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**Solving the Rubik's Cube of Indian Sport: Exploring Impactful  
Factors and Alternative Ways to Facilitate Success**

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Doctor of Philosophy

The University of Edinburgh

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This project has truly been an incredible experience; sometimes frustrating but mostly really enjoyable and educational.

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## Abstract

The heavy investment of nations in high-performance sport seems justified by the belief that high-performance sporting success can lead to national pride and mass participation. This would then provide a larger pool of talent for selection of future successful athletes, whilst also promoting participation and greater physical activity for others. Although India too seems to follow a similar philosophy, and has consistently been investing in sport, its performance at international sport, especially the Olympic Games has not been impressive. This is particularly distressing when considered against the country's large population. Given that India sees worth in investing in high-performance sport, potential ways to facilitate sporting success need to be explored.

Consequently, this thesis adopted a pragmatic approach to explore sport development in India. Specifically, potential factors contributing to the limited success were explored and potential alternatives to facilitate India's ongoing efforts of achieving sporting success on the international stage were proposed. The first step involved exploring Indian sport from a policy viewpoint to gain deeper knowledge about potential reasons that might be limiting the impact of numerous policies implemented so far. A long-standing issue with policy implementation and a potential lack of policy learning were concluded as two of the main reasons impacting sporting success. A potential for India to adopt bottom-up *and* top-down approaches to policy implementation and policy transfer were proposed as alternative ways for India to overcome the policy issues.

There was, however, a need to gather a rich picture of the current scenario of Indian sport. Therefore, perceptions of high-level key stakeholders were explored through a semi structured interview to gain in-depth knowledge about Indian sport. Reflecting the challenges of size and scope, and the consequent need to triangulate and generalise the conclusions, further exploration was completed through a quantitative survey. Significant findings from these empirically driven studies included: i) a lack of sporting culture; ii) a need to develop

quality Indian coaches and a coaching system; and iii) a need to increase use and knowledge of sport science support.

Of these conclusions, coach development was prioritised for three main reasons, its significance in the wider literature, the fact that India lacked a coaching system and Indian coaches being criticised for their relatively poor knowledge (including misconceptions and limited use of sport sciences). Therefore, an India-specific model aimed at developing quality Indian coaches and a coaching system was proposed. Given the policy implementation issues, however, the feasibility of the model was tested through another empirically driven study. Finally, a revised model for coach development was offered that might contribute to India's efforts of succeeding at international sports.



# Lay Summary of Thesis

The lay summary is a brief summary intended to facilitate knowledge transfer and enhance accessibility, therefore the language used should be non-technical and suitable for a general audience. [Guidance on the lay summary in a thesis](#). (See the Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study, General Postgraduate Degree Programme Regulations. These regulations are available via: [www.drps.ed.ac.uk](http://www.drps.ed.ac.uk).)

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Insert the lay summary text here - the space will expand as you type.

The power struggles between nations significantly increased with the realisation that sport could have socio-economic, cultural and political significance. Consequently, heavy investments in high-performance sport increased, with nations using the virtuous cycle of sport philosophy, which although continues to be contested is used to defend the investments as a way to achieve sporting success which would bring in national pride and increase the overall talent pool from which they could choose future stars. This was also seen as a way to inspire physical activity participation, offering an offset to the growing challenges of inactivity, obesity and chronic medical issues. Despite India believing sporting success to have a similar impact, however, together with constant efforts, the country’s performance at international sport, especially the Olympic Games is still relatively poor. Although other nations are adopting strategic planning to develop high-performance athletes, reports suggested that resources in Indian sport are not being invested impactfully. There is insufficient data, however, to conclude any particular reasons that could explain why India’s efforts are not facilitating sporting success.

Consequently, a pragmatic approach was used to produce meaningful data that could contribute to sport development in India and consequent success at the international sport. The first step involved two desk-based studies aimed at exploring Indian sport from a policy viewpoint to understand why already implemented policy initiatives have not facilitated success at the

international level. Taken together, findings identify a long-standing issue with deploying policies and a potential failure to learn from previous successes and failures. Although options for policy implementation and policy transfer were explored as potential alternative pathways, a need to understand the current situation of Indian sport was identified.

A qualitative study was therefore conducted to gather a rich picture of Indian sport. Given that India is a huge country, a wider perspective was then explored to triangulate and increase generalisability of conclusions from the qualitative study. These empirically driven studies highlighted a lack of sporting culture, a need to focus on coach development and a lack of use and knowledge of sport science support as potential issues impacting sporting success achieved by India. Whilst sport science support is considered important for athlete development, coaches are highly responsible for incorporating such support. Unfortunately, Indian coaches were criticised for their quality and relatively poor knowledge and use of sport science support. Furthermore, the Indian coaching system was generally criticised for being unevolved.

An urgent need to reprioritise the current focus on *hardware* (stadia) to an emphasis on developing the *liveware* (people) was therefore concluded. Consequently, a context specific model aimed at developing quality Indian coaches and a coaching system was proposed. Although this model was India-specific and not simply copied from elsewhere, (especially important given that policy implementation was reported to be an issue in India) the feasibility of the model was then tested through a second qualitative study. The thesis concludes with an appropriately revised model for coach development that could potentially facilitate India's efforts of succeeding at international sport.

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## Table of Contents

<b>Declaration</b> .....	<b>ii</b>
<b>Acknowledgments</b> .....	<b>iii</b>
<b>Abstract</b> .....	<b>iv</b>
<b>Lay Summary</b> .....	<b>vi</b>
<b>Table of Contents</b> .....	<b>viii</b>
<b>Lists of Tables</b> .....	<b>xv</b>
<b>Lists of Abbreviations</b> .....	<b>xvi</b>
<b>Publications and Presentations Emanating from the Thesis</b> .....	<b>xviii</b>
<b>Chapter 1: Introduction</b> .....	<b>1</b>
1.1 Introducing the context .....	1
<i>1.1.1 Significance of sport in general and Indian sport in specific</i> .....	1
<i>1.1.2 Indian sport and my interest in the topic</i> .....	4
1.2 Research aim and outline of the thesis .....	6
<i>1.2.1 Brief outline of the thesis</i> .....	6
<b>Chapter 2: The ‘what’ of the thesis: Process of contributing solutions to solving the Rubik’s cube of Indian sport</b> .....	<b>8</b>
2.1 Introduction .....	8
2.2 Why does India care about sport? .....	8
<i>2.2.1 Then why the limited sporting success?</i> .....	12
2.3 The process of solving the Rubik’s cube .....	13
<i>2.3.1 Sport policy</i> .....	13
<i>2.3.2 Evolution of empirical studies to unwrap Indian sport</i> .....	15
<i>2.3.3 Sport coaching</i> .....	19
2.4 Conclusion .....	20
<b>Chapter 3: Methodology</b> .....	<b>22</b>

3.1 Introduction .....	22
3.2 Research philosophy .....	22
3.2.1 <i>Pragmatic approach</i> .....	22
3.3 Research design .....	24
3.3.1 <i>Case study</i> .....	24
3.4 Methodology .....	25
3.4.1 <i>Desk-based studies</i> .....	25
3.4.2 <i>Qualitative research</i> .....	27
3.4.3 <i>Quantitative research</i> .....	27
3.5 How were the specific objectives achieved? .....	29
<b>Chapter 4: Why does India care about sport? Indian sport from a policy viewpoint</b> ...	<b>31</b>
4.1 Introduction .....	31
4.1.1 <i>Objectives of the study</i> .....	31
4.2 Significant policy initiatives .....	31
4.2.1 <i>Policy initiatives before 2001</i> .....	31
4.2.2 <i>National Sports Policy, 2001</i> .....	32
4.2.3 <i>Comprehensive Sports Policy, 2007</i> .....	36
4.2.4 <i>National Sports Policy, 2011 (NSCI)</i> .....	38
4.2.5 <i>Other significant initiatives to promote sport in the country</i> .....	39
4.3 Potential reasons contributing to the limited success achieved by India .....	42
4.3.1 <i>Policy implementation in India</i> .....	42
4.3.2 <i>Policy learning</i> .....	47
4.4 Summary and discussion .....	49
4.5 Conclusion .....	51
<b>Chapter 5: Effective policy implementation: Exploring alternative pathways for Indian sport</b> .....	<b>52</b>

5.1 Introduction .....	52
5.1.1 <i>The context and issue to be investigated</i> .....	52
5.1.2 <i>Objectives of the Chapter</i> .....	53
5.2 Exploring top-down and bottom-up approaches to policy implementation .....	53
5.3 Policy transfer .....	55
5.3.1 <i>The role of policy actors</i> .....	56
5.3.2 <i>Effectiveness of policy transfer</i> .....	57
5.4 The potential for policy transfer in India .....	58
5.4.1 <i>What to transfer and where to transfer from?</i> .....	58
5.4.2 <i>Policy transfer from other countries</i> .....	59
5.4.3 <i>Policy transfer 'within' India</i> .....	62
5.5 Summary, discussion and conclusion .....	67
<b>Chapter 6: The state of play: Evaluation through a sample of key stakeholders in Indian sport</b> .....	<b>71</b>
6.1 Introduction .....	71
6.1.1 <i>The context and the issue to be investigated in this Chapter</i> .....	71
6.1.2 <i>Consideration of participants</i> .....	71
6.1.3 <i>Objectives of the study</i> .....	72
6.2 Methodology .....	72
6.2.1 <i>Participants</i> .....	73
6.2.2 <i>Instrumentation</i> .....	74
6.2.3 <i>Procedure</i> .....	76
6.2.4 <i>Data Analysis</i> .....	77
6.2.5 <i>Trustworthiness of the data</i> .....	79
6.3 Results .....	80
6.3.1 <i>Systemic factors</i> .....	82

6.3.2 Coaching system .....	89
6.3.3 Sport science support .....	91
6.3.4 Research .....	93
6.4 Comparing India's performance against a commonly used framework .....	94
6.4.1 Situating findings within the literature .....	94
6.4.2 Factors on which India has progressed .....	95
6.4.3 Factors in which India still lacks .....	97
6.4.4 Reallocating existing resources from hardware to liveware .....	100
6.5 Summary, discussion and conclusion .....	104
<b>Chapter 7: Exploring a broader picture of Indian sport as perceived by a wider sample of pre-elite and elite athletes</b> .....	<b>107</b>
7.1 Introduction .....	107
7.1.1 The context and the issue to be investigated in this Chapter .....	107
7.1.2 Consideration of participants .....	107
7.1.3 Objectives of the study .....	108
7.2 Methodology .....	108
7.2.1 Participants .....	108
7.2.2 Instrumentation .....	110
7.2.3 Procedure .....	112
7.2.4 Data Analysis .....	112
7.3 Results .....	113
7.3.1 Sporting culture across different sports and levels of competition .....	113
7.3.2 Perceptions about coaching behaviours and practices .....	117
7.4 Summary of findings from the current study against conclusions from previous Chapters .....	123
7.5 Discussion .....	126

7.6 Conclusion .....	129
<b>Chapter 8: Ways forward for Indian coaching: Proposing a context specific coach development model for immediate deployment .....</b>	<b>131</b>
8.1 Introduction .....	131
8.1.1 <i>The context and the issue to be investigated in this Chapter</i> .....	131
8.1.2 <i>Objectives of the Chapter</i> .....	132
8.2 Overview of the current coaching field in India .....	132
8.3 Situating the current Indian coaching field against wider coach education literature	135
8.3.1 <i>Why is there a need to target ‘quality’ coaches?</i> .....	135
8.3.2 <i>Developing ‘quality’ coaching in India: Adopting an expertise-based approach</i> .....	135
8.3.3 <i>What would develop ‘quality’ coaches – Formal or informal education?</i> .....	138
8.3.4 <i>How to develop a ‘quality’ coach?</i> .....	140
8.4 A coach development model for the Indian context .....	144
8.4.1 <i>Phase 1</i> .....	148
8.4.2 <i>Phase 2</i> .....	150
8.4.3 <i>Phase 3</i> .....	153
8.5 Potential pitfalls to consider before implementing the proposed model .....	153
8.6 Summary and discussion .....	156
8.7 Conclusion .....	158
<b>Chapter 9: Is the model really required and would it work? Exploring the importance and feasibility with key stakeholders .....</b>	<b>159</b>
9.1 Introduction .....	159
9.1.1 <i>The context and the issue to be investigated in this Chapter</i> .....	159
9.1.2 <i>Consideration of participants</i> .....	159
9.1.3 <i>Objectives of the Chapter</i> .....	160

