



# Indigenous Sports of India: Connecting Past to the Present

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## Abstract

Historically, sports was merely seen as a recreational or leisure activity (Mandell, 1984). However, in recent centuries sports became a global, social and an economic activity (Mylik, 2014). Since the beginning of the twentieth century, sports industry has been growing at a fast pace (Forster & Pope, 2004). Today, sports is recognised as a soft power as it's a global medium to improve diplomatic relations and to promote peace and prosperity (Beutler, 2008). Many indigenous and traditional sports are mentioned in several historic scriptures of India. Several local games have been practiced over centuries in India (Haque & Ghosh, 2014). Traditional and indigenous sports have served the purpose of channelizing youth's energy into constructive areas. Indigenous sports create a strong sense of belonging among the youth that can improve the well-being of tribal and backward communities (Rossi, 2015). It's in this context that this study examines the scope of indigenous sports industry in India. It's a remarkable achievement that many of India's indigenous sports have stood the test of time and continue to attract the youth even today. The development of such sports not only benefits the youth who participate in them, but also the Indian economy. Creation and utilization of sports infrastructure, employment generation and hosting sports events have positive economic impact on the long-term development of India. Hence, this study analysis in-depth about the various indigenous sports and their spread in India. It bridges the gap of lack of literature on indigenous sports in India.

**Keywords:** Indigenous/traditional Sports, Youth, Development, Policy Achievements, Economic Development, India

## **1. Introduction**

Globally, the sports industry is expected to grow at a rate of 3% to 5% each year (Sports Global Market Opportunities and Strategies Report, 2021). The economic importance and potential of sports is highlighted in fields such as sporting goods manufacturing, sporting events, sport-related services, and the media (Abeku & Musa, 2018). Several developed countries have taken huge interest in promoting sports. Sports not only has a positive impact on the health of the citizens but it also promotes the overall development of youth. Hence, it positively affects the Indian economy by strengthening its human capital resources. Sports also has indirect economic effects in addition to producing new revenue streams at various levels. It can also play a crucial role in reducing the healthcare expenditure in an economy as citizen's remain fit and so their spending on health automatically reduces. Sports can help children and teenagers to develop fundamental social and organisational skills, which are crucial at their workplace (Jadhav, 2021). It's crucial to treat sports as a 'public good' and bring it on the same pedestal as education and health across the world (Gaustad, 1999). The promotion of sporting culture among the youth of India facilitates universalisation of education (National Sports Development Code of India, 2011).

Traditional or indigenous sports are a part of a country's intangible heritage and forms the backbone of its socio-cultural practices (Table 1). In its framework on intangible cultural assets, UNESCO's 2003 convention acknowledges 'traditional play and games' as a subdomain (UNESCO: Intangible Cultural Heritage, P.3). Indian heritage has provided many traditional sports, advanced versions of which are now played globally, even in the Olympic games like badminton, hockey, wrestling, etc. (Gulia & Dhauta, 2019). Since independence, the Government of India has made several efforts to provide young athletes who play indigenous sports a better standard of living. Indigenous sports like Kabaddi, Mallakhamb and Kalaripayattu have been successful in making a mark at the international level.

Today the popularity of kabaddi has crossed the Asian borders and has spread across several other continents. One of the major landmarks in the history of this sport was its introduction in the 11th Asian Games as a medal event in 1990. The modern day Kabaddi is an amalgamation of agility, strength, speed and coordination (Kumar, 2014). The youth's perspective in India towards kabaddi was also influenced with the launch of 'Pro Kabaddi League' in 2014. The Kabaddi league is showing a great opportunity as it is now attracting high television ratings and profitable sponsorship deals. In 2017, Kabaddi emerged as one of the most important non-cricketing sports of India which was an important milestone in the promotion of indigenous sports (Jayakumar, 2020).

