

## INDIAN SPORTS PREHISTORIC TO PRESENT EPOCH

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### ABSTRACT

*The history of the sports in India can be traced back to the ancient time of Vedic era. At that time, sports were concerned or used for the development of the physique and for the defence. It is well said that "a healthy mind resides in a healthy body" with this we can recognised the importance of games in our life. India was one of the most developed countries in the ancient period. It gave many games and sports to the world and also accepts the modernised or improved version of them from the world. India has a rich heritage of different sports activities which can be found in archaeological excavations of Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa, the Vedic literature and the other epics and the literature works of different culture. According to Simon Jenkins, sport is 'A subset of leisure and work activities that involves both physical activity and competition'. Sport is an activity which involves physical exertion and skill in which an individual or team competes against another or others.*

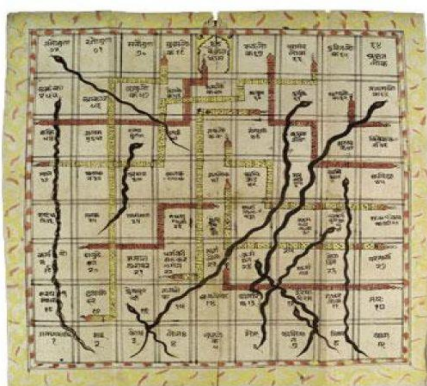
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**INTRODUCTION:** India has evolved a number of games. The games like chess, snakes and ladders, playing card, racing, polo, judo had originated as sports in India and it was a gift to the world. Initially these around were started in India but they were modernized by other countries. In India sports refers to the large variety of games played in India, from tribal games that was originated from the ancient time to the modern sports such as cricket, badminton, football etc. India's diversity in terms of culture, religion and people is reflected in the wide variety of sporting disciplines in the country. We can see this evolution in terms of the different time period that the country has gone through.

## ANCIENT PERIOD

- During the Vedic period the chariot racing and wrestling were very famous. Apart from this a number of games like- hide and seek, swinging were played by both men and women. At that time women received equality as men so there were no differences between them related to sports. In the late Vedic era, the yoga and meditation were also started and acquire the seat of spiritualism all over the world.
- The favourite recreations of the Vedic period were **hunting, taming elephants, dancing, and music and gambling**. Gambling was so popular in ancient India that a gambling hall attached to the palace of the king. Thus the ancient Indian Scriptures exhibit a very developed knowledge of the games.
- The history of sports in India was also evident in the Indian epics like **RAMAYANA AND MAHABHARATA**. During the period of Ramayana, **hunting, archery, horse riding, swimming were royal games**. Even lord Ram himself was known for his mastery in **Archery, horse and the chariots**. Ayodhya, kiskindha and lanka were the centres of many games and sports.
- Mahabharata made a mark in the sports like **dicing, gymnastics, wrestling, shatranj etc. Throwing and lifting of weights, swimming and water sports**, comprehensive physical activities were played by the men and women during this period. The 100 kauravas and 5 panadavs played various kinds of games of strength, skill and amusement.
- **CHATURANGA** was very famous during this time. From there it spread to the rest of the world and now it is known as **CHESS**. Lord Krishna played Gulli danada at the bank of Yamuna. Arjuna was the hero in the Archery and shooting. So, during this time people took much interest in the sports.
- Universities like **Takshila and Nalanda** was established during this time. These universities were famous for military training, wrestling and mountain climbing. Archery

was found mentioned in the JATAKA stories. The BHIMSENA JATAKA tells that BODDISATVA learnt archery at Takshila. Subjects like **DHANU VEDA** or the science of archery was part of their studies and people around the world came there to study and learn about them. The YOGA was developed at that time and became an important and integral part of the daily life of the people at that time. The BHAGWATGITA also considered it as **YOGASASTRA**.



## **BHUDDHISM**

When we talk about the history of Indian sports, Buddhism has been vital role in spreading the culture of sports in India. Gautama Buddha, himself was master at Archery and Hammer throwing. Manas Olhas- a classic written by Chalukya nearly 850 years ago mentioned about **Mallakhamb**(in which a gymnast performs aerial yoga postures and wrestling grip with a vertical stationary or hanging pole, cane or rope), **archery (Dhanurvedya)**, **duels with weapons (Anka Vinoda)** and **game played on horses**.