9.2 Methodology .....	160
9.2.1 Participants .....	160
9.2.2 Instrumentation .....	162
9.2.3 Procedure .....	163
9.2.4 Data Analysis .....	163
9.2.5 Trustworthiness of the data .....	164
9.3 Results .....	164
9.3.1 Wider Indian sports field .....	166
9.3.2 Limitations of the Indian coaching field .....	170
9.3.3 Overcoming limitations of the Indian coaching field .....	180
9.3.4 The proposed model .....	184
9.4 Summary of findings from the current study against conclusions from previous Chapters .....	188
9.4.1 What is the status of the Indian sport field in general? .....	188
9.4.2 What is the current status of the Indian coaching field? .....	189
9.4.3 What is the current status of foreign coaches in India? .....	194
9.4.4 Perceptions about the proposed model .....	197
9.5 Summary and conclusion .....	200
<b>Chapter 10: Where next: General discussion, conclusions and recommendations for future research .....</b>	<b>203</b>
10.1 Revisiting the research question .....	203
10.2 Summary of the findings .....	203
10.2.1 Revised model for developing quality coaches and a coaching system .....	205
10.3 Strengths and limitations of the thesis .....	211
10.4 Future directions for research .....	213
10.4.1 Suggestions for research specific to the thesis .....	213

10.4.2 <i>Suggestions for general research about Indian sport</i> .....	216
10.5 Conclusion.....	217
<b>References</b> .....	<b>219</b>
<b>Appendix</b> .....	<b>267</b>

## Lists of Tables

### Chapter 2

<i>Table 2.1</i> .....	16
------------------------	----

### Chapter 6

<i>Table 6.1</i> .....	73
------------------------	----

<i>Table 6.2</i> .....	80
------------------------	----

<i>Table 6.3</i> .....	94
------------------------	----

### Chapter 7

<i>Table 7.1</i> .....	109
------------------------	-----

<i>Table 7.2</i> .....	113
------------------------	-----

<i>Table 7.3</i> .....	114
------------------------	-----

<i>Table 7.4</i> .....	115
------------------------	-----

<i>Table 7.5</i> .....	116
------------------------	-----

<i>Table 7.6</i> .....	117
------------------------	-----

<i>Table 7.7</i> .....	118
------------------------	-----

<i>Table 7.8</i> .....	120
------------------------	-----

<i>Table 7.9</i> .....	121
------------------------	-----

<i>Table 7.10</i> .....	122
-------------------------	-----

<i>Table 7.11</i> .....	122
-------------------------	-----

<i>Table 7.12</i> .....	123
-------------------------	-----

### Chapter 8

<i>Table 8.1</i> .....	146
------------------------	-----

### Chapter 9

<i>Table 9.1</i> .....	161
------------------------	-----

<i>Table 9.2</i> .....	165
------------------------	-----

### Chapter 10

<i>Table 10.1</i> .....	209
-------------------------	-----

## **Lists of Abbreviations**

<b>Abbreviation</b>	<b>Full Term</b>
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
TOI	Times Of India
AICS	All India Council for Sports
MYAS	Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sport
SAI	Sports Authority of India
NSNIS	Netaji Subhash National Institute of Sport
LNCPE	Lakshmbai National College of Physical Education
IOA	Indian Olympic Association
NSFs	National Sports Federations
LTDP	Long-Term Development Plan
NSDF	National Sports Development Fund
NYKs	Nehru Yuva Kendras
NYKS	Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan
NSCI	National Sports Development Code of India
NADA	National Anti Doping Agency
NSTSS	National Sports Talent Search Scheme
TOPS	Target Olympic Podium Scheme
NEP	National Education Policy
KIYG	Khelo India Youth Games
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
ICMR-INDIAB	Indian Council of Medical Research-India Diabetes
WHO	World Health Organisation
TID	Talent Identification and Development
GSDP	Gross State Domestic Product
WBTSS	World Beater Talent Spotting Scheme
SDAT	Sports Development Authority of Tamil Nadu
CAG	Comptroller and Auditor General
PESSCL	Physical Education, School Sport and Club Links
PESSYP	Physical Education and Sport Strategy for Young People
PESS	Physical Education and School Sport
BRIC	Brazil, Russia, India, and China

IPL	Indian Premier League
PKL	Pro Kabaddi League
ISL	Indian Super League
PBL	Premier Badminton League
TRDW	Talent Resource Development Wing
KSCA	Karnataka State Cricket Association
BCCI	Board of Control for Cricket in India
ICC	International Cricket Council
TRDO	Talent Resource Development Officers
NCA	National Cricket Academy
RGKA	Rajiv Gandhi Khel Abhiyan
IAAF	International Amateur Athletics Federation
PJDM	Professional Judgement and Decision Making
LSS	Leadership Scale for Sports
CBS-S	Coaching Behaviour Scale for Sport
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
CoP	Communities of Practice
QPP	Quadrennial Planning Process
AIFF	All India Football Federation
OGQ	Olympic Gold Quest
RE-AIM	Reach, Effectiveness, Adoption, Implementation and Maintenance
TDF	Theoretical Domains Framework
OTF	Olympic Task Force
SPLISS	Sports Policy Factors Leading to International Sporting Success (SPLISS)

## **Publications and Presentations Emanating from the Thesis Publications**

Khasnis, U., Chapman, P., Toering, T., & Collins, D. (2021). Focus on the people: key stakeholders' perceptions of elite sport in India and its potential for development. *Managing Sport and Leisure*, 1-21.

Khasnis, U., Chapman, P., Toering, T., & Collins, D. (2021). Policy implementation in Indian Olympic sport: Exploring the potential for policy transfer. *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics*.

## **Presentations**

Khasnis, U. (2020, September). Solving the Rubik's cube of Indian coaching. Presented at the Scottish Sport and Exercise Psychology Network Meeting, United Kingdom.

## Chapter 1

### Introduction 1.1 Introducing the context

#### *1.1.1 Significance of sport in general and Indian sport in specific*

Sport has become an important feature for all nations of the world due, perhaps, to its frequently inseparable connection to perceptions of national worth (Nicholson, Hoye, & Houlihan, 2011) compelling almost all nations to strive to achieve sporting success (De Bosscher, De Knop, Van Bottenburg, Bingham, & Shibli, 2007). As part of this evolution, the Olympic Games have gained tremendous popularity, especially evident from the 2016 Rio Olympics where a record 206 nations participated (Otamendi, Doncel, & Martín-Gutiérrez, 2020). With the ever-increasing popularity of the Olympics, nations realised that international sporting success could be of economic, cultural and political significance. If nations are to be in a position to use sport as a resource, however, it would be advantageous if they possess assets in the form of recognised world-class high-performance athletes (Houlihan & Green, 2008; Houlihan & Zheng, 2013).

With the realisation that nations need to develop world-class high-performance athletes, sport became an important aspect of government interventions, mainly in the form of discrete sport policy with concomitant funding and support for elite and community sport development initiatives (Hoye, Nicholson, & Houlihan, 2010). Notably, such an emphasis on sporting success and consequent funding has been questioned within the sporting literature with studies attempting to answer why countries prioritise investment in high-performance sport. The virtuous cycle of sport has however been proposed as a potential explanation for this investment. This philosophy, although highly contested, essentially states that high-performance success on the international stage leads to prestige and that high-performance sport contributes to a collective sense of identity. This then boosts greater mass participation, leading to a healthier populace, which in turn provides a larger pool of talent from which to choose the high-performance stars of the future and which ensures high-performance success

(Grix & Carmichael, 2012). For example, the UK government's most recent sport strategy (published in 2015 – since then, not much interest!), outlines the reasons for investing in high-performance sport as being: 1) “wellbeing, social and economic benefits to the nation. Put simply, the more our teams win, the better the nation feels” (p. 43); and 2) success in sport encourages people to participate and/or volunteer in sport. The only ‘evidence’ for these is being related to levels of employment in sport and spending on sport (including things like gym memberships and tickets to football matches) whereas the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) attached to these endeavours being medal tables and number of championships won (HM Government, 2015). In short, whilst policy seems to see a clear purpose for sport, the evidence is somewhat equivocal.

With its huge population of 1.4 billion people, India is often considered a top contender in sport, or at least a country that has the potential to be a successful sporting country (Srivastava et al., 2020; Sullivan, 2016). India is therefore no stranger to the continuous competition and has, over the years, taken immense efforts to succeed in sport. These ongoing efforts seem to have rewarded the country with a considerable influence and success at the Asian level. In the 2018 Asian Games, India ranked eighth winning a total of 69 medals with its 15 gold medals tallying with the first-ever 1951 Asian Games (Saxena & Lakhina, 2018). India's performance at the Commonwealth also seems to have improved in the past few years with 66 medals and an overall third rank in the last Commonwealth games (TOI, n.d.). Along with improved performances at the Asian and Commonwealth Games, India also seems to have a significant influence on sport development within Asia. For instance, India was the first country to introduce the Asian Games in 1951 with the games considered to be an opportunity to forge Asian solidarity (Singh Sisodia, 2005). Since the introduction of the games in 1951, India has continued to be a leading country in trying to promote sports within Asia. For instance, the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) were at the forefront of leading kabaddi's journey to the Asian Games. To popularise the sport within

Asia, the IOA began promoting the sport in China and Japan, the two most prominent and powerful Asian countries. With both China and Japan adopting the sport, it was successfully introduced in the 1990 Asian Games in Beijing, China (Shukla, 2020). Furthermore, the introduction of Pro Kabaddi League (PKL; where foreign players play in local Indian teams Mishra, 2019) in India also proved to be a stimulus to the sport as nine and 11 countries participated in the women's and men's category respectively at the 2018 Asian Games at Jakarta. India, therefore, seems to have a significant influence in promoting sport within Asia. If, however, we look at the number of successful Olympic athletes in India, there are still only a handful (Dabholkar, 2020; Lavoie, McGarry, & Fisher, 2019). India is still far behind the top sporting countries, winning a mere two medals at the 2016 Rio Olympics as opposed to the USA, Great Britain and China winning 121, 67 and 70, respectively (Kesavan 2016). Although India's performance was better at the Tokyo Olympics, with it winning seven medals (BBC Sport, n.d.-b), the difference between India and top sporting countries is all the more telling when medals are considered against the country's population.

So, why is India still struggling to emerge as a 'sporting nation', especially at the Olympic level despite all the efforts? Even with Asian and Commonwealth Games, India is believed to be performing better potentially because both Asian and Commonwealth Games have some different sports, e.g., kabaddi in which India does perform well. Next different countries participate at each of these games, for instance, countries such as China which usually perform well at the Olympics do not participate at the Commonwealth Games. Finally, and most importantly, top athletes may not always participate in Commonwealth and Asian Games, whereas they do in the Olympics. For example, Usain Bolt did not participate in the 2010 Commonwealth Games held in Delhi but did participate in both the 2008 Beijing and 2012 London Olympics (Kishore, 2018). Many possible answers have been offered to answer this question. The most common being poor infrastructure, financial instability, job insecurity and so on. But, as stated earlier, India has and continues to take tremendous efforts

to overcome these issues, evident from the improved performances at the Asian and Commonwealth Games. The country's performance at the Olympics however still remains rather poor (BBC Sport, n.d.-b). Therefore, the question persists: what is stopping India from succeeding in international sport generally, and specifically the Olympics which will be the focus of the thesis.

