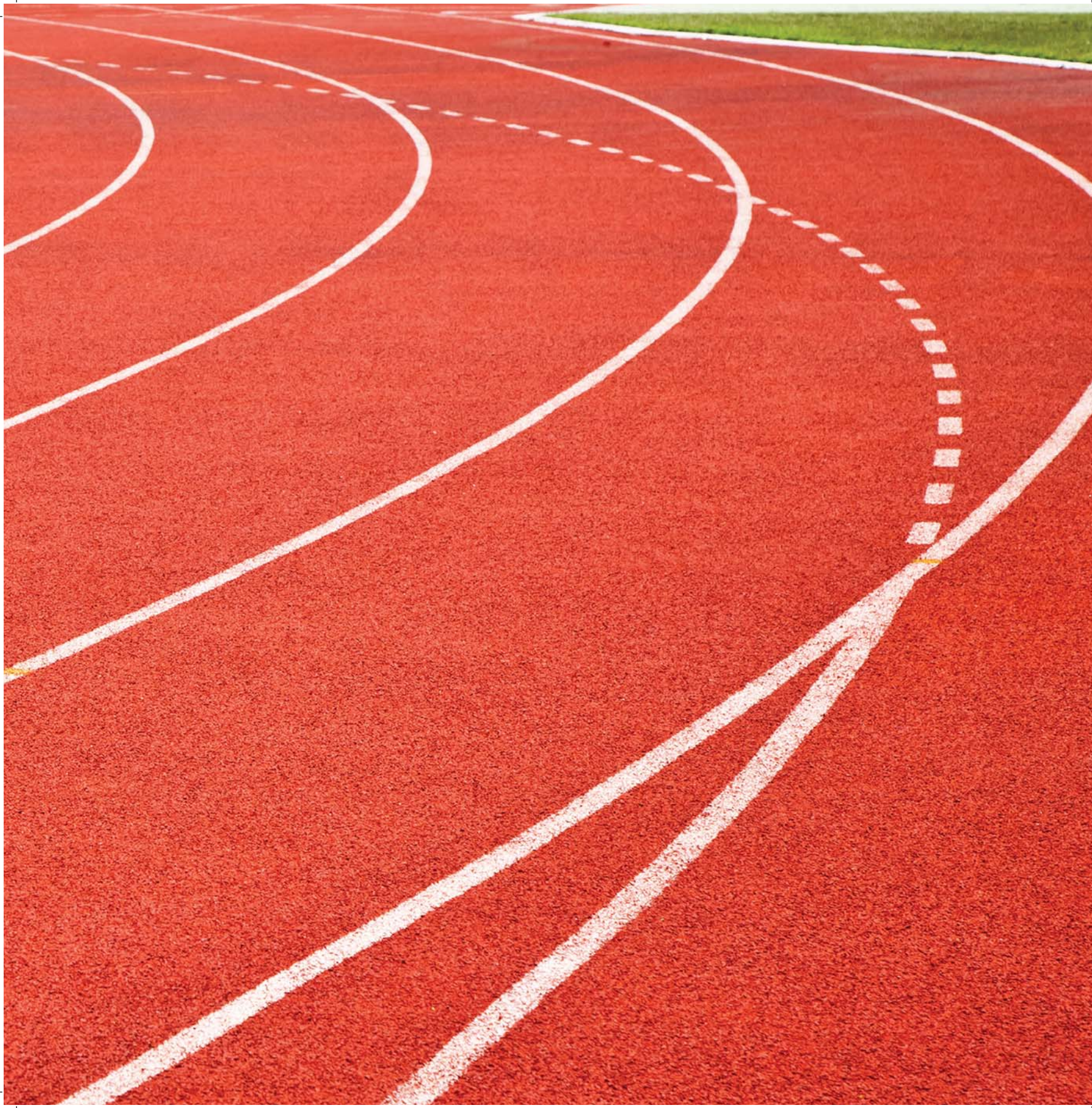




LET'S PLAY

TARGET 50 OLYMPIC MEDALS
ACTION PLAN FOR REVITALISING SPORTS IN INDIA



CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	2
ACTION PLAN: SHORT TERM	
1. Target a Group of Priority Sports	4
2. Organize Sportspersons into Three Groups for Each Priority Sport	5
3. Harness the Potential of Indigenous and Regional Sports	6
4. World-Class Coaches	7
5. Grading System for Coaches	8
6. Sports Injury Insurance Scheme	9
7. Strengthening and Scaling-up of Existing STCs (SAI Training Centres)	10
8. Facilitate Creation of More Sports’ Academies for Individual Sports	11
9. Create a Digital Database for Sports in the Country	12
10. Implement National Sports Code and Sports Bill	13
11. Promote Revenue Generating Methods for Team Leagues of Priority Sports	14
12. Review Performance of Sportspersons, Sports Bodies and Infrastructure	15
ACTION PLAN: MEDIUM TO LONG TERM	
13. Catch Them Young	18
14. Sports Curriculum for Schools	20
15. Dedicated Training Programme for Coaches	21
16. Encourage Development of Sports Infrastructure through Private or PPP mode	22
17. Develop Health and Psychological Support Division (HPSD)	23
18. Consistent Funding Contracts	24
19. Host International Events in Priority Sports	25
20. Promoting a Culture of Sports	26



**"WE ARE A LARGE AND DIVERSE NATION.
SPORTS CAN BE A GREAT MEANS OF NATIONAL
INTEGRATION"**

SHRI NARENDRA MODI
HONOURABLE PRIME MINISTER OF INDIA

INTRODUCTION

The second most populous nation in the world has the lowest rank in terms of medals per capita. It is disappointing that a country that has world class talent in various disciplines has not been able to produce champions in the area of sports. Compared to previous years, this year witnessed large participation in Olympics. However, only two medals could be bagged. India's performance in Olympics over the past 60 years has shown limited improvement in performance in terms of medals won, peaking only in the London 2012 Olympics.

This peak had been achieved on account of increased investment towards constructing sporting facilities, owing to the recent international events such as Common Wealth Games. However, the country still does not have a conducive environment for sports to polish the talent of Indian sportspersons, and make them at par with their global counterparts. Efforts need to be undertaken at each level, from family and communities to schools, regional academies, states and national level. These efforts need to be aimed at radically increasing the level of sporting activities, filling the gaps in the system and monitoring for lags. Moreover, these efforts should help in overcoming the existing societal barrier towards sports that can be summarised in the popular phrase

"Kheloge kudoge to honge kharab, padhoge likhoge to banoge nawab."