Known as the "The mother sport of ancient India", Mallakhambh is an amalgamation of aerial yoga, martial arts and gymnastics. It's primarily known as a sport from the state of Maharashtra. The first written record of the sport can be found in Manasollasa (1135 A.D.) which was a detailed instruction about military training written by the Chalukyan King, Somesvara III. Over the years it has emerged as a national sport with regular championships held at district, state and national level throughout the country (Burt, 2010). The first step towards the formal institutionalization of Mallakhambh was taken in 1958 by introducing it as a sport in the National Gymnastics Championship. The first National Mallakhambh Championship was organised in 1962 at Gwalior. The sport was further reinvigorated when it was declared as a State sport by Madhya Pradesh in 2013. In 2019, the Mallakhambh World Championship was held in Mumbai (Niti Aayog, 2021).

The origin of Kerala's prominent indigenous martial art, Kalaripayattu can be traced back to the Sangam period. Kalari is a traditional psycho-physiological discipline that promotes physical, mental and spiritual control. Each posture of this art reflects the deeply ingrained culture and history of Kerala. In ancient times, this martial art was used to train warriors since it involves great mind-body coordination and agility. In the modern era, Indian Kalaripayattu Federation is one of the primary governing body of the sport. (Mandakathingal, 2021).

Apart from the above mentioned major indigenous sports there are many others that are deeply etched in the history and culture of

India. North India has a rich culture of sports that has been passed down from generations to generations. In states like Jammu and Kashmir games like saz loung and tuli langun are played. Sqay is another form of martial arts that originated in Kashmir. The Sqay Federation of India now governs this sport. Thoda is another indigenous martial art form that originated in Himachal Pradesh (Kamal and Khan, 2020). Sports like Akhada Khushti, Kabaddi, Surr and Musti Yuddha are prominent in the states of Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Punjab (Tokarski, 2011). Rajasthan has various traditional sports like Satoliya, Archery, Polo, Rumal-Jhapatta and Camel racing. The Matsya Festival which is organised yearly in Alwar is known for celebrating and promoting some of the major indigenous sports of this region. Gatka is a traditional Sikh Martial art form that originated in Punjab. Today, the Gatka Federation of India and the World Gatka Federation together are taking steps for the revival of this ancient indigenous sport (Singh, 2014). Shooting ball, that is governed by the Shooting ball Federation of India is another traditional game hailing from North India. The first National Championship for the sport was held in 1976 in New Delhi.

Sports has been an integral part within the culture of Northeast India. The North-eastern states have a rich history of tribal indigenous sports. Thang- ta and Sarit Sarak are the martial art forms that were founded by the Meitei people of Manipur (Mee, 2011). Other indigenous sports of Manipur include Sagol Kangjei or the Manipuri Polo, Mukna, Yubi Lapki or Coconut Rugby, Hiyang Tannaba and Kang. Dhopkhel is the most popular traditional game of Assam (Padma, 2007). Indigenous sports in Mizoram include Inbun, Insuknawr, Camping and Mountaineering. Naga Wrestling or Naga Kene is one of the oldest indigenous sports of Nagaland. Over centuries, Otso Chenta, Peseum Petpu, Hekko and Sei Bagei are some of the other indigenous sports that are being played by the tribes of Nagaland. The main indigenous sports of Arunachal Pradesh are Hole Taso Dukanaram, Hinam Turnam and Porok-Pamin Sinam. Gella- Chutt that originated in Tripura is another outdoor game which is played by two groups (Prajapati, 2022).

In the Eastern part of India, in Bihar, Pari Khanda is one of the oldest indigenous martial art forms. The famous game of Tug of war traces its origin to the state of Odisha. Other indigenous sports of the state

include Chhau and Paika Akhada, Nadia Phinga, Khapara Dian, Puchi and Kaudi Khela. In West Bengal, traditional games like Lathi Chora, Ghuri or Kite Flying, Danguli and Kit-Kit have been a part of social and cultural life since ancient times (Ghosh, 2015).

One of the most popular indigenous sports of India, Kho-Kho, is said to have started in the state of Maharashtra where it was called RATHERA in its earlier form (Suradkar, 2012). In the current scenario, kho-kho is striving to make a mark on global platforms. Modern-day Badminton was also developed during the British Reign in the state of Maharashtra where it was called 'POONA' or 'POONAH' based on the city of Pune. Other indigenous sports of the state are Atya Patya and Mardani Khel (Gulia & Dhauta, 2019).