### ***1.1.2 Indian sport and my interest in the topic***

A potential explanation of the limited sporting success achieved by India could be that the current initiatives are not fully effective. This could potentially be because the resources invested in Indian sport are not being used impactfully (Kulkarni & Magotra, 2017). Furthermore, the high population might possibly be hindering India's attempts at efficiently using the invested resources and thereby succeeding at sport. Along with a large population, India is also characterised by great religious, ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity, making it a complex and unique country (Chelladurai, Shanmuganathan, Jothikaran, & Nageswaran, 2002). Unfortunately, India also has some more urgent concerns that need to be tackled leaving the public investable funds to a minimum (Mahapatra, 2020). With its unique composition, India would therefore need initiatives that amalgamate all these complexities in a unifying and positive cultural campaign (Nicholson et al., 2011). Given these complexities, however, another question that needed to be explored was why does India even care about sport?

Although the two questions - why India's efforts have not resulted in the country being successful at the Olympic level and why does India even care about sport will be explored in more detail in Chapter 2, in this Chapter I would like to highlight why this topic was chosen and outline what the thesis covers. The status of Indian sport was very close to me given my background as an Indian national and a former national level athlete. I was a sprinter for nine years which gave me a great opportunity to observe the Indian sport field very carefully. Unfortunately, the situation was not the greatest when I was an athlete and I,

like many other Indians, had to prioritise education over my sporting career. Importantly, however, I always wanted to contribute something to the Indian sport field and am passionate to facilitate the country's efforts to succeed at international sport. Although I am training to become a sport psychology practitioner, I felt that focusing on Indian sport more broadly would be more beneficial. This decision was mainly guided by the fact that, research on Indian sport is generally very limited (Bandyopadhyay, 2005). Consequently, I felt that exploring why India even cares about sport and assuming that it does, what is really stopping Indian sport from succeeding rather than directly focusing on sport psychology research (when that might not even be the 'real' problem) would be important. The thesis would therefore best be described as a thesis on sport development in India with two major parts that evolved in the process of exploring Indian sport. The various sport policies introduced in India were explored to understand what is happening in Indian sport from a policy viewpoint and identify potential policy hindrances that might be restricting India's performance at the Olympics. As the thesis evolved, sport coaching was identified to be an important area to focus on. Although I do acknowledge that there are multiple areas India might potentially focus on, based on the results obtained from the various studies, sport coaching was identified to be the most appropriate area to focus on in the thesis. Consequently, the following Section will highlight the overall aim of the thesis, followed by a brief outline of consequent Chapters.

As my motive was to contribute to the development of the Indian sport field, at this point I would also like to reinforce that my background as an Indian national and a former national level athlete was more dominant throughout the thesis rather than my sport psychology background. Given that subjectivity in research is almost inevitable and also contextual, and considering that neither of my supervisors were from India, they were consistently utilised throughout to reduce the subjective impact my background could have had on the research process (Bradbury-Jones, 2007; Peshkin & Peshkin, 1988).

## **1.2 Research aim and outline of the thesis**

The overall aim of this thesis was:

*To contribute solutions to solving the Rubik's cube of Indian sport by exploring impactful factors and alternative ways to facilitate success*

With this Chapter briefly outlining 'why' this topic was chosen, Chapter 2 provides a more detailed explanation of the 'what' of the thesis, specifically emphasising what the thesis is and is not, i.e., this thesis is a thesis on sport development in India with sport policy and sport coaching as the two main elements rather than it being a thesis on sport policies or sport coaching in India. These two major elements evolve from the thesis, rather than being a focus from the start of the thesis. With the 'what' and 'why' of the thesis being highlighted, Chapter 3 then explores 'how' I have achieved numerous objectives throughout the thesis. A total of six studies were conducted within this thesis, with three being desk-based studies and three being empirical studies. A brief overview of how the thesis is structured is provided in the following Section with a more detailed overview of how the thesis unfolds highlighted in Chapter 2.

### **1.2.1 Brief outline of the thesis**

After highlighting the 'what', 'why' and 'how' of the thesis, Chapter 4 then attempts to explore potential reasons the sport policies implemented in India have only had a limited impact on India's sporting success. Based on conclusions from Chapter 4, Chapter 5 explores policy literature to identify alternative solutions to facilitate India's sporting success. This Chapter specifically explores options to improve policy implementation and policy transfer as a means for India to learn from other countries and from within. Despite increased understanding of the Indian sport field, there was limited (if any at all) data about what was currently happening in the Indian sport field. Chapter 6 therefore explores a current rich picture of Indian sport to gain deeper understanding of what is really happening in Indian sport. Although this Chapter provided rich data about the current scenario of Indian sport,

especially given the huge population, a need to gain a wider rather than deeper picture was identified. Consequently, Chapter 7 focuses on gaining a wider picture of Indian sport with an aim to potentially generalise the conclusions obtained from Chapter 6. Based on the conclusions of Chapter 6 and 7, Chapter 8 then proposes a model for developing coaches and a coaching system. Given conclusions from previous Chapters, Chapter 9 is focused on gaining a deeper understanding of firstly, whether coach development truly is the best way forward for India and secondly, perceptions about feasibility of the proposed model. Finally, Chapter 10 proposes a revised model and highlights overall strengths and weaknesses of the thesis before concluding the thesis with potential future directions for research on the Indian sport field.

## **Chapter 2**

### **The ‘what’ of the thesis: Process of contributing solutions to solving the Rubik’s cube of Indian sport look like?**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This Chapter will focus on how the thesis evolved, starting with an exploration of sport policies to proposing a model for developing coaches and a coaching system. Before exploring solutions to solving the Rubik’s cube, however, it was important to understand why India even cares about sport, especially if it has other more basic concerns to address (Mahapatra, 2020). The Chapter, therefore, begins with an attempt to address the question of ‘why does India even care about sport?’ followed by an exploration of proposed potential reasons that might be contributing to the limited sporting success. Next the Chapter highlights the process of solving the Rubik’s cube of Indian sport, with reference to relevant literature about sport policies and sport coaching. Section 2.3 also provides a detailed description of the various empirical studies and how they evolved throughout the thesis.

#### **2.2 Why does India care about sport?**

Competitive sport and physical activity seem to have been an integral part of the Indian culture for many decades. The Vedic times and the epics of Mahabharata and Ramayana have both emphasised physical activity and the competitive successes of heroes. In fact, yoga, now practiced all over the world, is also believed to have originated in India (Chelladurai, Shunmuganathan, & Stephen, 2011; Government of India, 2007; NDTV Profit, 2014). Furthermore, competitive sport and physical activity have not just been important in the ancient times. In modern times, as highlighted in Chapter 1, India was the first country to introduce the Asian Games in 1951 with an aim to forge Asian solidarity (TOI, 2019b). Aside from this, India has also adopted more global level initiatives such as the 2001 United Nations theme of ‘Sport for Development and Peace’ which emphasised a close link between sport and youth development. Consequently, using sport to develop youth and establish peace

within society has been a priority in various Indian policy initiatives (e.g., Government of India, n.d.; Khelo India, n.d.).

Another factor that appears to guide the importance which India gives to competitive sport and physical activity seems to be the international success achieved by other countries in high-performance sport. With sport increasingly gaining global importance, there is a constant power struggle between countries to win medals at major international events which does seem to impact the priorities highlighted in policy initiatives and the consequent financial investment to achieve the policy initiatives (De Bosscher et al., 2007; Grix & Carmichael, 2012). India, like many other countries, has formulated numerous policy initiatives and is continually investing in sport and physical activity with the hope that it can use sport for its socio-economic, cultural and political significance (Jajo, 2016; Sharma, 2020; Houlihan & Zheng, 2013). Furthermore, with the success achieved by Indian cricket, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) is known to have a considerable influence within the International Cricket Council (ICC). India therefore is very well aware of the impact and influence it could have with sporting success which might be a significant contributor in its constant efforts to achieve success.

In fact, a desire to emerge as a leading sporting nation was mentioned by the Indian government as early as 2007 (Government of India, 2007). This desire was underpinned by the belief that promoting a nation-wide sports culture is important for both, developing the youth of the country to achieve accelerated, inclusive, and sustainable growth and inculcating national pride through excellence in sport. Specifically for India, media influence also seems to have played an important role in inculcating a sense of national pride and stronger sporting culture following high-performance success achieved by Indian athletes. Media often report an event with specific reference to the country's history and its character with an aim to domesticate media events and thereby disseminate nationalism in an effective way (Lee & Maguire, 2011). This strategy of reporting an event as historical and exploiting the historical

references and national characters are particularly evident in media coverage of global sporting events. For example, New Zealand media coverage of international rugby tends to emphasise unified and unifying notions of national identity with reference to an uncontested historical narrative of the nation. By adopting such historical accounts and framing historical perspectives, the media seem to contour a common national boundary (Lee & Maguire, 2011). In the Indian context, one of examples of the media using a historical perspective to report certain events is just after the 2016 Rio Olympics when the media reported the Prime Minister praising three Indian athletes, PV Sindhu, Sakshi Malik and Dipa Karmakar, for achieving historic achievements at the highest sporting level (Nath, 2016). Furthermore, after PV Sindhu won a gold medal at the Badminton World Championships in 2019, the Prime Minister's quote was consistently reported in various newspapers, "India's pride, a champion who has brought home a Gold and lots of glory" (Sarkar, 2019; Srivastava, 2019). Similarly, Neeraj Chopra, after winning a gold at the Tokyo Olympics, dedicated his medal to Milkha Singh who had always wished to see an Indian win an Olympic medal in track and field. With Milkha Singh being the first Indian to finish fourth in the 400 metre at the 1960 Rome Olympics, media reports highlighted how Neeraj Chopra had finally achieved what the country had longed for after the near misses from Milkha Singh and others such as PT Usha and Anju Bobby George (Gupta, 2021). Another prominent example of international success leading to a sense of national pride is the success achieved by Indian cricket. Cricket is more than just a game in India and it helps unite not just a fragmented and divided India but also the global Indian community, regardless of country, class or religion (Devan, 2012; Nair, 2011).

Along with the influence of media, the success achieved by Indian athletes itself seems to have had an impact on the future generations. For instance, success achieved by Karnam Malleswari, the first Indian woman to win a medal at the Olympics seemed to have inspired the next generation of female athletes such as Mary Kom, Sania Mirza, PV Sindhu

and Sakshi Malik (Olympic Channel, 2020c). In fact, successful Indian athletes not only motivated more athletes to pursue sport at the high-performance level but also helped increase mass participation, potentially contributing to resolving social problems such as obesity. For example, following the success achieved by athletes such as Saina Nehwal, PV Sindhu and Srikanth Kidambi in badminton, the popularity of the sport improved significantly with the number of athletes participating at the local competitions increasing from less than eight for the doubles event in 2008-09 to 3,000 in 2019 (Nayar, 2019; Acharya, 2019). Interestingly, badminton is not just popular at the competitive level, but it is also popularly played as a recreational activity (Pandhare, 2018). Similarly, Gagan Narag, after his personal success, a bronze medal at the 2012 London Olympics, established his own shooting academy to popularise shooting within the country. His personal success did seem to attract the population to pursue shooting, with the academy now producing numerous top-ranked young high-performance athletes (Venkat, 2020b). Although causation is hard to prove, this does seem to be consistent with the previously mentioned virtuous cycle of sport philosophy. In short, and unlike the reported impacts of high-performance sport in many other countries (e.g., Boardley, 2013; Pappous & Hayday, 2015) where the existence of such a link between sporting success and increased participation is strongly challenged, it seems that Indians are very susceptible to being influenced by national success.

India, therefore, does seem to view sport as being mythopoeic in nature, meaning that sport is seen as inherently good and something that can add value to a country in numerous ways, such as increasing national pride and solving social problems (e.g., inculcate peace, reduce health issues such as obesity) (Coalter, 2007). Consequently, India's policy priorities focusing on high-performance success seem to be informed by the virtuous cycle of sport philosophy. As mentioned in Chapter 1, this philosophy, although highly questioned, highlights that countries tend to believe that high-performance success will lead to international prestige for the nation, a 'feel-good factor' among the population as also

increase mass participation which would then contribute to a healthier population and a wider pool of people from which future champions can be chosen (Grix & Carmichael, 2012). If India's high-performance policy discourse is thus understood as a virtuous cycle of sport, it does help explain the government's comparative (to other nations) over-emphasis on the ability of high-performance sport to positively impact the population and thereby justifies the heavy investment in Indian sports (Grix & Carmichael, 2012).