In this context, NITI Aayog presents a 20 point action plan that highlights some key areas that require improvement. These action points have been divided to a short term vision (4 to 8 years) and a medium to long term vision (8 to 15 years). The action points identify the initiatives required to be undertaken by the country to achieve a target of 50 medals in the 2024 Summer Olympics.

ACTION PLAN

SHORT TERM

1. TARGET A GROUP OF PRIORITY SPORTS

To improve the performance of sports and demonstrate medal winning performance, it is important to prioritize ten sports and develop an outcome oriented action plan for each of these sports. Countries like Kenya and Jamaica participate in only two Olympics sports but have managed to get a medal tally of 100 and 78 respectively.

The ten priority sports should be ones with high winning potential as well as those in which India has won medals in the past. The action plan should be extensive in its coverage. It should include targets in the next four year cycle, training and coaching schedules to achieve those targets, medical, psychological and drug test schedules, institutional and private support systems for all categories of players of each sport. Each action plan should be reviewed after every 4 years and its outcomes assessed annually.

India could take lessons from other countries such as the United Kingdom (UK), whose performance in the Olympics has significantly improved in the past few decades, from 13 medals in 1968 to 67 medals in 2016. UK has a Sports Business Plan to support high performance sports (elite sports).

2. ORGANIZE SPORTSPERSONS INTO THREE GROUPS FOR EACH PRIORITY SPORT

Organise all sportspersons into 3 groups - A, B, & C, in accordance with their past four years' performance and future prospects. Grouping can be done in the following way:

- **Group A*** – Players who have been in the top 50 at the Olympics and/or other international level sports events, such as the Asian Games, Commonwealth Games, Paralympic Games, etc.
- **Group B*** – Young sportspersons ranked between 51 – 150 at Olympics, and/or other international level sports events
- **Group C** – National, State and District level championship performers, those who demonstrate the capacity to achieve a medal result at World or Olympics level (youth or regular) within next eight years

*In case of different rankings, as in case of participation in multiple international events, highest ranking in the past 4 years could be used to decide entry into groups.

3. HARNESS THE POTENTIAL OF INDIGENOUS AND REGIONAL SPORTS

It is important to scout natural sports talent from inaccessible tribal, rural and coastal areas of the country and nurture them for achieving excellence in sports. For instance, best performing players in wrestling come from Haryana and Jharkhand is known for its talent in archery. Talent needs to be identified early, trained and sponsored at the right time for them to become world-class sportspersons. Strengthening the existing institutional structure for identifying sportspersons and giving them the requisite training through sport training centres is the key to produce world class sportspersons.