In South India, Adu Huli Aata and Kambala which is a kind of buffalo race are popular indigenous sports of Karnataka (Dalal, & Raghavan, 2018). One of the most famous indigenous sport of India, Kabaddi traces its roots to the state of Tamil Nadu where it has been practiced since ancient times (Gulia & Dhauta, 2019). Today Kabaddi is one of the globally recognised sport. Other Indigenous sports of Tamil Nadu include Seval Sandai, Jallikattu, Rekla, Sathurangam, Malyutham and Silambam. Kathi Samu is a popular traditional sport of Andhra Pradesh. Kerala's traditional sports and games are highly influenced by its history and culture. Traditional Sports like Vallam Kali or boat racing, Gatta Gusthi, Nadan Panthu Kali are still practiced in Kerala. Kalaripayattu, which is considered to be India's oldest surviving martial art, also originated in Kerala. The Nicobarese tribe of Andaman and Nicobar islands is known for its indigenous sports like that of Asol Aap and Kirip (Hajra, 2015).

## **2. Objectives**

One of the major objectives of this study is to identify and classify state-wise the various indigenous sports and games being played in India and to identify the State's initiatives to promote them. This could help policymakers and researchers to design policies to realize the full potential of indigenous sports and to bring them to the forefront. The second objective is to analyze and discuss various policy achievements that have played a major role in strengthening the roots of such sports. The paper also analyzes the scope of these indigenous sports in the future. It aims to explore indigenous sports

as a medium to improve the living standards of people associated with it and to transform India into a major sporting nation.

### **3. Methodology**

Through a systematic review of literature we categorized the traditional and indigenous sports and games of India according to their states. This study throws light on the scope of indigenous sports and games in India by exploring their future prospects. There's a lack of availability of quantitative data, so we have tried attempting to study the qualitative aspect of the research problem.

### **4. Review of literature**

It is evident through the existing literature that sports can play a significant role in the development of an economy. Sports has evolved into one of the most powerful public relations assets available (soft power). It also has the potential to improve and enhance human resource capacity, resulting in long-term economic success of nations. Sports is a powerful and cost-effective tool for achieving development goals (Abeku et.al., 2018).

A study by Tony Rossi (2019) states that sports is a promising tool that can be used as a medium of development and as a welfare model. Sports possess the capacity to promote communal harmony and peace across borders. Often economic models and economic metrics fail to measure the overall well-being of indigenous communities in quantitative terms. It is important to create social opportunities for the indigenous communities which is also about creating a broad platform for engagement and interaction within the development context. Indigenous sports provide a common platform for individuals belonging to different caste, religion, speaking different languages to emerge as a homogenous group.

It is interesting to note that indigenous sports have been an integral part of several cultures where elements of religion and politics were also included in games & sports. It is considered an intangible heritage and forms the backbone of several tribal communities. Such sports are strongly embedded in the history of civilisations and have stood the test of time despite the rise and fall of ancient civilisations. They are a medium to convey the values of solidarity, inclusiveness and diversity. Many of Indian traditional and indigenous sports are

also referred to in historic scriptures. Physical health and excellence have long been valued highly in India. India is well-known for being the birthplace of the Indus Valley Civilization.

In primeval India, indigenous games and sports were played both by skilled sportsmen and by almost every member of the family to maintain vigor and agility. A great variety of indigenous sports and games have been played for generations in India. The most popular indigenous traditional sports and games are still played today. Weapons such as the bow and arrow, the notable bow Gandiva-Archery, the famous sudarshan chakrs-Discus, toran-Javelin, Mallayudhha Wrestling, Weight-Lifting Bharashram, Walking Bharamanshram, the dagger – a sharp pointed knife – the ace, sword fighting hunting, swimming, boating, horseback riding, running, ball games, and yoga were the principal sports practised and fostered in ancient India (Saoji, 2017).