Even with this significance given to sport, however, India's performance, especially at the Olympics is not very impressive with a mere seven medals at the Tokyo Olympics (BBC Sport, n.d.-b). Potential reasons proposed for this lack of sporting success will therefore be explored below.

### ***2.2.1 Then why the limited sporting success?***

With India perceiving sport as an important tool to achieve various benefits, it has implemented numerous policies over the years to attain sporting success and promote physical activity. Unfortunately, however, India has only achieved limited sporting success at the international stage and also has a majority inactive population. As outlined in Chapter 1, having a complex composition with great religious, ethnic, linguistic and cultural diversity (Nicholson et al., 2011) coupled with societal issues like gender discrimination, socio-economic status, financial conditions, and cultural barriers could be obstructing sports development in the country (Riordan & Krüger, 1999; Taylor et al., 2015). India, compared with more economically developed nations, still has a low per capita income and high poverty rates, making public investible resources scarce (Mahapatra, 2020; S. Mukherjee, 2020). Religion too, affects sport in a country as religious beliefs could contribute to restricted sport participation, thus affecting development (Chandran, 2016). For example, among certain religions, female sporting participation is very uncommon and, as a multi-cultural and multi-religious country, sport in India could be affected to a large extent (Jona & Okou, 2013). Aside from these societal factors, the level of development of a nation also

affects the success of sport. Some nations, as outlined in Chapter 1, do not have the option of investing largely in sport as they are compelled by more basic needs, whereas others voluntarily prioritise such sectors to invest in. These issues, to a large extent, do seem to explain why nations have different sporting standards (Chandran, 2016). Despite the prevalence of these societal and economic challenges, however, the sport budget in India for the financial year 2021-22 was a significant Rs 2596.14 crore (approximately \$ 35.8 billion) (India Today, 2021). Although, the budget was nearly 8.16% less than that allocated for the 2019-20 financial year, India is still investing in sport, regardless of other more urgent needs such as poverty (Mahapatra, 2020).

It therefore does not seem like India is not taking any efforts. Sport does seem to be important for India and it sees benefit in investing in sport. Although low, the seven medals won at Tokyo Olympics were India's best performance in the past four decades (The Times of India, 2021). The abovementioned reasons however were reported to be insufficient to explain India's relatively poor performance as countries such as Kenya and Jamaica, having low per-capita income consistently perform better (Chandran, 2016). I therefore wanted to further explore potential reasons for India's limited sporting success.

### **2.3 The process of solving the Rubik's cube**

As outlined previously, this thesis has two main parts, sport policy and sport coaching. The following Section will therefore begin with an exploration of why sport policies were explored, followed by a detailed outline of how the studies in this thesis evolved and finally a brief review of the coach education literature used to propose an India specific coaching model.

#### ***2.3.1 Sport policy***

In this regard, considering the significance placed on sports policies at the global level and increased interest in strategic planning, a decision to explore the sport policies implemented in India was taken. As policies have been reported to guide the outcomes

achieved, they were considered to be an important aspect to be explored. A policy could be understood as a general term used to describe a formal decision or plan of action adopted by an actor to achieve a particular goal. Policies could be explained in different ways such as a label for a field of activity (e.g., sport policy); an expression of intent (e.g., we will develop sport); specific proposals (e.g., manifesto or white paper); decision of government and the formal authorisation of decisions (e.g., legislation); a programme or package of legislation, staffing and funding; intermediate and ultimate outputs (e.g., more high-performance athletes, better infrastructure); outcomes or what is actually achieved (high-performance sporting success) and a process not an event, or a series of decisions, not a single decision (Cairney, 2012). Exploring sport policies implement in India so far would therefore have helped unwrap potential reasons, other than cultural and societal reasons that might be contributing to the limited sporting success in the country. Unfortunately, as outlined in Chapter 1, India is not a very well researched country (Bandyopadhyay, 2005; Chelladurai et al., 2011) which essentially meant that there was only limited data (if any at all) about why the numerous policies have not contributed to significant sporting success. To however understand why the policies have had a limited impact, the first step was to explore in detail the sport policies that have been implemented till now. Chapter 4, therefore, had two main objectives; to explore significant policy initiatives implemented in India to achieve excellence in high-performance sport and promote mass participation, and; to analyse potential reasons contributing to the limited success of the policy initiatives. Based on the analysis in Chapter 4, policy literature was further explored in Chapter 5 which again had two main objectives; to explore top-down and bottom-up approaches to policy implementation, and to explore policy transfer to identify ways to reform and implement various strategies.

Although Chapter 4 and 5 provided important insights about Indian sport policies and potential reasons for the limited impact these policies have had on sporting success, with Indian sport being under-researched, there was not enough data about what is really

happening within the sport field. There is some evidence in the media highlighting that currently invested resources in Indian sport are not being used impactfully (Kulkarni & Magotra, 2017), but generally, data about where the resources are potentially being 'wasted' is limited. In this regard, whilst India could certainly learn from other countries (policy transfer as explored in Chapter 5) and prioritise its own facilities accordingly to avoid wasteful investment of available resources, it would first need to understand its own sporting environment. Consequently, as highlighted in Chapter 1, total of three empirical studies were conducted with an aim to unwrap the Indian sport field.

### ***2.3.2 Evolution of empirical studies to unwrap Indian sport***

Despite the growing interest in sporting research and strategic approach, India still remains an under-researched country and a complex challenge due to the number of interacting factors (e.g., size, religion, diversity, culture) which would need to be considered. Globally, along with an increased academic interest on the policies implemented by countries, there was a significant increase in the use of strategic approaches to develop high-performance athletes. Consequently, studies were conducted to identify ingredients of successful high-performance athlete development with an aim to recognise potential antecedents that could facilitate sporting success (Digel, 2002 a, b; Green & Oakley, 2001). Many models with a slightly different combination of potential antecedents contributing to sporting success have been identified. Although these studies identified several key factors, the factors seemed to be overlapping and were therefore organised into three groups: contextual- such as funding or wealth; processual- such as a system for talent identification; and specific- such as bespoke training facilities. These factors were considered to contribute to development of high-performance athletes that could then be used as assets to help nations realise the various benefits of sports (Houlihan & Green, 2008). Many models comprising a slightly different combination of these antecedents were proposed to explain potential antecedents contributing to high-performance sporting success (See Table 2.1).

Table 2.1 Models identifying factors contributing to high-performance success  
 Adopted from (Houlihan & Green, 2008)

<b>Factors</b>	<b>Oakley and Green</b>	<b>Digel</b>	<b>UK Sport (SPLISS Consortium)</b>	<b>Green and Houlihan</b>
<b>Contextual</b>	An excellence culture  Appropriate funding	Support, especially financial, of the state  Economic success and business sponsorship  A media supported positive sports culture	Financial support  Participation in sport  Scientific research	Support for 'full-time' athletes
<b>Processual</b>	Clear understanding of the role of different agencies Simplicity of administration Effective system for monitoring athlete progress Talent identification and targeting of resources Comprehensive planning system for each sport  Lifestyle support	Talent development through the education system  Talent development through the armed forces	Talent identification and development system  Athletic and post-career support  Integrated approach to policy development Coaching provision and coach development	
<b>Specific</b>	Well-structured competitive programmes	Sports science support	International competition	A hierarchy of competition opportunities centred on

Well-developed specific facilities	Training facilities	preparation for international events High-performance facility development The provision of coaching, sports science, and sports medicine support services
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The focus of these models does differ, however. For instance, Green and Oakley’s (2001) model represents common approaches to the problem of enhancing high-performance sport rather than responses to the social, political, and economic elements in each country. In contrast, Digel's (2002a, b) model focuses on the context within which an effective high-performance sport system can develop. As another alternative, the Sports Policy Factors Leading to International Sporting Success (SPLISS) approach considers only developed nations, leaving very little utility in regard to less economically developed nations (Henry et al., 2020). Despite contrasts between them, however, firstly, these models have been used as a basis to compare performance of different countries on the antecedents contributing to sporting success (De Bosscher et al., 2007; De Bosscher et al., 2015; Houlihan & Green, 2008). For example, Green & Houlihan (2005) conducted a detailed analysis of the high-performance sport systems in Australia, Canada and the United Kingdom; SPLISS 1.0 was a comparison of six countries, while SPLISS 2.0 compared 15 nations (De Bosscher et al., 2007, 2015). Such studies analysing the high-performance sport system have been identified to potentially help countries engage in strategic planning (De Bosscher et al., 2015).

Secondly, although the antecedents are slightly different in each of the models, with the overlap between the antecedents or factors contributing to high-performance sporting success, an increasing trend towards a homogenous model of high-performance sports systems has been reported (Houlihan & Green, 2008). This increasing homogeneity was

suggested by Oakley and Green (2001) and later confirmed in the SPLISS report (De Bosscher, Bingham, Shibli, Van Bottenburg & De Knop, 2006). A strong evidence of strategic approaches based increasingly around a homogeneous model of high-performance sport development has therefore been very evident within the sports field. That said, there, however, is no clear unique blueprint of antecedents or best practices that can be simply copied from one context to another. Rather, the literature suggests a set of broad principles or antecedents which can be adopted to local circumstances in a culturally appropriate manner (De Bosscher, Shibli, Westerbeek, & Van Bottenburg, 2015). No set of antecedents or best practices can be copied and pasted between different contexts. Although, as a set of antecedents based on a common framework can be adopted to local circumstances in a culturally appropriate manner (De Bosscher et al., 2015), numerous studies have used these various identified models as the basis of comparison between high-performance development systems. Given the limited data on Indian sport and the country not being part of any studies that have used one of the models to compare different country's performance on the proposed antecedents, Chapter 6 had two main objectives. Firstly, to contribute an empirically driven rich picture of Indian sport and secondly, to explore India's performance against a commonly used framework of antecedents contributing to high-performance athlete development to encourage strategic planning to high-performance sporting success. This Chapter concluded that India might benefit from reprioritising its resources from 'hardware' to 'liveware', i.e., from stadia to people.

Although Chapter 6 provided rich data about Indian sport, as identified in Chapter 1, a need to obtain a wider picture of Indian sport was identified, especially considering the country's huge population of 1.4 billion people (Srivastava et al., 2020). Chapter 7, therefore explored perceptions of athletes about three main conclusions highlighted from previous Chapters. The objectives for this Chapter therefore were; to evaluate athletes' perceptions about sporting culture and their motives to participate in sport; to evaluate athletes'

perceptions about current coaching practices and behaviours, and; to evaluate athletes' perception about the knowledge and use of sport sciences. Despite some inconsistencies, Chapter 7, too concluded a need to focus on developing quality coaches and a coaching system. Consequently, Chapter 8 had two objectives; to explore current Indian coaching field against the wider coach education literature (see Section 2.2.3 for a brief review of literature considered), and; to propose a model aimed at developing *quality* home-grown coaches within the Indian context. Despite coaching being identified as an important antecedent within the literature and by participants in my previous Chapters, I wanted to triangulate this conclusion to ensure coaching is in fact the best way forward for Indian sport. Furthermore, given the conclusions from previous Chapters, understanding the feasibility of the model was also identified to be important. Consequently, Chapter 9 had three main objectives; to contribute an empirically driven rich understanding of the current coaching field; to explore whether developing quality coaches and a coaching system is the way forward for India, and; to explore feasibility of the proposed model. Finally, Chapter 10 concludes the thesis with a revised model based on conclusions from Chapter 9 and proposes future directions for the research on Indian sport.