The Sport Authority of India (SAI) has initiated a Special Area Games (SAG) Scheme for this purpose that covers 26 disciplines. At present, there are 19 SAG Centres in the country having a total strength of 1,676 trainees in the age group of 12 to 18 years. The funding available per sportsperson is very low, only about Rs.12,000 per annum. Rigorous efforts need to be made to increase the pool of financial resources for these players. Increase in monetary stipend to players into these sports will attract more and more talented people from these remote areas to take up sports.

4. WORLD-CLASS COACHES

Coaching and mentoring are fundamental skills required for the development of any sportsperson. A great coach often is a good sportsperson but a great sportsperson may not necessarily become a good coach. A coach has to impart training, knowledge and important skills that will ensure the performance and success of sportspersons.

- With the promotion of sports in India, there would be a growing demand for coaches and trainers. The gap has to be filled by hiring more number of national and international coaches per sport, per training centre and per location.
- A well-defined and transparent selection criteria should be put in place that can be reviewed from time to time to hire coaches based on talent, qualification, experience and proven track record.
- Proper incentives (or a programme) should be developed for transition of newly and previously retired sportspersons and/or award winners from Olympics, Asian Games, Commonwealth Games etc.; to serve as coaches, advisers or mentors since their experience will greatly benefit the sportspersons.

5. GRADING SYSTEM FOR COACHES

Performance of the coaches should be reviewed and assessed so as not to compromise with the quality of coaching. For these reasons, we should:

- Review the performance of coaches annually through a quantitative cum qualitative assessment.
- Develop a ranking system to judge the competence at the State, National and International level.
- Recognise efforts through certification, scholarships, attractive pay, promotion or other benefits.

6. SPORTS INJURY INSURANCE SCHEME

The fear of being seriously injured is a factor that can adversely affect the competence of sportspersons. This can be addressed if a sports injury insurance scheme is implemented to provide insurance against serious injuries. The insurance scheme should be tailored as per the needs of each sports discipline and should cover players from different categories.

Karnataka's Department of Youth Empowerment and Sports has started an innovative scheme called "Youth Sports Insurance Scheme" to support sportspersons by encouraging youths from the state by providing accident/health insurance. India can also take cues from the models of UK and Australia that have well developed sports insurance schemes.

The proposed sports insurance scheme may have the following features:

- Eligibility – open to all three groups of sportspersons
- Life time insurance for sportsperson between the ages of 5 – 35 years
- Insurance to family members in the case of loss of life
- Loss of sports kit
- Personal accident insurance
- Disability insurance
- Hospital and pharmaceutical expenses
- Children education and employment loss compensation

Complete information about this sports insurance scheme should be provided to the players through various facilitating organizations.

7. STRENGTHENING AND SCALING-UP OF EXISTING STCS (SAI TRAINING CENTRES)

There are 56 STCs in the country having a total strength of 5,394 trainees (3,807 boys and 1,587 girls). While these centres have produced the Olympians that qualified for the recent games, they are sometimes prone to negligence, substandard delivery of services and lack of timely disbursement of funds and kits.

Presently, STCs take children at the age group of 12 – 18 years. However, this should be reduced to 8 years so that the talent can be identified at a very young age. There should be regular monitoring of the condition of students at these training centres to correct negligence. A grievance redressal system should also be in place so that children, particularly girls, do not encounter abuse. Lastly, more such centres should be opened up so that a larger number of players qualify and compete in the next three summer Olympics. At least one more STC can be established in each state by 2020 that can help increase the strength of trainees to at least 10,000.

8. FACILITATE CREATION OF MORE SPORTS ACADEMIES FOR INDIVIDUAL SPORTS

There is a scarcity of sport academies that target individual sport disciplines in India. Sports Academies play a vital role in grooming of sportspersons for sporting events. At present, there are only a handful of such academies such as Gopichand Badminton Academy, Bhiwani Boxing Club, Bhaichung Bhutia Football Schools, Tata Football Schools, Prakash Padukone Badminton Academy, Mahesh Bhupati Tennis Academy, Tata Archery Academy.