India is the birthplace of Chaturanga-Shatranj (chess), Krida Patram (cards), Ganjifa, Chaupar, Chandel-Mandal, Pachisi, Chaugan-Polo, and Martial Art-Judo-Karate. These old Sports have been given to the present era as a gift. India is considered the place of origin for several traditional games that have obtained the status of global sports in the current era. Sports like Kabaddi, Kho-Kho, Teerandaji and Shatranj have their roots in ancient Indian culture (Gulia & Dhauta, 2019). Traditional games are sustainable in nature and require very little to no equipment which was one of the reasons for their massive popularity in the ancient civilisations. They are far less expensive than today's modern sports.

Over the years, the Government of India has initiated several schemes for encouraging and sustaining these indigenous sports and games. The National Sports Policy, 2001 played a crucial role in defining the roles and responsibilities of the Central, State and the Local government in preserving and promoting such sports. Since then, several other policies such as Rural Sports Programme (RSP), Khelo India Scheme, Panchayat Yuva Krida aur Khel Abhiyan (PYKKA), Rajiv Gandhi Khel Abhiyan (RGKA), Fit India Movement etc. have been launched to improve the overall infrastructure of traditional games throughout the country (Jena, 2020).

## **5. History**

India had a primeval cultural society and its history of sports dates back to the Vedic era. Physical fitness and perfection were vital to the people of India, and they often engaged themselves in games of strength and speed. Many modern-day sports are an advanced version of games nurtured in ancient India (Table 10.1 in appendix).

It is evident from the Vedas and from the artifacts of the Indus Valley Civilization that India has had a sports culture since ancient times (Singh, 2018). The tradition of sports and games in Vedic period was very rich and developed, mainly played for maintaining physical fitness. Their mode of amusement included gambling with dice, music, poetry and singing which was also a part of their cultural activities. Hunting, swimming, boating, boxing, horse riding were also some of the major sports played at that time. An important development took place at the end of the Vedic period which has affected the present day course of physical education in India. It is believed that the origin of Pranayama, Yogasana, a series of physical exercise known as Suryanamaskara took place in Ancient India which was an integral part of ancient Indian culture (Kaur & Chander, 2015).

The Epic Age of Mahabharat and Ramayana transformed physical activities into military training like archery, javelin, spear throwing, fighting with swords (Jagathesan, 2018). However, wrestling, swimming, boating and hunting were still played for amusement as sports. Wrestling, that was called Mallayuddha back then was a prominent sport practiced by warriors. Bhima, Balaram and Jarasandha were regarded as the greatest wrestlers of that age (Kamble, 2020). Lord Krishna was considered as the master of Sudarshan Chakra, a spinning discus weapon. Arjuna was the master of Archery and was known for his divine bow, Gandiva. People also gravitated toward the guru shishya system in which the gurus took their shishya with them and introduced them with archery, wrestling, horse riding, weightlifting (Bharashram), walking Bharamanshram, hunting, chariot racing and military tactics. Things like the javelin (Toran) and discus (Chakra) were used for sports (Tiwari et.al., 2020).

The Historical Period of the 6th Century B.C. saw the rise of Buddhism and Jainism in India. During these times games like

wrestling, boxing, running, jumping, spear throwing, horse riding were prevalent (Sharma, 2021). The world-renowned traveller Hieun Tsung had written about these popular sports which were back then played by the students of the ancient universities of Takshashila and Nalanda. During the medieval era, the Rajput kingdom showed zeal in military arts and physical training. The Rajputs were skilful in noble horsemanship and in the use of arms. Another favoured pursuit was throwing javelin on horseback for precise marksmanship as it involved being adept in body balancing and controlling simultaneously. Wrestling, hunting, spring hunting, and bow and arrow were also prominent (Haider, 2019).