### ***2.3.3 Sport coaching***

With the social, economic and technological changes in the world, the demand for skilled workforces has increased. This is no different within the coaching field where the importance of developing high-quality coaches has been emphasised. Pragmatically, quality coaching could be thought of as a holistic approach to coaching which equips coaches to consider the athletes as a human being rather than a mechanical body or commodity. Quality coaches go beyond the traditional emphasis on competencies to understand, support and care for athletes as people which contribute to athlete's motivation (Allen & Hodge, 2006). Furthermore, from a more philosophical viewpoint, the notion of quality is not solely the end point but rather, a process. It is a reflective process that emphasises two questions that are

believed to arise when focusing on developing quality; ‘What are the consequences of what I do?’ and, ‘What are the consequences of how I coach?’ (cf. Cassidy, Jones, & Potrac, 2009). In this regard, reflection is a process that offers a conceptual framework to connect and understand coach education, theory and practice (Nelson & Cushion, 2006). Consequently, a focus on quality requires coaches to explore ways in which their practice can be made ‘more meaningful, purposeful, just and enjoyable’. This process helps coaches consciously search for contradictions in their practice. For example, identifying a difference between what coaches think they are doing and what they are actually doing (Cassidy et al., 2009).

Given that ‘quality’ coaches needed to be developed, various coaching models were considered. For instance, the behavioural model which is very evident from the recent work of Cushion & Stoder and was based on the old concepts of Smith, Small and Hunt (Smith, Smoll, & Hunt, 1977; Stodter & Cushion, 2019). This model focuses on the way the coach behaves, they will assess the coach’s behaviour, e.g., how often does this behaviour occur and recommendations are made based on these observations. Next, work of Bourdieu, appearing most recently works such as Cushion and Jones (2014) and explores concepts such as power dynamics was also considered. Another model that was considered was the staged model proposed by Muir which essentially focuses on the ‘what, who and how’ (Allen & Muir, 2020). This model explores coaches’ decision making through a reflective process. Finally, the expertise-based approach was also considered which is evident from the work done by researchers such as Collins, Burke, Martindale, & Cruickshank, 2014; Nash, Martindale, Collins, & Martindale, 2012. For reasons that will unfold through the Chapters, an expertise-based approach was adopted for the model I have proposed.

## **2.4 Conclusion**

There seems to be some proof that the virtuous cycle of sport philosophy is in fact true as far as India is concerned. Consequently, considering that India does care about sport and wants to succeed at the international level, the thesis is focused on facilitating sport

development in the country with a specific focus on exploring sport policies implemented in the country and proposing potential ways to enhance the quality of coaches the country develops. The next Chapter will therefore begin with an exploration and analysis of sport policies.

## Chapter 3

### Methodology

#### 3.1 Introduction

Having looked at ‘what’ the thesis includes, exploring ‘how’ the various objectives highlighted in Chapter 2 are achieved. Consequently, the current Chapter will focus on the methodology used throughout the thesis. The Chapter begins with an exploration of the research philosophy adopted, followed by the research design that guides the thesis. Next a detailed description of the various methodologies incorporated within the thesis are reviewed before providing a brief outline of the methodology incorporated for each of the studies conducted throughout the thesis.

#### 3.2 Research philosophy

##### *3.2.1 Pragmatic approach*

Given the abovementioned context, aim and objectives a pragmatic approach was chosen with an aim to generate practically meaningful knowledge (Giacobbi, Poczwardowski, & Hager, 2005) which might potentially facilitate sporting success in India. A pragmatic approach is a philosophy of knowledge construction that emphasises practical solutions to applied research questions and attempts to provide practical solutions to contemporary problems experienced by people and society (Giacobbi, Poczwardowski, & Hager, 2005). Instead of focusing on the underlying philosophical assumptions of the methods, pragmatic researchers emphasise the research problems and use all available approaches to understand the problems (Creswell, 2009). Pragmatists argue that a continuum exists between objective and subjective viewpoints, the choice of which depends on the nature of the research question being asked and the particular point in the research process. In other words, the pragmatist prefers to avoid debate about whether constructivistic or positivistic conceptions of truth are more accurate. Rather, they consider the practical concerns with human existence, the research questions being asked, and the consequences of

inquiry, to be more important than which version of the truth is better than another (Giacobbi et al., 2005). Furthermore, pragmatists with an aim to provide tangible applied outcomes rather than generalisability or pure context dependent subjectivity consider themselves to be co-constructors of knowledge (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). Knowledge generated and/or refined through this approach is focused on optimal returns for practice (Cruickshank & Collins, 2017).

**Strengths and weaknesses of a pragmatic approach.** One of the main strengths of this approach is that it enables researchers to be flexible in their investigation techniques as they attempt to address a range of research questions that arise. A feature which was considered particularly important for a complex country like India. Secondly, using more than one methodology as opposed to a single methodology enables pragmatic researchers to combine empirical precision with descriptive precision (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005) which would certainly contribute to achieving the aim and objectives of this thesis.

However, like any other approach, this approach does have some weaknesses. The side-lining of ontological concerns in favour of the primacy of the research question is one of the primary critiques of pragmatism (McCaslin, 2012). As pragmatists prioritise methods and theories that are more useful within specific contexts (e.g., answers to practical problems) and not those that reveal underlying truths about the nature of reality, another criticism for this approach is that it can be highly context dependent. Although the second weakness might actually be an advantage for the current thesis as I am essentially concerned with providing answers to practical problems in a very specific context, i.e., facilitating sporting success in India (Giacobbi et al., 2005).

As my philosophical position greatly influences the methodologies I use, the following Section will now explore the available options for methodology in general and conclude with the methodology I have used. Before that I however discuss the research design used in this thesis.

### **3.3 Research design**

Research design is defined as a plan that guides an investigator in the process of collecting, analysing and interpreting data. It is a blueprint for any research which mainly deals with four problems; what questions to study, what data are relevant, what data to collect and how to analyse the results. The main aim of a research design is to help researchers avoid any situations in which the evidence does not address the initial research questions (Yin, 2009).

As mentioned in Chapter 1, I was interested in building a rich detailed picture of sport in India. I could certainly have explored one part of the country and obtained detailed description of that part. This however would have restricted my vision to a very tiny part of a huge country that does have potential to succeed at sport. Furthermore, as data about Indian sport is very limited, gaining a wider perspective of the sporting field in general rather than focusing on any one part of the country, especially without enough information about which part of the country to select, was identified to be a more appropriate starting point. With contributions from such a broader perspective I was hoping to achieve my aim of making a positive contribution to India's ongoing efforts to succeed at international sports.

This thesis therefore presents a multi-faceted case study of Indian sport with a very driven purpose of potential ways to make Indian sport better. The strengths and weaknesses of case study design are now explored below.

#### ***3.3.1 Case study***

Case studies are useful for developing an in-depth understanding of a specific phenomenon or context and for exploring contemporary events (Yin, 2003). Four characteristics of a case study research have been highlighted: a) focus is on specific cases, b) analysis of each case is both in-depth and intensive, c) cases are studied within the natural context and d) the researcher draws on the perspective of those within the case, rather than his or her own perspective (Zheng, 2015). This type of research has numerous strengths, with

the most important one being its often-deep insight into a particular phenomenon. A case study design also provides the researcher with an opportunity to gain a holistic view of the process and finally, even though there are criteria for the selection of cases, there is a degree of freedom regarding the selection of the units of analysis. A key point in relation to developing the research design is that multiple sources of data should be sought (Yin, 2003). The current thesis, as would be evident throughout, achieved this by sampling individuals involved in different sports within India and holding different roles within sport in the country.

At this point I would like to highlight that I was very well aware that cricket stands apart within Indian sport as a sport that is very well-organised and well-resourced, and which the country has excelled at internationally for decades (Devan, 2012; Nair, 2011). Although a case study approach was employed on the entire Indian sport field, I do acknowledge cricket as a specific case and therefore deliberately chose to exclude cricket from the thesis. Instead, the current thesis focuses on other sports in India, especially the Olympic sports, considering what the general issues are and how the high-performance sport system can be improved.

### **3.4 Methodology**

After a comprehensive consideration of my philosophical position, research design and the aim and objectives to be achieved, I took a decision to adopt a combination of desk-based, qualitative and quantitative methods. Strengths and weaknesses of each of these approaches will now be discussed in detail.

#### ***3.4.1 Desk-based studies***

Desk-based studies are studies that do not require original data to be collected, but rather use secondary data (data that has already been collected by others) or primary data (data that you have collected) that has been collected for some other study. Desk-based studies that use secondary data could be a useful starting point for additional research by suggesting problem formulations, research hypotheses and research methods. They also

provide an opportunity for the new data to be compared to existing data for purpose of examining differences or trends (Stewart & Kamins, 1992).

Of course, the data used for such studies, could have some disadvantages that need to be addressed before selection. Firstly, when selecting data for desk-based studies, special attention needs to be given to the validity and reliability of the data. Second, being mindful of when data were originally collected and whether it is still appropriate and relevant is extremely crucial.

**Resources.** With India being an under-researched country (Bandyopadhyay, 2005), a lot of grey literature needed to be used (Paez, 2017; Rothstein & Hopewell, 2009). The thesis mainly used government policy documents published by the Government of India which are generally perceived as valuable resources containing unique information content (Johnson, Ryan, & Oakes, 2013) as well as media articles such as newspapers and internet sources considering that they do provide great value. Within media reports, I mainly relied on e-newspaper articles for information about the current initiatives and situation of Indian sport, offering a perspective on both policy and the population's perceptions of same (given that media reports generally reflect or drive popular opinion). I was however mindful about the concerns of quality of material that is published outside of traditional academic publishing (Paez, 2017; Rothstein & Hopewell, 2009). I therefore evaluated the grey literature against the four criteria proposed by Scott (1990, p.6); authenticity, credibility, representativeness and meaning of the resources used. In regard to authenticity, I evaluated whether the evidence was genuine and from official, authoritative, and reliable sources, whereas with credibility I had to evaluate whether the evidence provided was a sincere expression of the views of the resource author and what the nature of the author's perspective was. With representativeness, I considered if the evidence was typical of its kind and if it was not, was the extent of the unrepresentativeness known. Finally, regarding meaning, the ambiguity of the data was evaluated (Zheng, 2015). Consequently, the mass-media outputs were mainly selected from

relatively popular and well-read newspapers (wherever possible) such as Times Of India (TOI), Hindustan Times and Mint (Jha, 2019; TOI, 2019a).

### ***3.4.2 Qualitative research***

Qualitative research designs are influenced by interpretivist epistemology which seeks to resolve the problem by gathering sufficient knowledge that leads to a deeper understanding or explanation. This approach is concerned with how people make sense of the world and how they experience events with the quality and texture of experience rather than with the identification of cause-effect relationships (Moran, Matthews, & Kirby, 2011). A key characteristic of qualitative research is the use of an explorative approach and the collection of rich descriptive data (Silverman, 2006) with an aim of producing a useful map of the world rather than a correct one (Streat, 1998). This approach argues that concepts such as feelings, emotions, beliefs are too complex to be reduced to numbers and would rather require words, statements and other non-numerical measures to collect data from the viewpoint of the participant. It also allows the researcher to gain an insider's perspective, to try to understand the participants from within which may allow identification of concepts that may otherwise be missed by a quantitative approach (Gratton & Jones, 2010). The strength of qualitative research, therefore, is the closeness to 'truth' (at least a context-delimited version) or practical utility (Greenhalgh & Taylor, 1997).

Qualitative approaches do inevitably have some limitations as well. Questions over reliability and validity as well as trustworthiness, credibility and authenticity are raised due to the subjective nature of interpreting people's thought and feelings. Findings from qualitative research are also less likely to be generalisable to other settings and the overall time and resources required to collect the required 'deep and rich' information tends to be longer (Gratton & Jones, 2010).

### ***3.4.3 Quantitative research***

Quantitative research designs stem from a positivist epistemology in which the goals of the research are to produce objective knowledge that is impartial and unbiased, i.e., without personal involvement or vested interests on the part of the researchers (Moran, Matthew & Kirby, 2011). This type of research assumes that behaviours can be observed and objectively measured and analysed. Such objective measures are generally, although not always, numerical in nature (Gratton & Jones, 2010). Quantitative researchers generally agree that concepts such as feelings, emotions, beliefs and so on do not have any place in research as they cannot be directly observed or measured and that they are unreliable and instable over time. This approach is considered to be ideal if the aim of the research is to describe, compare or measure a phenomenon (Creswell, 2009). This approach therefore has its undoubted strengths, especially in terms of precision, control and objectivity and their ability to be generalisable.

