Sports As A Career, Case Study Based on Mann Ki Baat; Its Impact on Youth and Parental Perception

Raj Singh Bishnoi¹, Kalpana Sharma², Vyshakh K³, Deuti Singh⁴

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of Mann Ki Baat on the perceptions of youth and parents regarding sports as a career. A mixed-methods approach was used, including a survey of 3,008 young sports enthusiasts and semi-structured interviews with 10 elite athletes and 10 parents. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and data was collected from various regions throughout India. Results from both statistical and thematic analyses indicate that Mann Ki Baat has a strong impact on youth and parental perceptions of sports as a viable career option. These findings have important implications for policymakers, educators, and other stakeholders seeking to promote the benefits of sports and physical activity among youth. By leveraging the power of media and popular culture to promote sports as a career choice, we can inspire a new generation of young athletes and help drive the growth of the sports industry in India.

Keywords: Mann Ki Baat, Sports, Career opportunities.

INTRODUCTION

The Indian government promoted sports and fitness to encourage personal development and national integration (NDTV Sports, 2016). The radio program "Mann Ki Baat" hosted by Prime Minister Narendra Modi played a significant role in shaping public opinion and awareness towards sports and career opportunities. The PM took initiatives to promote sports at the grassroots level, nurture talent, and create a vibrant sports ecosystem in the country.

PM’s Khelo India program promoted sports among school children and identified talent for the future, aiming to develop a sporting culture in the country (Singh and Bali, 2021). He also emphasized the need for sports infrastructure and facilities, creating job opportunities, and boosting tourism. Additionally, the Fit India movement aimed to promote fitness and a healthy lifestyle among citizens, making physical

¹ Senior Executive Director, SAI-NSNIS, Patiala
² Director Academics, SAI-NSNIS, Patiala
³ Intern, Department of Sports Psychology, SAI-NSNIS, Patiala
fitness a way of life, where sports played a crucial role.

Nelson Mandela's quote from 2000 highlighted the transformative power of sports in inspiring and uniting people, especially youth. It could create hope and bring positive changes in individuals and society, (Mandela, 2000). Similarly, Barack Obama's statement from 2011 emphasized the role of sports in American culture, fostering competitiveness, promoting health, and teaching valuable life skills (Steinberg, 2017). Both leaders recognized the importance of sports in personal and national growth and the potential it held to bring people together for a better future.

In his addresses to the nation in “Mann Ki Baat,” our Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi often addressed the country’s sports achievement and importance of sports, specifically holding a whole session on sports. In his addresses, he said, “We are encouraging youngsters to pursue a career in sports. Initiatives like TOPS are benefitting youngsters in preparing for major sporting events. The sports budget of the country has increased almost three times since 2014”. The initiatives taken were very well visible (PIB, 2021).

The PM frequently talked about famous athletes in his Mann Ki Baat speeches, such as Milkha Singh, Sachin Tendulkar, and Mary Kom. He praised their achievements and used their stories as inspiration for young athletes in India to pursue excellence in sports. For example, he called Milkha Singh "an inspiration for the entire nation" and referred Sachin Tendulkar as "a living inspiration for millions of people," (Economic Times, 2021). He also highlighted the importance of traditional Indian sports and games, encouraging their development and inclusion in the sports curriculum.

The PM encouraged sports as a culture in India, so that it could be seen as a viable career option. In his Mann Ki Baat address in July 2021, he emphasized the need to encourage youth to take up sports professionally and government efforts to promote sports. His speeches were aimed to inspire young people to pursue their dreams in sports and promote the growth of the sports industry in India.

A study by Abhishek Garhwal in 2022 analyzed the effectiveness of Mann Ki Baat in raising awareness about social issues and government programs. According to the study, the program effectively used radio’s popularity to engage and sensitize citizens towards developmental challenges (Garhwal and Khattiri, 2022).

FICCI's 2018 study shows that while many Indian youths see sports as a viable career option, lack of funding and parental support prevents active participation. The study emphasizes the emergence of sports-centric jobs beyond just being an athlete, such as coaching and sports management, and highlights
the government's responsibility to improve infrastructure and governance. To achieve growth, the study suggests changing the mindset of the youth, introducing sports in educational institutions, and collaborating with foreign partners. Non-government organizations can also conduct more tournaments and provide better infrastructure (FICCI, 2018).

Our study will be based on a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods, including surveys and interviews with athletes, parents, and sports professionals. The study aims to explore, whether “Mann Ki Baat” have influenced the athletes and parents to change their perspectives towards sports.