Both outdoor and indoor activities were popular among the Muslim rulers of the country. The Persians took active part in Chaugan (Polo) between 226 to 641 A.D (Dart, 2017). Ancient polo grounds can still be found in some parts of the country. Wrestling was given royal patronage by Mughal emperors. Akbar watched wrestling matches almost every day. Swimming, Boxing, Hunting, Animal fights, Gladiatorial combats, and indoor games such as Chess, Chaupar, Chandel-Mondal, and Pachisi were popular during this time period. Chaturanga Mughal history boasts about such sports between 1192 and 1526, as the Mughal Emperors were patrons of hunting (Kavesh, 2018).

During the reign of the Maratha Emperors, Chhatrapati Shivaji's teacher, Samarth Ramdas, established a number of Hanuman temples around Maharashtra to encourage youth to engage in physical activity (Burt, 2010). The initiative to create Talimkhanas, Vyayamshalas, and Akhadas in every village began during this period. Some existed earlier, but many patriotic people started them with the goal of national re-generation through physical exercise. People were trained for self-defence through exercises such as Lathi, Benethi, sword and spear use, Malla Yudhha, Dandand Baithakas, and so on. Dand, Baithakas, and folk dance were all part of the programme on a regular basis. Some of the vyayamshalas (place for exercising) are still operational today (Kibe, 1939).

Sports in the modern era is said to have taken its final shape from the indigenous sports that have existed since centuries (Arvind et al., 2023). The modern-day sport of Fencing, traces its roots to an ancient Indian traditional sport, Sword Fighting. The modern-day

concept of having Coaches in various sports also traces its history from the ancient 'Guru-Shishya' practice that has been followed in India since generations. Many indigenous sports played in Ancient India continue to thrive in today's day and age as well (Saoji, 2017). Several Indigenous sports have found their way to regional and international tournaments such as Commonwealth Games, SAF Games, Asian Games etc. where they give a testimony to India's glorious past of multiple centuries. Such indigenous sports are an integral part of culture and therefore it is our responsibility to help them retain their glory (Chelladurai & Patil, 2021).

## **6. Policy Achievements**

Traditional sports have been used as a mode of passing down cultural heritage among different generations. Such sports are strongly embedded in the history of civilisations and have stood the test of time despite the rise and fall of ancient civilisations. Such sports provide a common platform for individuals of caste, religion, speaking different languages to emerge as a homogenous group.

Since independence, several policies have been drafted to improve the sports infrastructure of the country particularly of traditional and indigenous sports. The common objective of most of the policies were to penetrate to the grassroot level and uplift the condition of these sports. The Government of India launched the National Sports Policy in 2001 for the promotion and development of sports. According to this policy, the Union Government along with the Sports Authority of India (SAI), Indian Olympic Association (IOA) and the National Sports Federation (NSFs) focused on tapping the latent potential in the tribal and rural areas of the country and worked in the direction of ushering the indigenous sports to the forefront. Conducting Sports festivals in various backward regions of India was presented as a medium to promote indigenous sports. The policy also laid prime importance on the mobilisation of Village Panchayats, Gram Sabhas and Rural youth and sports clubs to channel the development of infrastructure to identify talent. This was done by devising an appropriate competition structure in the rural and remote parts of the country (National Sports Policy, 2001).

Over the years many other schemes have been implemented to groom young athletes to achieve excellence in national as well as

international events. Under the National Sports Talent Contest, schools having credible sports performance and infrastructure were adopted by the Sport Authority of India. Educational Institutions having cluster of Schools like Kendriya Vidyalayas, Navodaya Vidyalayas, DAV, Vidya Bharati and similar institutions were also included in this scheme for development and promotion of indigenous games and martial arts. Several National Centres of Excellence (NCOEs) have also been established across the nation in an endeavour to train athletes and prepare them for International level events. These Centres provide overall supervision to the athletes under best coaches and nutritionists. They are also provided with high quality equipment and specialized training to bring them to perfection in their respective sport.