There are some weaknesses as well. Sport is a social phenomenon, that is, whoever participates in, watches or manages sports are affected by numerous external social forces, but also have the freedom to respond to such forces in an active way and are not inanimate objects whose behaviour can be understood in terms of causal relationships. When studying sports, one cannot predict whether X will always cause Y as we all have, to a differing extent, the freedom to act in a number of different ways. Unfortunately, quantitative approaches do not take into account intangible concepts related to this freedom (e.g., feelings, the role of such concepts in explaining our sporting behaviour etc) (Gratton & Jones, 2010).

To sum, a combination of the three methods was found to particularly align with my pragmatic philosophy and the case study design. As outlined above, a pragmatic approach emphasises research problems and uses all available approaches to explore the problems (Creswell, 2009). Case studies are also increasingly employing any preferred form of data collection (Yin, 2003). Finally, a combination of methods could help triangulate data which

was specifically relevant for a complex country like India (Chelladurai, Shunmuganathan, & Stephen, 2011; Gratton & Jones, 2010).

### **3.5 How were the specific objectives achieved?**

As reported earlier, data on Indian sport is limited. Although with some data about sport policies and initiatives introduced in the country and given the significance of policies, Chapter 4 and 5 were desk-based studies. Both these Chapters used secondary data to highlight the significant policy initiatives introduced and identify potential reasons for the limited sporting success achieved by India. With lack of data about Indian sport and as secondary data could be a useful starting point for additional research (outlined in Section 3.4.1), desk-based studies were identified to be an ideal option for Chapter 4 and 5. These Chapters facilitated formulation of some initial conclusions and provided further direction for the consequent Chapters. Given my intention to use only secondary data in Chapter 4 and 5, a desk-based approach was used. I essentially used grey literature (such as newspaper articles and government documents) and journal articles which were all evaluate against the four criteria mentioned in Section 3.4.1 (Gratton & Jones, 2010; Paez, 2017; Rothstein & Hopewell, 2009; Zheng, 2015).

Having used the limited secondary data to explore Indian sport, the next important step was to gather empirical data about the current picture of Indian sport. Although secondary data can provide important insights, collecting primary data is also required (Gratton & Jones, 2010), especially if my aim was to contribute to development of sport in India. Consequently, Chapter 6 and 7 were aimed at contributing an empirical picture of the Indian sport field. With India being a vast country, quantitative approaches such as a survey would have definitely let me generalise from the data I gathered, albeit that even a large sample by research standards (c. 100+) would still be proportionately tiny against a population of 1.4 billion (Srivastava et al., 2020)!! For the first study highlighted in Chapter 6, however, I was more interested in gathering in-depth information about Indian sport by

capturing the interactions and concerns seen at higher levels of the sporting pathway: in short, a qualitative representation as opposed to a quantitative one. Furthermore, as highlighted in Section 3.4.2, the closeness to truth (at least a contextually relevant version) or practical utility is considered to be a strength of qualitative research (Greenhalgh & Taylor, 1997). Therefore, considering the aims of the study and consistent with my pragmatic research philosophy, a qualitative approach was used (Gratton & Jones, 2010; Silverman, 2004; Streat, 1998). Although, as highlighted previously, qualitative approach is not without its limitations, including the inability to analyse data in an epistemological vacuum (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Triangulation of data was therefore particularly important for the current thesis to provide complementary evidence and greater understanding of the findings (Creswell, 2009; Moran, Matthews & Kirby, 2011). Given that a combination of methods could help triangulate data (Gratton & Jones, 2010) and considering the aim and parameters of the study highlighted in Chapter 7, a quantitative approach was employed.

Following data from the two empirical studies highlighted in Chapter 6 and 7, I then needed to explore the Indian coaching field against the wider coach education literature to propose an India specific coaching model. Consequently, as I only intended to use secondary data, Chapter 8, like Chapter 4 and 5, used a desk-based approach. A combination of journal articles and grey literature such as newspapers, internet resources were used which were all evaluated against the four criteria mentioned in Chapter 1 (Zheng, 2015; Gratton & Jones, 2010; Paez, 2017). Finally, given the significance of triangulation, especially for a complex country like India (Chelladurai et al., 2011), a decision to conduct another empirical study, highlighted in Chapter 9, was taken. Although a quantitative approach could have given me a larger sample, gathering sufficiently in-depth knowledge about the topic would not have been possible (Gratton & Jones, 2010). Consequently, a conscious decision to use a qualitative approach was made to gain detailed knowledge about the current coaching field in India and the feasibility of the proposed model.

## Chapter 4

### Indian sport from a policy viewpoint

#### 4.1 Introduction

Having explored the importance of sport at the global stage, virtuous cycle of sport philosophy and why India cares about sport, the aim of the current Chapter is to understand why India cares about sport and also explore potential reasons for India's limited sporting success and mass participation. Specifically, this Chapter focuses on Indian sport from a policy viewpoint to develop a better understanding of why various policy initiatives have only contributed to limited sport development and mass participation.

##### *4.1.1 Objectives of the study*

Reflecting the first element of my aim, namely, to explore Indian sport from a policy viewpoint to understand why India has only managed to achieve limited success so far, the current chapter had two objectives,

- i. To explore significant policy initiatives implemented in India to achieve excellence in high-performance sport and promote mass participation, and;
- ii. To analyse potential reasons contributing to the limited success of the policy initiatives

#### 4.2 Significant policy initiatives

##### *4.2.1 Policy initiatives before 2001*

Aside from introducing the Asian Games in 1951, the Indian government, in 1954 took another important step to promote sport by creating the All India Council of Sports (AICS). The AICS acted as an advisory body, informing the government on numerous areas including national sports policies, government funding of national sport governing bodies, and coaching high-performance athletes. The next significant policy initiative was in 1982 when a specific government department for sport, the Ministry of Sport (now the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sport, MYAS), was established. Thereafter, India introduced its first ever

National sports policy in 1984. The 1984 National sports policy in conjunction with the government also introduced an apex body, the Sports Authority of India (SAI) to promote the development of coaches and physical education teachers, participation in sport and physical activity and infrastructure. The SAI focused on promotion of these factors with an aim to achieve three distinct purposes: excellence, knowledge in sport and physical activity and a healthy lifestyle. Along with these, the 1984 policy also recognised that mass participation would not be possible without the creation of basic sports infrastructure at the grassroots level. Consequently, development and maintenance of infrastructure was prioritised. In regard to excellence at the high-performance level, the policy emphasised the importance of institutional support, international exposure, and incentives to athletes.

Furthermore, in 1986, the National Education Policy was introduced to emphasise the importance of sport and physical education in the education sector and incorporated objectives of the 1984 national sports policy as far as the Education sector was concerned (Government of India, n.d.-b). Within the 1986 education policy the government of India also established two distinct government units, the Netaji Subhas National Institute of Sport (NSNIS) and the Lakshmi Bai National College of Physical Education (LNCPE) to promote sport and physical education in the country (Chelladurai et al., 2002). Following the 1984 policy, an action plan was proposed in the national sports policy of 1992. Unfortunately, the implementation of initiatives proposed in both the 1984 and 1992 policies were not successfully achieved. Consequently, there was a need to reformulate the policy and introduce more concrete terms with specific measures required to be undertaken by different agencies (Government of India, 2011).

#### ***4.2.2 National Sports Policy of 2001***

Given the need to reformulate the earlier sport policies, the next national policy was introduced in 2001. This 2001 national sports policy emphasised a dual aim of mass participation in sport and excellence at the high-performance level. India is not the only

country to have such a dual focus as sport policies of other countries have also focused on both mass participation and excellence at the high-performance level. For example, Australia implemented twin objectives focused on excellence in high-performance sport and increased participation in sport activities for all. Contrastingly, in Canada, the primary focus of the federal intervention was high-performance sport whilst the responsibility of recreation and mass participation was left with provinces, territories and municipalities (Green & Houlihan, 2005). In fact, as per the 2001 policy, India had a similar structure, as state governments were mainly responsible for promoting mass participation whereas the central government and the SAI would collaborate with the IOA and National Sports Federations (NSFs) to promote excellence at the high-performance level. With sport being a State subject, as per the Indian Constitution, each State is therefore responsible for incorporating the national policies within their state policies (Chelladurai et al., 2011).

**Mass participation.** With physical activity holding an important place in traditional Indian culture and with India strongly believing that sport plays an important role in inculcating national pride, peace and youth development, mass participation was given particular importance in the 2001 national sports policy. To ensure mass participation, the policy reinforced that sport and physical education would be more effectively integrated within education by including it as part of the curriculums of educational institutions such as schools, colleges, and universities, in both rural and urban areas. The rationale to include sport and physical activity in schools, college and universities was that educational institutions come under the jurisdiction of the states and would therefore increase the probability of successfully promoting mass participation. Furthermore, a National Fitness Programme was introduced in all schools with a special focus on increasing the availability of both infrastructure and appropriate physical education teachers. The 2001 policy also emphasised the 1984 policy priority of developing and maintaining infrastructure. Along with this, promotion of sport in rural and less accessible areas was also given preference. The

Village panchayats (village government bodies) and the rural Youth and Sports Clubs were encouraged to provide necessary infrastructure and organise appropriate competitions to identify talent in the rural and less accessible parts of the country. Along with these mass participation initiatives, as the 2001 national sports policy had a dual focus, high-performance sport was also equally promoted.

**Excellence at the high-performance level.** First, this policy emphasised the need for various government agencies and the IOA and NSFs to work harmoniously to achieve sporting success. The main areas to focus on included conducting national championships to identify talent, inculcate a competitive spirit and provide appropriate infrastructure and sport equipment. Furthermore, as participation in international events such as the Olympics, World Championships, Commonwealth and Asian Games is considered to promote national pride, selection, and preparation of the team for such events was given special attention. To compete with international athletes, the policy also proposed the need for each sport discipline to develop a Long-Term Development Plan (LTDP) for their athletes which would include provision and development of coaches and sport science support and exposure at international events.

Second, generation of financial resources were a specific focus of this policy. The Central and State governments were to allocate higher budgets, with the private sector also being encouraged to contribute towards sport development. In this regard, the Policy of Economic Liberalisation made it more convenient for the private sector to be involved in the development of sport. Next, the National Sports Development Fund (NSDF) was also established to collect more funds for developing sport. Along with financial incentives, social recognition, for both athletes and coaches, in the form of awards was also introduced. Given the interdependence and interrelation of sport and tourism, a need to generate substantial revenue through sports tourism was also highlighted. The concerned Central ministries and State governments (i.e., sport, tourism, and other relevant ministries) were encouraged to

work together to formulate and implement plans for revenue generation. Furthermore, to attract a larger population to pursue sport as a career, providing incentives to athletes was also included in this policy.

Next, mass media was also highlighted as a way to popularise sport and inculcate a stronger sporting culture within the country. Finally, with globalisation reaching India in the early 1990s, a decision to pursue sport exchange programmes with all friendly nations was highlighted in this policy (Government of India, n.d.-b). Despite these policy initiatives, however, India, as compared to China or even Cuba was still lacking in mass participation and was also significantly behind in terms of excellence at the high-performance level. The issues mentioned in Chapter 2 are not entirely sufficient to explain India's poor sporting performance, as there are other countries with similar issues that have still managed to perform well. For example, countries such as Kenya and Jamaica have low levels of per capita income but are still top performers in certain sports. In this regard, Majumdar observed that India does not have a sports culture (Chandran, 2016). With India being predominantly academically and economically focused, Indian parents have always prioritised education. For Indian parents, education has always been a preferred pathway, mainly due to the perception that education could lead to a more stable and certain career than sports (Navigus Blogs, 2017). The focus placed on education, coupled with the perception that sport is not a good career to pursue, might be limiting the number of Indians that are involved in sports (Sajad, 2018). An analysis of the 2001 policy however highlighted that India still majorly lacked basic sports infrastructure, especially at the grassroots level. The emphasis on developing sport and promoting physical education in the country was still low. Potential reasons for this were the absence of a holistic and integrated policy approach to promoting excellence by developing easily accessible sporting facilities, low levels of resources allocated to sport by the Central and State governments and a lack of support from the private

sector. Consequently, a need to implement a more comprehensive set of policy initiatives was identified (Government of India, n.d.-b).