METHODOLOGY
Design
The study used a mixed methods approach to collect quantitative and qualitative data from participants in India aged between 13 to 35 years, who were interested in sports or had participated in sports. The quantitative data was obtained through online surveys, while the qualitative data was obtained through in-depth interviews with elite international athletes and parents.

Sample
The sample size for the survey is 3,008 students selected using stratified random sampling. For the qualitative portion, 10 elite international athletes and parents are purposively sampled based on success in their respective sports. Stratified sampling was likely implemented by first dividing the population of students into strata based on relevant characteristics such as experience in sports and level of participation. The sample for the quantitative data was limited to Indian population who has experience in sports. For the qualitative data, the parents were selected based on their children’s participation in sports.

Data Collection
Online surveys and in-depth interviews were conducted to collect data on perceptions of sports as a career, the impact of "Mann Ki Baat". Surveys were administered in English and Hindi, while interviews were conducted face-to-face or online in English or Hindi and recorded with consent.

Statistical Approach
Quantitative data was statistically analyzed, while qualitative data was put to thematic analysis to identify patterns and themes in the data.

RESULTS
Table 1 shows the mean, median mode and standard deviation of the scores obtained by the participants. Mean, median, mode and standard deviation of the scores obtained from the questionnaire was found to be 10.91, 12, 12 and ± 2.54 respectively.
Table 1: Descriptive statistics for the scores obtained by the participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistics</th>
<th>Values</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>10.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std Dev</td>
<td>± 2.54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1 shows, the careers in which the athletes are interested in. 61.1% of the athletes are interested in coaching, 09.0% athletes are interested in strength and conditioning, 07.06% of athletes are interested in sports psychologist jobs, 04.07% athletes are interested in sports nutrition, 02.6% athletes are interested in sports physiotherapists and 11.5% are interested in other sports related careers.

Figure 2: participants Response

Figure 3: Participants Response
Has MKB made you more motivated to pursue a career in sports because of the recognition and respect that comes with it?

No 9.4%
Yes 90.6%

Figure 4: Participants Response

Do you believe that "Mann Ki Baat" has inspired more youth to consider a career in sports?

No 7.0%
Yes 93.0%

Figure 5: Participants Response

Have you seen positive changes in the attitude of your family and friends towards your decision to pursue a career in sports since MKB?

No 11.1%
Yes 88.9%

Figure 6: Participants Response

Do you think "Mann Ki Baat" has helped in promoting the importance of sports in society?

No 6.8%
Yes 93.2%

Figure 7: Participants Response

Has "Mann Ki Baat" encouraged you to follow your passion for sports despite societal pressures to pursue traditional career paths?

No 10.7%
Yes 89.3%

Figure 8: Participants Response

Do you feel more positive about pursuing a career in sports after hearing "Mann Ki Baat"?

No 8.5%
Yes 91.5%

Figure 9: Participants Response
Figure 2 to Figure 13 shows the pie chart of the responses of the athletes. It has been identified that 90.86% of the participants have agreed that that Mann Ki Baat is effective in changing their perspective towards the career opportunities in sports.

DISCUSSION
"Mann Ki Baat," a popular radio program hosted by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, had a significant impact on the promotion and development of sports in India. The program was particularly instrumental in increasing awareness and support for sports as a viable career option in India. Both athletes and parents alike praised the program for its positive impact on sports as a career option.

From the statistical analysis, it was evident that the majority of the young participants received a positive impact through the Mann Ki Baat program. 90% of the participants agreed that Mann Ki Baat channeled their thinking towards sports in a positive direction. A mean score of 10.93 of the survey reassured it. As seen from the results of this study, it
was evident that "Mann Ki Baat" had a positive impact on athletes in India. The majority of respondents answered 'yes' to questions related to their personal interest and passion for pursuing a career in sports, societal acceptance of sports as a viable career option, inspiration to pursue a career in sports, belief in their ability to become successful sports persons, positive attitude towards pursuing a career in sports, and encouragement to follow their passion for sports despite societal pressures.

The program improved the following areas:

**Increased Awareness and Support for Sports:** One of the most significant themes that emerged from both athlete and parent responses were the increased awareness and support for sports as a viable career option. The athletes unanimously agreed that "Mann Ki Baat" had significantly increased awareness and support for sports in India. They believed that the program had been instrumental in encouraging parents to consider sports as a serious career option for their children. Parents also agreed that the program had increased awareness and support for sports among parents in India. They believed that the program had helped change the mindset of Indian society to view sports as a respectable and rewarding career option.