The Khelo India National Programme for development of sports is a central sector scheme that is being implemented from the financial year 2017-18. The erstwhile schemes of 'Rajiv Gandhi Khel Abhiyan', 'Urban Sports Infrastructure Scheme' and 'National Sports Talent Search System Programme' were merged into the Khelo India Scheme. The primary focus of the scheme is to improve India's sports culture, starting from the grass-root level. It is imperative to build a strong framework to establish India as a great sporting nation. The scheme has been divided into 12 verticals in order to achieve this objective, one of them being, promotion of rural and indigenous sports and games. The major objective of Khelo India is to promote mass participation of youth in various annual and semi-annual competitions. It also includes guiding young talent through existing sports academics and striving to set up new infrastructure at district, State and National level.

In the last decade, an incentive structure was introduced to provide monetary aid to indigenous sports by establishing Regional Sports Federation (RSF) in India. The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, in 2015, decided to consider granting recognition to sports federations of specific indigenous sports disciplines such as the Regional Sports Federations (RSFs) subject to a few conditions, like the sports must be well-liked/be popular in the region and be played in one or more states; the sports must have been played in the region for at least the last ten years; and the RSFs seeking recognition from the government must have held championships in all categories,

including Senior, Junior, and Sub-Junior. The Ministry held that only one RSF shall exist for each sport and only indigenous sport federations shall be eligible for recognising RSFS. Also if a certain sport has an international organisation, recognition from that apex body shall be required (Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, 2016).

It is also stated that the competitions organised under the Khelo India scheme should cover all the states of the country. The Khelo India Youth Games 2021 will also include four indigenous sports namely Gatka, Kalaripayattu, Thang-ta and Mallakhamba. Yogasana was also included as a discipline. This can be seen as a major push in the direction of popularising indigenous sports. Khelo India Scheme has also specified that indigenous games and martial arts can be included in any State or National level competitions if at least 8 states have opted for it. Together, they launched a series of special films that aimed to promote ten indigenous sports of India under the 'Ek Bharat, Shrestha Bharat' initiative. These films will not only bring into vogue traditional sports and games of India but will also help in creating promising employment opportunities. Youth of India will be inspired by these films and hence participate more in indigenous and traditional sports and games.

In 2020, The National Education Policy (NEP) was introduced with a vision to outline the new education system of India which is more multidisciplinary and holistic in nature. It presents India with a golden chance to integrate sports as a non-alienable part of curriculum in schools and colleges throughout the country (Niti Aayog). The wide network of schools and colleges aims to facilitate sports to reach each household. The fact that sports will now be an indispensable part of education provides us with a great opportunity to transform India as a sporting nation. In order to infuse a sporting culture in the country, it is important to treat sports as a scientific discipline which requires a strategic roadmap. There are multiple sports that have originated in India and Indians have a comparative advantage either due to the prolonged assimilation or their genetic build. Recognising and nurturing such inherent strengths opens a new window of opportunity to bring India to the forefront.

## **7. Indigenous sports as a catalyst to boost economic development**

In the modern era sports development is gradually becoming a crucial part in the national budget or in education of most developing countries. With the development of sports tourism, large audiences are attracted to a number of local sports events, at first from the nearby and encompassing regions where games happen and progressively, from further away. Local industries and the sports sector will benefit from such events should they attract enough willing people to attend the event and make a purchase of products and services linked with the event. A virtuous cycle can be developed at the local level, in which sports-related administration are given, resulting in jobs and open doors to possibilities to upgrade skills and produce additional services and items – a positive 'spill-over' effect from local sporting events.

It is accounted by many local races in Peru, like the Inca Marathon, the Andes International Marathon and the Huancayo to have produced small local industries and generated job opportunities. Moreover, sports tourism will help in building economic opportunities for the states. Local communities build their own skill set and use their own capabilities to organise the event and achieve local economic development in creating lasting and sustainable economic opportunities.

The Qila Raipur Sports Festival also known as India's Rural Olympics, is an annual sporting event that promotes local rural sports in the district of Ludhiana, Punjab, through competitions. Qila Raipur Sports Festival was founded in 1933 by Inderjeet Singh Grewal with the goal of bringing people together and promoting harmony through sports. Shot put, hockey, kabaddi, and track races are among its athletic events. Tug of war, horse racing, horse acrobatics, and various activities are among the others. The festival aims to provide a platform for emerging talent in professional games as well as to foster a sporting culture in the area. It serves as a unifying factor, bringing people closer together and keeping them connected to their roots. These intangible values of sports are frequently overlooked in the clamour of professional sports.