More individual sports academies need to be set up across different parts of India for the identified priority sports. These academies should provide a platform for Sub-Junior, Junior and Senior players to get expert guidance on all aspects related to their physical and psychological training under one roof. Steps that can be taken to create more academies include facilitating the availability of land to retired sportspersons and subsidies to procure sporting equipment to world class sportspersons to start their regional academies.

9. CREATE A DIGITAL LIBRARY FOR SPORTS IN THE COUNTRY

Effective implementation and monitoring of the recommendations can be hampered by lack of accurate information. Data on sportspersons and trainees, infrastructure, schemes/incentives of the Government and others is scattered. There is a need to establish an interactive sports data repository in the country. The repository should contain the following information:

- Profile of sportspersons and trainees who have participated at any formal level. Their performance should also be detailed out for monitoring their progress. This would also enable quick identification of possible participants for any sporting event.
- Inventory of infrastructure (training facilities, academies, stadiums etc.) in every state and support services provided by all the facilities to sportsperson.
- Details on available coaches, such as their ranks, previous positions held, sporting history, remuneration etc.
- Literature in the form of videos, short films on the international best practices of priority sports. These videos can be used by coaches to strategize and train sportspersons.

10. IMPLEMENT NATIONAL SPORTS CODE AND SPORTS BILL

It is essential to promote ethical practices in sports and improve transparency and accountability of sports bodies. Draft National Sports Development Bill, 2013 made an effort to tackle these issues. Salient features of the Bill are:

- Development and promotion of Olympics sports, Paralympic sports, Special Olympics sports and Sports for hearing and visually impaired persons
- Implementation of anti-doping measures by the National Anti-Doping Agency. Central Government should provide financial assistance to implement such measures
- Prevention of sexual harassment of women in sports
- Prevention of fraud of age
- Mechanism for sports dispute settlement and establishment of a Dispute Settlement and Appellate Tribunal.
- Defined duties and responsibilities of Sports Authority of India, India Olympic Association and National Sports Federations.

This bill can be implemented after incorporating accounts of different stakeholders.

11. PROMOTE REVENUE GENERATING METHODS FOR TEAM LEAGUES OF PRIORITY SPORTS

Experiences of Indian Premier League (IPL) in India, and premier football clubs across the world, have shown that the investments in marketing and promotion of league tournaments have reaped benefits in terms of attracting sponsors, popularizing the sport, and increased viewership. Thus it is recommended that;

- Heavy investments are made in marketing and advertising tournaments (from district level to international level) of existing leagues in the country, such as those of Hockey India League, Golf Premier League, I-League (Football), and Indian Badminton League.
- Encourage movie stars to endorse leagues amongst the priority sports.
- Allow private companies/PSUs to acquire naming rights, i.e., buy rights to name a facility, event, sportspersons (beginning from the age of 5) typically for a defined period of time, in exchange of sponsoring related activities. This will incentivize buyer to market and promote products and services, promote customer retention and/or increase market share.
- Make the leagues more spectator friendly, by ensuring that no international tournament is taking place around the same time; maximum number of players are participating in the events; tournaments are conducted keeping in mind suitable weather, and timing of matches.
- Equally focus on maximizing revenue from theatrical rights, internet rights, sponsorships (title, ground, umpire, official food & drinks, blimps), franchisee fees, gate revenue, etc.

12. REVIEW PERFORMANCE OF SPORTSPERSONS, SPORTS BODIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

There should be a continuous review of performance of sportspersons, sports bodies, infrastructure and resources provided for each identified sport.

- Annual performance review by identifying suitable parameters, which may include strategies like peer review
- Review the conditions of the infrastructure and resources (training centres, stadiums) and benchmark them to world class standards
- Revise the criteria's periodically if required
- Should have sufficient back up sportspersons, coaches and resources in cases of replacements



ACTION PLAN



MEDIUM TO LONG TERM

13. CATCH THEM YOUNG

Studies suggest that a growing number of coaches, parents, and children believe that the best strategy to produce superior young sportspersons is to have them specialised in one sport from an early age. This strategy has produced successful young sportspersons across different countries in the recent Olympics. China's successful sportspersons in swimming had their talent identified at an age of 4 – 5 years. Similarly, the recent success of Germany in football has been attributed to successful youth academies of under-12-year olds.

Presently, the only provision India has to identify young talent is through SAI's National Sports Talent Contest, (NSTC) Scheme. The NSTC scheme scouts sports talent in the age group of 8 – 14 years from schools and nurtures them into future medal hopes by providing scientific training. However there is lack of awareness towards this scheme and lack of focus towards developing individual talent in the age group of 5 – 10 years.