**Inspiration and Motivation:** Both athletes and parents noted that "Mann Ki Baat" had been a source of inspiration and motivation. The athletes were inspired by the stories and messages shared on the program to pursue sports as a career and found the program to be a valuable source of guidance and encouragement. Some parents mentioned that they were inspired or motivated by the stories and messages shared on "Mann Ki Baat" to encourage their child to pursue sports as a career.

**Overcoming Societal Stigmas:** The athletes and parents alike noted that "Mann Ki Baat" had helped in overcoming societal stigmas and cultural biases that discouraged parents from supporting their children's sports careers. The program helped change the mindset of Indian society to view sports as a respectable and rewarding career option.

**Improved Infrastructure:** The athletes believed that "Mann Ki Baat" had helped in creating better infrastructure for sports training and development in India. The program highlighted the importance of investing in sports infrastructure and led to the development of better sports facilities and training centers across the country.

**Contribution to Sports Growth:** Both athletes and parents saw "Mann Ki Baat" as a significant contributor to the growth and promotion of sports in India in the past years. They believed that the program would continue to inspire and encourage young athletes to pursue their dreams and would lead to an increase in the number of successful sports professionals in the country.
Positive Impact on Youth and Parents:
Both athletes and parents noted that "Mann Ki Baat" had a positive impact on the youth and parents of India when it came to sports as a career option. The program helped in creating a more positive and supportive environment for young athletes and encouraged parents to consider sports as a viable career option for their children.

Need for Continued Improvement:
While both athletes and parents praised "Mann Ki Baat" for its positive impact on sports in India, they also believed that there was room for improvement. Some parents suggested that "Mann Ki Baat" could be further improved to create a more positive impact on the youth and parents of India when it comes to sports as a career option.

Personal Positive Impact:
Both athletes and parents experienced a personal positive impact. Additionally, both groups emphasized the importance of sports in the overall development of an individual and the country. They noted that sports could have a positive impact on the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of an individual and lead to the development of essential life skills such as teamwork, discipline, and perseverance.

Both groups stressed the importance of sports in the overall development of an individual and the country as a whole. They recognized the potential of sports to have a positive impact on physical, mental, and emotional well-being and the development of essential life skills. They acknowledged the need to continue to improve the support and infrastructure for sports in India, and the role of programs like "Mann Ki Baat" in promoting and supporting sports as a viable career option.

The findings of the current study were further supported by the significant increase in the number of children in the country who uploaded their videos or biodata about their achievements in sports on the Sports Talent Search Portal website, which was launched by the Sports Ministry. In addition, people's involvement in sports activities has increased, as seen through events organized by state governments, companies, and celebrities, such as the FIFA World Cup under 17 that was also organized in India (Kaur, 2022).

"Mann Ki Baat" played a vital role in highlighting the achievements of successful sportspersons in India. It provided a platform for these athletes to share their journey and inspire others to pursue a career in sports. By featuring successful sports persons, "Mann Ki Baat" gave recognition and respect to the sports industry and the athletes who excelled in it. This recognition and respect motivated athletes to pursue a career in sports and work hard to achieve success in their respective fields.

This suggested that "Mann Ki Baat" was successful in promoting the
importance of sports in society and inspiring more youth to consider a career in sports. The program helped in creating awareness about various career options in sports other than being an athlete. It also made athletes more optimistic about the future of sports as a career in India.

**CONCLUSION**

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that "Mann Ki Baat" had a positive impact on athletes' perception of sports as a viable career option. The majority of the participants reported that "Mann Ki Baat" increased their personal interest and passion for pursuing a career in sports. It increased societal acceptance of sports as a career option.

The findings showed that 90% of the participants agreed on the effectiveness of "Mann Ki Baat" in changing their perspective towards sports as a career. Moreover, "Mann Ki Baat" played an instrumental role in inspiring athletes and youth to pursue their passion for sports despite societal pressures to pursue traditional career paths. It helped in promoting the importance of sports in society and encouraged more youth to consider a career in sports.

Some participants observed the positive influence of "Mann Ki Baat" on the attitude of family and friends towards the decision of pursuing a career in sports. They also reported that "Mann Ki Baat" made athletes feel optimistic about the future of sports as a career in India and increased their belief in their ability to succeed in a career in sports.

In conclusion, "Mann Ki Baat" was instrumental in changing the perspective of athletes and youth towards sports as a viable career option. It helped in inspiring and motivating them to pursue their passion for sports and increased societal acceptance of sports as a career option. Therefore, it can be considered a valuable resource for athletes and parents in changing their perspective towards sports as a career.

**REFERENCES**