In addition to the ancient Indian games, modern India has seen an increase in the number of Indian players at the global level in a

variety of other professional sports primarily played in rural areas of the country, such as kabaddi, hockey, and archery. Sports can be a powerful economic development stimulant, particularly at the local level. In India, sports can have a significant impact on regional development. Engaging in sports help to fight sedentary lifestyles and associated health problems by boosting health and fitness. They promote social cohesiveness and community formation by bringing people together. People can learn important qualities like teamwork, leadership, and problem-solving through sports. Local sports organisations can spot and develop talent, resulting in the birth of local sports heroes who serve as an inspiration to others. Building infrastructure is another common aspect of sports growth that helps athletes and the public. Sports events can strengthen a community's economy and increase its visibility on a national and worldwide scale. Henceforth, supporting local sports can have a significant positive impact on an economy's welfare (Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, 2016).

The Special Area Games (SAG) Scheme intends to identify and develop gifted athletes for contemporary competitive sports in remote tribal, rural, and coastal parts of the nation. The programme also plans to recruit athletes from local communities who are genetically or geographically suited for success in a specific sport discipline, as well as from native games and martial arts. The basic goal of this Scheme is to develop talented athletes in the age range of 12 to 18 years, while in extreme circumstances, the age limit may be lowered (Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, 2016). Due to economies of scale, the linkages between different aspects of the sports sector are particularly effective when leveraged locally. Each of the numerous segments of the sports economy has the potential to generate activity, employment, and income on its own.

Research shows that there is a need to recognise new sports-related occupations and a need to compile a make a list of all career categories in emerging nations that can utilize and benefit from athletic talents or those derived from sports. Classification of sports and sports related economic opportunities in skill building where few or none of them have been registered. This will even help in future research and policy framing and allow a better understanding of the sport sector to unveil growing employment possibilities.

## **8. The way forward**

To revive the traditional and indigenous sports of India, regular competitions or sports meets are being conducted at the state, block and district levels across the country. In Nagaland, the Directorate of Youth Resources and Sports organized the 2nd State Level Indigenous Games competition at Indira Gandhi Stadium, Kohima in April 2021 for the promotion of sports which were native to the state. In Kerala, each year during Onam, competitions for sports like Vadamvali, Thalapanthukali, Uriyadi, Kilithattu Kali are organised in every major district and city across the state. In addition to this the government has often laid emphasis on adequate publicity to raise awareness among people in remote areas of Kerala about these sports. Since Independence, efforts have been made to expand the network of coaches and trainers especially in the rural areas to create a general awareness regarding the technical aspects of sports. It is often seen that sports infrastructural projects are delayed in the absence of adequate funds. In such cases the government has considered the option of Public Private Partnership to provide better facilities.

At present India has a plethora of ambitious schemes and programmes to execute. However, it's also important to thoroughly monitor the activities of such schemes at the grass root level to ensure that India emerges as a sporting nation in its truest sense. Schemes like Mid-day meals have been implemented with more efficiency and children are given advice regarding the importance of proper nutritional intake since there exists a positive correlation between sports and nutrition. Today, various sports federations are working in the direction of standardizing the rules and regulations of the traditional sports which are important to bring them to the forefront and to ensure uniformity. Just like India, several other countries like Korea and Japan have also worked in the direction of standardizing the rules of ancient traditional martial arts to bring them to a global pedestal.

## 9. Conclusion

Considering the fundamental link between sports and national pride, the government has a major role in sports governance. With the remarkable commencement of the Pro kabaddi league in 2013 and the ultimate kho-kho league in India, a magnificent story of indigenous sports revival was observed in India. In particular, India's indigenous athletic events have historically attracted a large number of players, as rural youngsters account for 20% of the country's population. While kabaddi and kho-kho are popular across the country, boat racing, archery, and a variety of other sports such as mallakhamba and kushti, as well as various forms of martial arts, are unique to a particular state or region. Sports can be a powerful economic development stimulant, particularly at the local level. Each of the various segments in sports in India has the potential to generate economic activity, employment, and income on its own.