#### ***4.2.3 Comprehensive Sports Policy, 2007***

The aim to emerge as a successful sporting country within the next decade in the conviction that a strong sporting culture would help develop the younger population and also inculcate national pride through excellence at the high-performance level was introduced by the Indian government as early as 2007. To achieve this aim, a realignment of responsibilities between the Central and State governments and the IOA, SAI and NSFs along with increased support from the private sector was proposed. The athletes were set to be the centre-stage in the policy with all other stakeholders taking on a promotional, supportive and convergent role towards achieving the dual goal of mass participation and excellence at the high-performance level (Government of India, 2007).

**Mass participation.** To promote mass participation, various strategies were introduced. First, ‘sports for all’ was a programme with twenty objectives such as universal access to sports and physical education to the entire population and increased public investment to ensure development of basic but extensive infrastructure in both rural and urban areas. Second, universalising sport facilities in educational institutions was introduced as sport infrastructure in educational institutions was found to be inadequate. This objective also reinforced the importance of integrating sport and physical activity in educational curriculums, providing sufficient resources to promote mass participation and optimally utilising available infrastructure. Next, in regard to sport facilities in rural areas, among other initiatives, reactivating the Nehru Yuva Kendras (NYKs) that were responsible for promoting sports was proposed. The NYKs were established in 1972 to promote sport and physical activity specifically in the rural areas. Later in 1987-88 the Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS) was established to promote youth development in various parts of the country. Although, over the years, for a variety of reasons, these organisations became inactive. To

therefore continue its efforts at promoting mass participation and achieve youth development, specifically in rural areas, this policy emphasised the need to reactivate these organisations (Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan, n.d.). Furthermore, the State sports authorities were provided additional financial and human resources to provide and develop the necessary facilities such as coaches and sports infrastructure. Next, although sport infrastructure was generally more developed in the urban areas, accessibility was low. Consequently, initiatives were proposed to ensure all concerned stakeholders worked together to increase accessibility of the infrastructure. Furthermore, mass participation was to be promoted by cultivating a club culture, promoting competition, and introducing the national physical fitness programme. Finally, promotion of indigenous sports and sport for women, differently abled and the senior population were the other initiatives proposed in the 2007 policy with an aim to achieve overall health benefits. The 2007 policy therefore continued to promote the objectives from the 2001 policy and also introduced new initiatives to promote mass participation (Government of India, 2007).

**Excellence at the high-performance level.** The Central government committed itself to systematically provide necessary financial and other relevant support to probable athletes with an aim to provide them the best opportunity to pursue their goals of excelling at the international level. SAI, State governments, educational institutions and NSFs were encouraged to develop and maintain talent identifiers who would be responsible for identifying talented youth, especially from disciplines that were most popular in those areas. State governments were encouraged to establish sports nurseries, schools, and academies to provide short- and long-term support to talented athletes. Similarly, centres of excellence were to be developed with financial support from SAI and the Central government. These sport schools and centres for excellence were to provide infrastructure, scientific support, and high-quality coaching to athletes from each sport discipline and offer financial assistance to athletes during and after their career. Furthermore, the existing sports infrastructure was to be

integrated into a robust National Sports Grid to maintain a database of the available infrastructure in the country. Finally, a decision to diversify from popular team sports to individual, medal-intensive sport disciplines such as athletics and gymnastics was taken (Sports Bureau Draft:Comprehensive Sports Policy 2007, 2007).

Unfortunately, the 2007 policy also saw very little improvement in the Indian sport field and most of the objectives were still to be achieved. Consequently, the national sports policy of 2011, National Sports Development Code of India (NSCI), was formulated with an aim to implement new strategies to achieve objectives set by the previous policies (Government of India, 2011).

#### ***4.2.4 National Sports Policy, 2011 (NSCI)***

The NSCI aimed to combine all the guidelines undertaken in and after the 2001 policy and other orders, notifications, instructions or circulars post 2001, such as the annual recognition of the NSFs, notification of National Anti Doping Agency's (NADA) anti doping rules, and introduction of guidelines for prevention of age fraud in sports.

**Initiatives at the administrative level.** As overviewed earlier, the policy aimed to achieve three main objectives to improve the administration and functioning of sport in the country. First, the policy aimed to define the areas of responsibility for the various agencies involved in promotion and development of sport in the country. The second aim was to outline eligibility criteria to allow NSFs to receive government recognition and grants, whereas the third one was to identify NSFs eligible under the proposed guidelines before setting priorities and developing procedures to be followed by NSFs to receive Government sponsorship. Recognition and further assistance provided to the various agencies, especially the NSFs was introduced to maintain certain basic standards, norms and procedures regarding the internal functioning that corresponded to principles and objectives of the concerned International Federations, the Olympic Charter or the IOA. The NSFs were also encouraged to introduce more transparency in their functioning.

**Excellence at the high-performance level and mass participation.** The NSFs were given various responsibilities which included, firstly, to introduce transparent procedures to select athletes for the Indian team as well as those competing at the local levels. Next, to develop a detailed LTDP that would follow a four-year cycle. Furthermore, encouraging introduction of professional practices, upgrading their administrative and technical systems, and using sport as a commercial tool to generate some revenue were also part of the NSF's responsibility. Another initiative introduced was providing coaching camps which would offer financial support to athletes, coaches, and other support staff. Extended support to NSFs for developing necessary infrastructure, purchasing equipment, and supporting international participation (events and training camps) was also introduced.

In regard to coaching, the 2011 policy also proposed potential appointments of foreign coaches on contract basis as well as improving coaching standards of Indian coaches. Similarly, the policy proposed potential assistance in arranging for foreign teams to visit India or Indian teams to visit foreign countries as part of a cultural exchange programme. Given the impact hosting major international events could have on a country's population the MYAS also identified the need to host major international events in India. Furthermore, the need to have a strong domestic tournament schedule was also identified to attain a dual goal of producing more quality athletes and also popularising the sport. As the lack of mass participation was consistently identified as one of the main reasons for the poor sporting standards in the country, NSFs were encouraged to include relevant measures in their LTDPs to increase participation in their sport, specifically at educational institutions and local clubs (Government of India, 2011).

#### ***4.2.5 Other significant initiatives to promote sport in the country***

Aside from the abovementioned national sports policies, other initiatives with an aim to promote mass participation and succeed in high-performance sport were also introduced.

**Initiatives introduced by the Government.** The National Sports Talent Search Scheme (NSTSS) was launched in 1985 to identify sports talent in the 8-14 years age bracket and develop them into medal prospects. Another more recent initiative is the Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS) launched by MYAS to fund potential Olympic medallists. Forty potential Olympic medallists from various disciplines such as athletics, badminton, boxing, sailing, shooting and wrestling (Business Standard News, 2019) were identified and provided financial assistance of Rs 50,000 (approximately USD 690) per month (Chelladurai & Nair, 2017). It is worthwhile contrasting these levels with those offered in other government systems. For example, UK Sport currently offer top medal prospects (who have already medalled) a grant of GBP 21,000 per year (approximately USD 2982 per month) (Current Funding Figures, n.d.).

With the dual aim mentioned in the sport policies, the ‘come and play’ scheme was also implemented in 2011, ensuring sport facilities are not just used by high-performance athletes but by the masses for recreational purposes. The aim of this was to promote a healthy lifestyle by encouraging the population to get involved in some sort of sport activity. Similarly, in 2019 the Fit India movement was launched with an aim to promote behavioural changes within the population by encouraging the population to be more physically active (Fit India, n.d.). Furthermore, the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, reinforced the need to encourage a holistic development of the youth. This policy proposed sport-integrated learning within classrooms to encourage students to adopt fitness as a lifelong attitude, achieve relevant life skills and the required levels of fitness as stated in the Fit India movement (Government of India, 2020). Another initiative is the Khelo India Youth Games (KIYG), introduced in 2018. The KIYG aims to encourage mass participation and provide appropriate support to talented athletes by targeting 12 objectives such as annual sports competitions, talent search and development, promotion of sport for women, differently abled population, and community coaching development. KIYG are also aimed to create inter-state

rivalry, to thereby push state governments to undertake more efforts to develop sport in their own states (Khelo India n.d.).

Unfortunately, these government initiatives did not seem to be sufficient to support India's huge population which led to the private sector introducing initiatives to achieve sport development in the country.

**Initiatives introduced by the private/corporate sector.** Recognising the pressure the government was facing, the private sector began supporting the athletes. Many private organisations, such as the Olympic Gold Quest (OGQ), have been established to support Indian athletes, financially and otherwise (e.g., providing athletes with sport psychologists) (Olympic Gold Quest, n.d.). Similarly, many private companies are now providing jobs to Indian athletes, enabling them to train full-time (Hannon 2010). With the Company Act 2013 expanding its scope to include promotion of rural sport, Paralympic sport and Olympic sport, private/corporate companies could invest on development of sport in the country through the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) fund. Consequently, some companies established sport academies, for example, Tata Steel instituted academies for football, archery, athletics, and hockey. Whereas, other companies such as Reliance Foundation introduced programmes such as the Jr NBA programme and Young Champs programmes (Shirotriya, 2019).

Despite these initiatives, however, India is still behind on both success at the international level (with just two medals at the 2016 Rio Olympics - Kesavan, 2016) and mass participation. A study by the Indian Council of Medical Research-India Diabetes (ICMR-INDIAB) reported that less than 10% of Indian adults were meeting the World Health Organisation's (WHO) recommended standards of physical activity (Anjana et al., 2014). This high percentage of inactive adults was having a negative impact on the overall health of the country which was evident from a study conducted in 2018 that reported more than 135 million individuals in India being affected by obesity (Ahirwar & Mondal, 2019). Furthermore, another study conducted in 2016 reported that one in four school children in

metro cities and one in six from non-metro cities were overweight. So, as mentioned in Chapter 2, if sport has always been important for India and something it sees real benefit in, and if India has introduced numerous policies to target development and promotion of high-performance sport and mass participation, why is it still struggling to emerge as a successful sporting country and maintain a healthy population? Consequently, the next Section focuses on analysing the implementation of policy initiatives mentioned in this Section and draw on some more examples to explore potential reasons that could be contributing to the limited success achieved by India.

### **4.3 Potential reasons contributing to the limited success achieved by India**

Although the continuous efforts outlined in Section 4.2, have helped India progress in high-performance sport and mass participation to a certain extent, the country is evidently still struggling to emerge as a successful sporting country and ensure that the majority of its population is active (Ahirwar & Mondal, 2019; Kesavan, 2016; Sharma, 2020). One potential reason that could explain India's limited success was a long-standing issue with implementation of policies. Unfortunately for India, implementation of policies has truly and universally been considered the Achilles heel of Indian administration (Maheshwari, 2003) and this is no different for Indian sports. Hogwood and Gunn (1984) attribute failure of policy implementation to three main factors: bad execution (failure to execute as intended), bad policy (executed properly but fails to have the desired effect) and bad luck (when it is carried out and should work, but it is undermined by factors beyond the control of policy-makers) (Cairney, 2012). There are examples of each of these in sport policy implementation in India which will now be explored in detail.

