

India's Sports Transformation for Viksit Bharat@2047 Ramesh S. Nagaraddi¹ & H.S. Jange²

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17297514>

ABSTRACT:

India's vision of becoming a developed nation by 2047, referred to as Viksit Bharat @ 2047, necessitates a comprehensive transformation across multiple sectors, including education, technology, economy, and healthcare. Among these, sports represent a unique and powerful domain that connects physical health, cultural identity, youth engagement, and global prestige. This paper examines India's current sports ecosystem and outlines a roadmap for transformation into a globally competitive sports power by 2047. Drawing from comparative international models, government initiatives, and socio-economic analysis, the paper identifies seven key pillars of transformation: grassroots development, infrastructure and sports science, sports economy and industry, Olympic and global excellence, inclusivity and empowerment, digital sports innovation, and fitness culture. The study argues that by mainstreaming sports as both an economic driver and a cultural necessity, India can achieve not only sporting excellence but also broader national development goals. Projecting a future where sports contribute 5–6% of India's GDP, create millions of jobs, and position India among the top five sporting nations, this paper establishes sports as an integral pillar of Viksit Bharat @ 2047.

KEYWORDS:

Viksit Bharat@2047, Khelo India, Fit India Movement, Sports infrastructure India, Sports science and technology, E-sports.

1. Introduction:

As India celebrates over seven decades of independence, the nation stands at the threshold of an ambitious vision: Viksit Bharat @ 2047. The government's long-term strategy envisions India as a fully developed nation by its centenary of independence. Development in this context is holistic, encompassing not only economic strength and technological leadership but also cultural vitality, human well-being, and global prestige. Sports, historically underemphasized in India's development discourse, have emerged as a critical domain through which these aspirations

can be realized.

Sports contribute to national identity, social cohesion, health and well-being, and economic development. Globally, nations such as the United States, China, Australia, and Japan have demonstrated how systematic investment in sports can deliver excellence on the world stage while fueling domestic industries and community engagement. For India, sports transformation is no longer optional; it is essential to harness the potential of its youthful population, combat rising lifestyle diseases, and secure a place in the global sporting order.

This paper explores how India can transform its sports ecosystem to align with the vision of Viksit Bharat@ 2047. It critically examines the present state of Indian sports, identifies gaps, and proposes a structured roadmap for long-term transformation.

2. Literature Review:

Sports as a Driver of National Development

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) identifies sports as a fundamental right and a vehicle for achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Studies show that sports participation enhances social capital, reduces crime rates, and promotes gender equity (Coalter, 2013).

Comparative International Models

- China: Adopted a centralized sports development model focusing on Olympic sports, leading to dominance in athletics, gymnastics, and swimming.
- United States: Built a sports economy worth over \$500 billion, anchored by collegiate sports, leagues, and commercialization.
- Australia: Invested heavily in sports science and grassroots programs after underperforming in the 1976 Olympics, achieving remarkable Olympic success thereafter.
- Japan: Integrated physical education into school curricula, cultivating a nationwide sports culture.

Indian Context

India has historically excelled in cricket, overshadowing other sports. However, recent decades have seen progress through initiatives like:

- Khelo India (grassroots and school-level engagement).
- Fit India Movement (national fitness awareness).
- Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS) (support for elite athletes).

Despite these efforts, India's medal tally at the Olympics remains modest compared to its population and potential. Literature suggests gaps in infrastructure, coaching quality, sports science integration, and funding distribution.

3. Objectives of Sports Transformation:

The transformation of Indian sports for Viksit Bharat @ 2047 aims to:

1. Integrate sports into the education system and daily lifestyle.
2. Achieve global sporting excellence, particularly in the Olympics.
3. Develop a sustainable sports economy contributing significantly to GDP.
4. Foster inclusivity across gender, disability, and regional disparities.
5. Position India as a hub for sports innovation, technology, and global events.

4. Methodology:

This study employs a qualitative policy analysis framework supported by:

- Review of government policies (Khelo India, National Sports Policy).
- Case studies of Indian athletes (PV Sindhu, Neeraj Chopra, Mirabai Chanu, Paralympians).
- Comparative analysis of international sports ecosystems.
- Projection models estimating sports economy contributions by 2047.

5. Current Landscape of Indian Sports:



India's sports narrative is dominated by cricket, which has built a billion-dollar industry but overshadowed other disciplines. However, there have been landmark achievements in recent years:

- Olympics: Neeraj Chopra's gold medal (Tokyo 2020), Mirabai Chanu's silver, Lovlina Borgohain's bronze.
- Women's Sports: PV Sindhu, Saina Nehwal, and Mary Kom have inspired nationwide participation.