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## Appendix

Name of the Indian Indigenous / Traditional Sports	Time Period of its conception	Place
Kabaddi	Ancient (mentioned in the Sangam Literature)	Several Indian states and crossed over to other countries (origin: Tamil Nadu)
Mallakhamb	Mentioned first in Manasollasa (1135 A.D.), Chalukyan Dynasty	Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh
Kalaripayattu	Ancient (mentioned in the Sangam Literature)	Kerala
Saz lounq	N.A.	Jammu & Kashmir
Tuli langun	N.A.	Jammu & Kashmir
Sqay	4,000 B.C.	Kashmir
Thoda	Ancient (mentioned in Mahabharata)	Himachal Pradesh

Name of the Indian Indigenous / Traditional Sports	Time Period of its conception	Place
Akhada Khushti, Surr and Musti Yuddha	Ancient (mentioned in Ramayana & Mahabharata)	U.P., Haryana, Punjab
Satoliya, Rumal-Jhapatta and Camel racing	Medieval times	Rajasthan
Gatka	17 <sup>th</sup> century	Punjab
Shooting Ball	N.A.	North India
Thang- ta and Sarit Sarak	17 <sup>th</sup> century	Manipur
Sagol Kangjei (Manipuri Polo), Mukna, Yubi Lapki (Coconut Rugby), Hiyang Tannaba and Kang	1 <sup>st</sup> Century onwards	Manipur
Dhophkhel	Ancient	Assam
Inbun, Insuknawr	N.A.	Mizoram
Naga Kene (wrestling), Otso Chenta, Peseum Petpu, Hekko and Sei Bagei	N.A. (tribal sports)	Nagaland
Hole Taso Dukanaram, Hinam Turnam and Porok-Pamin Sinam	N.A.	Arunachal Pradesh
Gella- Chutt	N.A.	Tripura
Pari Khanda	Ancient	Bihar
Chhau and Paika Akhada, Nadia Phinga, Khapara	N.A.	Odisha

Name of the Indian Indigenous / Traditional Sports	Time Period of its conception	Place
Dian, Puchi and Kaudi Khela		
Lathi Chora, Ghuri (Kite Flying), Danguli and Kit-Kit	N.A.	West Bengal
Kho-Kho (Rathera)	Ancient	Maharashtra
Poona (Badminton)	British time period	Pune (Maharashtra)
Atya Patya and Mardani Khel	Before 300 A.D.	Maharashtra
Adu Huli Aata and Kambala	N.A.	Karnataka
Seval Sandai, Jallikattu, Rekla, Sathurangam, Malyutham and Silambam	Ancient (mentioned in the Sangam Literature)	Tamil Nadu
Kathi Samu	Ancient	Andhra Pradesh
Vallam Kali, Gatta Gusthi, Nadan Panthu Kali	N.A.	Kerala
Kalaripayattu	Originated from the Dhanurveda, a scientific treatise on the art of warfare in ancient	Kerala
Asol Aap and Kirip	N.A. (Tribal sports)	Andaman and Nicobar Islands
Chaturanga-Shatranj (chess)	Ancient (mentioned in Mahabharata)	Across India
Krida Patram (cards)	Ancient	Across India

Name of the Indian Indigenous / Traditional Sports	Time Period of its conception	Place
Ganjifa (cards)	Medieval (Mughals)	Especially in Odisha
Chaupar (Board Game)	Iron Age (mentioned in Mahabharata)	Played by old people across villages in India
Chandel-Mandal & Pachisi (Board Games)	Ancient (mentioned in Mahabharata)	Across North India
Chaugan (Polo)	Medieval	Manipur

Table 10.1: Mapping the various Indigenous Sports of India