## MUGHAL PERIOD

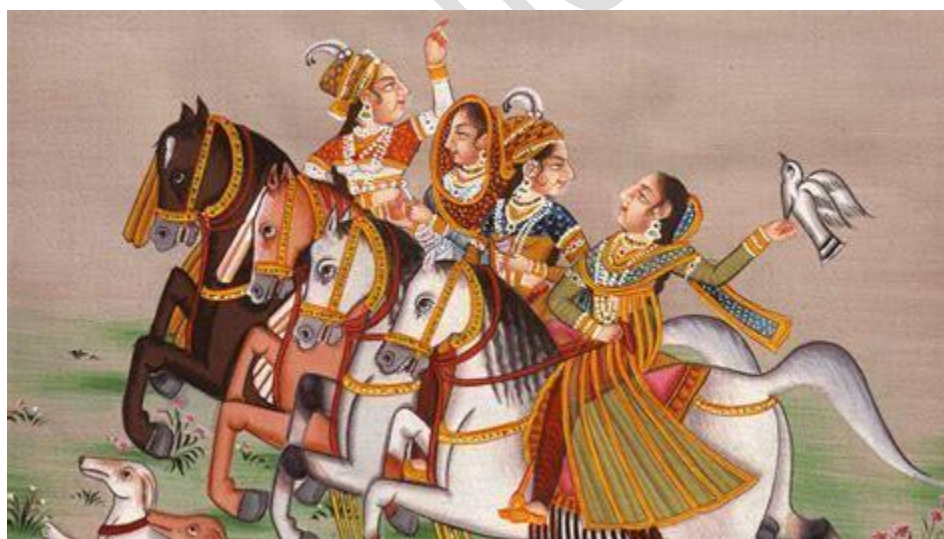
Even when Mughals came to India they brought the game with them which became popular with many royalties. The military and physical sports were popular with active soldier. The game of **Polo** was introduced in India by Mughals became popular among all the classes. It gained popularity with the coming of Afghans. People also took keen interest in horse racing. In fact

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various studies were made during the medieval times related to the habits, food and nourishment of the horses. Apart from **Polo and horse riding, wrestling, boxers, fencing, arrow shooting** and other sports were very popularly played at that time.



## BRITISH PERIOD

Even when the Britishers entered into India and ruled over it and destroyed the resources of the country, the development of sports never stopped. Many sports were introduced in India and many sports were modernised in India. Cricket was the first game that was introduced in India under the British rule. One of the oldest football club named **Mohun Bagan was established in India in 1889 AD**. India became the port of different games and has been world champion at that point in various sports like **Kabbadi, chess, hockey, cricket, badminton and Billiard**. India first competed in Olympics in 1900. Norman Gilbert competed in the first Olympic and won 2 silver medal. Indian National field hockey team was the first non European team to be part of international hockey federation. Indian men's hockey team was the most successful team at the Olympic Games. Manipur was considered as the origin of modern Polo. Polo was introduced to the British cavalry regiment in India.

India had a vast history in field of sports at the British period and the Indian athletes still carrying this heritage and made the nation proud by winning the medals and hearts at the international level.



## Post Independence

India got independent in 1947 and after that Government of India took various steps to improve the quality and status of sports.

“**Tara chand committee**” was established especially for looking in this field in 1948. This committee gave various recommendations to improve the condition of sports and physical education in India.

**Other committees and boards like All India Council of Sports (1954), National Sports Policy (1980), National Sports bill (2011) was appointed especially for the development of sports.**

In 1951 and 1982, India hosted the Asian games in New Delhi. The current Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports was initially set up as the Department of Sports in 1982. India also hosted various international sports events **in 1987, 1996 and 2011 cricket World cup, the 2003 Afro-Asian games, the 2010 Hockey World cup and 2010 commonwealth Games.**



## Modern period



Indian sports has experienced a vast change in every aspect be it in terms of popularity, reach and consumption. Those days are gone when only passionate people would follow sports. Today, sports have become a major source of cutting edge entertainment. Various institutes were opened to provide the bachelor and master degree in sports to enhance the career opportunities of the people in the sports. Indian sport has experienced a vast change over the past few years. Today sports become a major source of entertainment. A major promoter of this is the change because of private league culture. **Indian Premier League (IPL)** comes into the emergence in India. IPL has a huge fan base. **The Premier Badminton League, Pro Kabbadi League etc are just few examples.**

According to the Economic Times, the pro kabbadi league which was formed in 2014 managed to attract 397 millions viewers in 2018. The new pro volleyball leagues managed to attract 147 million viewers in its first edition, according to the organisers.

In this modern digital world, the one thing that has changed the way people follow sports is the digital revolution. People watch their favourite sports through Indian sports websites and through other online streaming routes.

According to the Star India- 202 millions people watched 2018 edition of IPL on Hotstar .This shows how the consumption pattern is changing in India.





## **Conclusion**

Sports have travelled a long journey on the way of upliftment in the Indian society. A sport is basically a social activity which can be best understood from the perspective of sociological history. Sports history shows us how sports are connected with the greater society. In highlighting the evolution of sports in India an attempt has been made to understand the social construction of sports during the different time period of India. Sports were looked upon as an important activity for the holistic development of humans. It has benefits to begin with keeping the mind and the body fit. It also entertains both the player as well as the viewers. Sports also bring the people together and create a sense of unity among them. India with its rich history of sports forms an important part of the cultural mosaic. Many games were started and many were transformed, many were extinct and many are in still practice in this country. Today sports in India have achieved a mark in terms of popularity. Cricket, football, hockey, badminton, kabaddi, archery, basketball etc have been deep seated into the Indian psyche. Sports in India have paved a long way towards the road of success and have made a mark in the world of sports.

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