The talent can be scouted through national level competitions for the priority sports. These competitions can start from the tehsil level across all schools and conclude at the national level. This annual competition across the 10 priority sports should be well publicized so as to reach all corners of the country. Both private and public schools should be allowed to participate.

- The best performing children at the state level should be given an opportunity to enter into the STCs of their choice in the state to further polish their talent. Furthermore, the best performing schools (highest number of medals) could be awarded grants to develop their sporting facilities.
- The children who qualify to the national level should be given an opportunity to be mentored under successful sportspersons at SAI's facilities to compete at the International Youth Olympics.
- ICT kits can also be used to identify the strengths of these children.

14. CONCURRENT FOCUS ON SPORTS IN SCHOOLS

There is a need to invest in sports right from childhood so that it paves the way for a career in sports. Presently, the priority given to academics over sports at school level limits the participation of students into sports. Sport is rarely given importance in schools and the players have to struggle very hard to balance their school timings with sports practice. In fact, even the recent draft education policy places physical education with co-curricular activities, and does not chalk out methods to promote the same. Concerns about the quality of physical education teacher training, teaching and teaching resources, inadequate supervision of practice, lack of professionalism and appropriate ethics also impacts the students' experience in sports.

Schools are the best sources of intervention to implement a structured sports program that will help in encouraging children to take up sports seriously while also improving the fitness standards in children. Following are the key measures that can be undertaken at this level:

- Sports should also be given equal priority as other academic subjects. The performance of children in sports can be added to the overall evaluation. Meanwhile, dedicated time towards sports can be ensured for students across all grades.
- Physical education teachers should meet minimum eligibility criteria and their performance should be monitored. These teachers should get equal pay as their academic counterparts. Amongst government schools, talented sports coaches can be put on a rotation bases in different districts delivering good performance.
- Schools should have a mandate to devote a fixed proportion of total expenditure towards procuring and maintaining sporting equipment and infrastructure.

15. DEDICATED TRAINING PROGRAMMES FOR COACHES

To make the best out of our sportspersons, we need the coaches also to be the best. A coach cannot bring out the best of a sportsperson unless he has the requisite training.

- A dedicated and tailored programme should be developed to enhance the growth of both current and emerging coaches.
- The structure of the programme should suit the requirements of the coach and enable him to deliver high performance.
- The curriculum should be made interactive, flexible and adaptive.
- Coaches should get exposure to the leading practices in sports across the globe.
- They should be made aware and be equipped with the most recent technology or research for better athletic performance.

16. ENCOURAGE DEVELOPMENT OF SPORTS INFRASTRUCTURE THROUGH PRIVATE OR PPP MODE

Limited funding avenues for sports and lack of state of the art facilities make a strong argument for roping in private sector. Public-Private Partnership in construction/upgradation of sports infrastructure and facilities could be encouraged via making provisions for:

- Central government, state government, and municipality funding assistance in the form of Viability Gap Funding
- Providing soft loans (low interest rate loans)
- Land grants on long-term lease
- Giving permission to develop residential colonies around their stadia/academies
- Encouraging them to adopt regional Sports Training Centres (STCs), along with their administrative control and automatic naming rights (of the facilities and sportspersons). This would make them responsible for maintaining/scaling up of the facilities, promotion of STCs to give their best performance etc.
- Existing public infrastructure like stadia and residential sports schools to private training academies could prove sustainable for both the Government and the private academies
- Lower import duties on sports equipment
- Attract sports equipment manufacturing under 'Make in India' program, in SEZ and CEZs, to bring down the cost of sports equipment in the country

17. DEVELOP HEALTH AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT DIVISION (HPSD)

Health, in the domain of sports, encompasses multiple dimensions including nutrition, diet, addressing injuries and psychological fitness.

It is suggested to set up a dedicated mechanism to address health and nutrition needs of sportspersons in each zone - North, South, East, West, Central, and North-East. The proposed HPSDs can be integrated with most of the SAI centres. This division could act as a nodal agency catering to all sports health related delivery mechanisms, and would comprise world class professionals in the domain of sports medicine, health and counselling. The objective to create this structure is to integrate diet and nutrition services for sportspersons at all three levels by the end of 8 years – during training, event and off-field.