- Para-sports: India secured its best-ever medal tally at the Paralympics (Tokyo 2020).
- Leagues: Pro Kabaddi League, Indian Super League (football), and others have professionalized non-cricket sports.

Challenges remain:

- Unequal access to infrastructure (urban vs. rural).
- Limited sports science expertise.
- Societal attitudes prioritizing academics over sports.
- Fragmented governance structures.

6. Roadmap for Transformation:

6.1 Grassroots Development

- Sports as a mandatory component of school curricula.
- AI-based talent identification systems.
- Regional academies focused on indigenous games (kabaddi, kho-kho, wrestling).

6.2 Infrastructure and Sports Science

- Establish high-performance centers in each state.
- Integrate sports medicine, biomechanics, and data analytics.
- Upgrade existing stadiums into multi-sport complexes.

6.3 Sports Economy and Industry

- Expand domestic sports leagues beyond cricket.
- Establish sports manufacturing hubs under Make in India.
- Promote sports tourism and event hosting.

6.4 Olympic and Global Excellence

- Focus investment on medal-heavy sports (athletics, shooting, wrestling, swimming).
- Collaborations with foreign coaches and institutes.
- Long-term athlete development programs.



6.5 Inclusivity and Empowerment

- Equal funding for women athletes.
- Mainstream para-sports and Special Olympics.

- Grassroots programs in marginalized and tribal regions.

6.6 Digital and Emerging Domains

- Promote e-sports as a regulated industry.
- Deploy VR/AR for training and injury prevention.
- Use blockchain for transparent funding and athlete sponsorships.



6.7 Sports as a Lifestyle

- Expansion of Fit India Movement.
- Promotion of marathons, cycling, yoga, and indigenous sports.
- Incentivize community participation through corporate partnerships.

7. Expected Milestones (2030–2047):

- By 2030:
 - » Sports literacy in 100% schools.
 - » Top 10 Olympic medal tally.
 - » Sports GDP contribution: 2–3%.
- By 2040:
 - » India as host of major global events (Olympics, FIFA World Cup).
 - » 100+ athletes ranked in world top 10.
 - » Sports GDP contribution: 4–5%.
- By 2047:
 - » India among top five sporting nations.
 - » 100+ Olympic medals.
 - » Sports GDP contribution: 6%+.

8. Discussion:

Sports transformation is not merely about medals; it is about nation-building. By embedding sports into education, India can create disciplined, resilient, and healthy citizens. The sports economy can generate millions of jobs in manufacturing, media, management, and tourism. Inclusivity ensures that sports empower women, differently-abled individuals, and marginalized communities.

Public-private partnerships will be crucial, as seen in the success of Indian Premier League (IPL) and Pro Kabaddi. Digital transformation, including e-sports and analytics, aligns with India's broader digital economy goals. Risks include over-commercialization, inequitable resource allocation, and potential neglect of indigenous sports. Balancing modern and traditional, commercial and community, elite and grassroots will be critical.

9. Conclusion:

India's journey toward Viksit Bharat @ 2047 cannot be complete without sports transformation. Sports must be recognized not as an extra-curricular activity but as a core component of national development. By leveraging its demographic dividend, integrating technology, fostering inclusivity, and learning from global best practices, India has the potential to emerge as a global sporting powerhouse. The vision for 2047 is not limited to medals but extends to building a healthier, more equitable, and economically stronger India through sports.

A forward-looking sports ecosystem will not only produce Olympic champions but also foster healthier citizens, reduce lifestyle diseases, promote social equity, and contribute significantly to the national economy. With systematic investment and a cultural shift that places sports on par with academics, India can redefine its global identity through athletic excellence and innovation.

Moreover, sports provide a unique platform for soft power diplomacy. By hosting global events, excelling in multiple disciplines, and reviving indigenous games, India can project itself as a confident, modern, and culturally rooted nation. At the community level, widespread participation in fitness and recreational activities will strengthen social cohesion and ensure that development is inclusive.

Ultimately, the transformation of sports in India is not only about medals and records—it is about nation-building, identity, and empowerment. The vision of Viksit Bharat @ 2047 demands that sports be mainstreamed into every aspect of life: education, economy, culture, and technology. If India can execute this roadmap with determination and consistency, the year 2047 will mark not only the centenary of independence but also the celebration of India as a global leader in sports and human development.

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Funding:

This study was not funded by any grant.

Conflict of interest:

The Authors have no conflict of interest to declare that they are relevant to the content of this article.

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