Some specific activities suggested to be undertaken by the envisaged HPSDs are given below:

- Developing guidelines and educational material on sports health and psychological support for coaches and sportspersons. The material (audio, video or print) will act as a ready reckoner of sports health for the stakeholders.
- Access to world class personalised nutrition counsellor, and psychological trainer must be provided to all sportspersons covered by Targeted Olympic Podium Scheme. Access to world class qualified rehabilitation experts to handle injuries, including their 24X7 presence at all international events must be ensured.
- HPSD must also prescribe qualification criteria of all the experts to be recruited and ensure strict adherence to them.
- Creating an injury prevention program focusing on education about rehydration, nutrition and monitoring team members “at risk”. Season analysis reviews and pre-season screenings using functional movement screen may be used to identify members at risk.
- Make credible health/nutrition and psychological counselling available at all sports facilities, starting at tehsil level.
- Promoting specialised applied research in sports medicine, nutrition and sports psychology, including access to credible degree/diploma courses in sports health related disciplines.

18. CONSISTENT FUNDING CONTRACTS

It has been observed that various sportspersons and/or sports academies receive erratic funding from one year to another. In order to overcome this problem and provide constant support to our sportspersons, it is recommended that after each Olympics, a fixed 4 year contract is signed between SAI and sportspersons from Group A sportspersons, keeping in mind the funding required by them up to the next Olympics and other international events in between. For groups B and C also, the budgets for the next 4 years should be fixed, with consistent funding allocation for each year. Funding data for all the groups should be publically made available as soon as it gets finalised.

Funding could also be divided under the following programs:

- **Corporate Sponsored Medal Targeting Funding to Sportspersons** - This funding should be provided for initiatives to assist in preparing Group A sportspersons for the 2020 Olympic Games, other international events in between, via financing their coaching, providing them technical support and equipment.
- **Indian Games Team Preparation Funding** - This funding should be provided to all Group B sportspersons and national level players from group C, to prepare them win to medals at all international level sport events
- **Indian Youth Olympic Events** - This funding by the SAI should be used to host and participate in Youth Olympic Games, for players between the age group of 13-19 years. This funding will also be used to provide coaching, technical and medical support national level junior players to prepare for Youth Olympics and the Indian Olympics team

19. HOST INTERNATIONAL EVENTS IN PRIORITY SPORTS

As the examples of Commonwealth Games held in New Delhi in 2010, and national level games organized by various states such as Kerala (2015), Jharkhand (2011), Assam (2007) etc. have shown hosting national and international events at regular intervals not only gives a boost to country's sports infrastructure, but also increases awareness amongst people regarding different sports and inculcates a healthy sporting culture.

It is recommended that a separate arm under the SAI be created which should be responsible for bidding and staging of major sporting events in India. This should be done in partnership with regional sporting organizations to ensure that India hosts some of the world's biggest international sporting events. We must target of hosting 100 major events until 2026.

These events should primarily focus on attracting World Championships, Asian Championships and Commonwealth Games events to India, with the following objectives:

- To provide international level opportunities for people to engage in sports
- Use and demonstrate the legacy of Commonwealth Games 2010 and National Games
- Drive positive economic and social impact for the country

20. PROMOTING A CULTURE OF SPORTS

One of the key issues that influence parents to prohibit their children to take up sports is the public perception that sports offers low remuneration in the future is devoid of an economic safety net. Also, there is a general lack of awareness towards non-conventional sports.

Sports for women is definitely trending and representing a changing element for the Indian culture. However, there is more than often a lack of encouragement from parents and family members. There is also a lack of proper sports orientation for women. They are restricted to household work in some areas and therefore from sports. Women may also be subject to violence and harassment, which prevents some parents from letting their daughters participate in sports.

At the school level, teachers-parent interactions along with sports counsellors may help. Parents of talented children need to be appropriately counselled especially by representatives of STCs intending to admit their children, about the possible future in sports. This would also explain the care provided to children at these facilities, which would ensure their growth and hone their sporting skills.

There should be a nationwide campaign to raise awareness on sports, including India's representation in Olympics and their success across various sports. This can be done on the lines of the 'Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao' initiative. Effective implementation of this campaign would also help target children residing in remote villages. Further, active regional/local media support would be required for the cause of developing sports in India.

Once access towards sports at school level is established, local leagues can be encouraged. This takes inspiration from the US model wherein local sporting leagues are ubiquitous, inexpensive, and open to all. The local governments can sponsor prizes for competition between local leagues. This will add to the sporting culture at the community level. Meanwhile, coaching centres can be instituted with help of district level authorities to coach talent at school level, which can provide information on sports academies and the necessary training to enter the same.

LET'S PLAY TO WIN