#### ***4.3.1 Policy implementation in India***

As noted above, the NSNIS and the LNCPE, were established with an aim to promote sport and physical education in educational institutions as early as 1986 (Chelladurai et al., 2002). The quality of education provided in these institutes, however, is still heavily criticised

(Business Standard News, 2019). Similarly, availability of basic infrastructure was highlighted in various policies, especially 1984 and 2001 policies, but the currently available infrastructure is still considered to be insufficient for the large Indian population (Anchan, 2020). Next, the NSCI codes to increase transparency and accountability were first introduced in 2011, but even today the MYAS is struggling to get the state sports federations to implement them (Laghate, 2017; The New Indian Express, 2019). There however was an example last year when MYAS rejected the Gymnastics Federation of India's (GFI) appeal to grant recognition as the federation had violated the NSCI code by electing the same secretary general for three consecutive terms instead of having a compulsory cooling off period after two consecutive terms (Singh, 2020). Despite examples like these, sport and politics in India still seems to have a complex relationship. The MYAS had appointed a working group to develop a robust sport governance code in 2017, but the ability to implement it was often found to be constrained by political actors from the same party. Such a contradiction could be explained by the prevalence of individual politicians in office-bearing positions in NSFs. The NSCI code is an example of this complex relationship. The 2011 NSCI code was found to be limited in scope, following which, the MYAS developed the expert working group composed of sports lawyers, athletes and experienced sports administrators to draft a more rigorous sport governance code. This code was still not implemented until 2020, due to resistance from influential politicians potentially having roles in NSFs and their allies in political and sporting decision-making circles (McLeod et al., 2020).

Another example could be the IOA itself. The summer and winter Olympics include 35 sports, but the IOA has 39 constituent and affiliate bodies with several of the bodies representing non-Olympic sports. These non-Olympic sports federations seem to be included because of the ease to manage smaller bodies and thereby secure their votes. With no stipulated criteria for becoming members of a sporting body and an ultimate aim of staying in power, an incestuous and nepotistic club of sports administrators is created by appointing

people close to you. To put all of this into perspective, the six medals won by India at the 2012 London Olympics, was mainly believed to be because of support from private organisations such as OGQ and Mittal Champions Trust and the athletes themselves, rather than support from the NSFs (Kaur & Kaur, 2019). It has, however, been established within the policy implementation literature, that even where politics appears to be the reason for implementation failure, there is often more to it: political ‘interference’ is often (though by no means always) a manifestation of factors ignored or missed in the policy-making process (Agarwal & Somanathan, 2005).

Other examples of the long-standing issue with deploying policy initiatives include the lack of sufficient, appropriate facilities and lack of development in coaching for high-performance athletes and scientific support. Despite these components being included in sport policies since 2001, India still continues to be criticised for the available infrastructure, quality of home-grown coaches and a lack of sport science support (Basra, 2016; Polson & Whiteside, 2016; Raj, 2018; Rasquinha, 2018; Business Standard News, 2019). For example, an issue reported with the TOP scheme has been that a large portion of the allocated budget goes to only a few athletes, especially those already receiving enough funding from elsewhere. This essentially leaves the other athletes, more in need of the funding, with very minimal financial assistance (Kumar, 2018; Bose, 2020). Likewise, the NSTSS was introduced as early as 1985 for talent identification and development (TID), but even the more recent TID systems (e.g., KIYG) are criticised for not being the strongest in identifying talented athletes and also giving a fair chance to the immense talent pool India is believed to have (Chelladurai & Nair, 2017; Sanyal, 2018). Furthermore, although mass participation was specified as a goal in all the sports policies and the ‘come and play’ initiative was introduced, it was observed that the policies of the State governments were not consistent with this goal. Physical Education, especially in schools, was emphasised only because it could promote excellence in high-performance sport and there was no attention given to sport

and physical activity contributing to health and fitness in Chelladurai et al.'s report (Chelladurai et al., 2011).

All these examples highlighting some long-standing issues with policy implementation in India (Maheshwari, 2003; Yadav, 2010) suggest a range of problems in relation to Cairney's (2012) seven conditions emphasised for successful policy implementation, and indeed the avoidance of failure. These conditions are; a clearly understood set of objectives, the appropriateness of the policy solution, the provision of sufficient resources, having people with appropriate knowledge and skills implementing the policy, existence of minimal dependent relationships, that ongoing support is in place and that external factors do not undermine the policy. Of particular note are issues in relation to cooperation and understanding of the policy between policymakers and implementers, lack of appropriate resources for policy implementation and a lack of appropriate knowledge and skills amongst those responsible for policy implementation. Each of these will now be discussed in turn.

Firstly, with regards to the disconnection between policymakers and implementers, Chelladurai et al.'s (2011) work specifically used the example of Tamil Nadu, one of the more advanced States in India, to explore potential reasons for the poor development of sport in India. Tamil Nadu is the southernmost part of India and is the eleventh largest, seventh most populous and most urbanised State. It is among the top five states in Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) (Pai & Holla, 2020). In 2002, the Tamil Nadu Government launched the 'World Beater Talent Spotting Scheme' (WBTSS) for talent identification, which was to be adopted by all schools. Unfortunately, more than 32% schools did not implement the scheme. A lack of physical education teachers (not appointed in 35% of schools) and not being aware of the WBTSS were reported as the two main reasons for the failure to implement the scheme. Acknowledging this, the Sports Development Authority of Tamil Nadu (SDAT) launched a web-based Tamil Nadu School Mail System in 2004 to

ensure all schools received the necessary information, and to ensure results of the WBTSS could be accessed through the mailing system. Most of the schools, however, did not have internet connection at the time, which highlights that the policy solution could have been inappropriate and bound to fail (Cairney 2012). This example highlighted that the scheme introduced in Tamil Nadu seemed to be formulated without studying its feasibility, making it difficult for the concerned agencies to successfully implement it. Unfortunately, as highlighted by the 2008 Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India report on Tamil Nadu, if the implementation of sport policies in one of the more advanced States in India is so haphazard, the situation might be a lot worse in the others.

Secondly, a major problem contributing to failure of policy implementation might be the financial support provided to sport. Although it is acknowledged that the government does offer some useful funding for sport, for example funding for the 2016 Olympic team; the sport budget allocated by the government, given the huge Indian population, the budget still seems comparatively meagre and not at all proportionate with the ideals set forth in the national policies. For example, in 2020-21, the NSFs will receive Rs 245 crore (approximately USD 33.83 million), which is Rs 55 crore (approximately USD 7.59 million) less than they received in 2019-20. Similarly, the budget allocation for SAI has also been reduced from Rs 615 crore (approximately USD 84.92 million) to Rs 500 crore (approximately USD 69.04 million), which may not be sufficient to achieve the goals set (Farooqui, 2020). As India has other basic needs to satisfy (Mahapatra 2020), it is understandable that it cannot afford to spend huge amounts of money on sports, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic which was cited as a main reason for the reduced budget (Rao, 2020). Chelladurai et al. (2011), however, highlighted the lack of serious effort on the part of governments (Central and State) to ensure proper implementation of the articulated policies through the effective distribution of allocated funds. Their work further concluded that India's efforts to provide important facilities, such as quality coaching and high-performance

training facilities, including access to consistent medical and scientific advice or opportunities for competitive experiences, seem to be uncoordinated, inconsistent in quality and financially wasteful (Green and Houlihan 2005; Nicholson et al. 2011).

Finally, a lack of knowledge about the most recent concepts within the sport field could also be a reason for the limited sport development achieved by India. For instance, as outlined previously, the TID models/systems implemented so far are purely based on competitive results and physical fitness tests (Government of India, 2018). Top sporting countries, however, use not just physical tests and competitive results but also include concepts such as assessments of behaviours and past experiences in sport in their TID systems (for example, UK Sport's Talent Transfer programmes-Bloyce & Smith, 2009; Houlihan & Chapman, 2009) as research in the TID area criticises the use of one-off anthropometric, technical and competitive testing protocols to select those with talent (e.g., Abbott & Collins, 2004; Abbott et al. 2005). Interestingly, the work of Abbott and colleagues was originally focused to address shortcomings in earlier iterations of UK Sport's approach. In fact, results from many studies, together with junior and adult ranking lists in multiple sports, highlight that high success rates of junior athletes often correspond with less success when these same athletes become adults. Even with 11- and 12-year-olds, experts (let alone tests) were less than 10% accurate in predicting adult success. In fact, research highlights that TID needs a biopsychosocial approach and these factors do need due consideration before implementing TID systems (Pankhurst, 2014).

Further analysis of the sport policies in India and the examples mentioned in this Section, highlighted a general lack of learning as one of the potential reasons for the long-standing issues with policy implementation. The following Section will therefore explore policy learning in more detail.

#### ***4.3.2 Policy learning***

Learning implies improved understanding, as reflected by an ability to draw lessons about policy problems, objectives, or interventions. Policy literature highlights the importance of learning from previous policy initiatives. Policy learning is essentially concerned with lessons about policy content – problems, goals, instruments and implementation designs (May, 1992). Policy failures are useful since failure serves as a trigger for considering policy redesign and a potential occasion for policy learning. Whereas policy successes might be said to provide a stronger bias for learning by making it possible to trace conditions for success. However, dissatisfaction serves as a stronger stimulus for a search for new ideas than success (May, 1992).

The Physical Education, School Sport and Club Links (PESSCL) and the Physical Education and Sport Strategy for Young People (PESSYP) in England in the 2000s can be considered a useful example of policy learning (Phillpots, 2013). PESSCL was launched in 2002 and found success in developing new infrastructure and increasing young people's participation in sport and physical activity. The policy was revised in 2008 and the new strategy, PESSYP, was launched. The overarching policy aims remained the same but there was further investment in order to meet extended targets and create a world-class system for Physical Education and School Sport (PESS) for all young people which might stimulate, increase, and sustain their participation in sport.

In the Indian context, despite the lack of feasibility highlighted in the Tamil Nadu example, the future policies still seem to have issues with successfully considering the feasibility of the initiatives before implementing them. For example, with the KIYG, selected athletes are registered with accredited academies for further training. However, 893 athletes out of the 1518 selected dropped out of the academies in 2018-19, primarily because of a lack of academic integration. The list of athletes was announced midway through the academic year which made it nearly impossible for many athletes to change their school and join the designated academies (Subramaniam, 2020). Similarly, although, along with the NSNIS,

some newer Universities and sport courses have been introduced to promote sport and physical education, as highlighted earlier the quality of education delivered still seems to be questionable (Hindustan Times, 2018; Business Standard News, 2019). Consequently, merely establishing newer institutions may not be the best solution. To really benefit from these universities and courses, learning from the past shortcomings, India could focus more on the *quality* of education it provides rather than the quantity of universities or courses introduced.

There however are examples wherein India attempted to learn from its past mistakes by introducing newer strategies in subsequent policies. For instance, from the 1984 National Sport Policy every subsequent policy mentioned in the current Chapter attempted to adopt the unattained objectives from the previous policy. After reviewing the 1984 national sport policy, the 2001 national sports policy adopted a dual focus to develop sport and promote physical activity in the country. India however, still did not manage to achieve mass participation or excellence in high-performance sport. In fact, as outlined in Section 4.2.2, even countries such as China and Cuba were performing better as compared to India. Consequently, the aim of the 2007 national sports policy was to achieve the goals from the 2001 policy and also address deficiencies in the country's sport development system such as access to sport and physical education opportunities at educational institutions and rural areas, encouraging indigenous sports and implementing a holistic and athlete-centred sporting pathway. Despite this and other similar attempts at policy learning, however, India has only managed to achieve limited success at both the high-performance level and mass participation (Dabholkar, 2020; Sharma, 2020).

#### **4.4 Summary and discussion**

The importance of sport and physical activity in the ancient Indian culture, the more recently emphasised benefits of sport, the impact of role models on the Indian population and the constant race between countries to win international medals together may have contributed to the importance India gives to sporting success and mass participation. Indian

policymakers also seem to strongly believe that sporting success achieved at the high-performance level contributes to increased national pride, a larger talent pool to choose future high-performance athletes from and a healthier population because of an increased mass participation (Grix & Carmichael, 2012). Consequently, as evident from Section 4.2, India has certainly implemented numerous policy initiatives from 1954 onwards and still continues to take immense efforts to succeed at high-performance sport and promote mass participation. Each of the national sports policies outlined here attempted to achieve the unattained goals from the previous policies. The other, more recent policy initiatives too were formulated with an aim to facilitate India's on-going efforts to achieve sporting success and mass participation. Despite these immense efforts, India however still seems to be behind top sporting countries and also seems to have a majority inactive population (Ahirwar & Mondal, 2019; Kesavan, 2016).

A lack of sporting culture was identified as a factor contributing to the limited impact of the policy initiatives and a consequent lack of sporting success. To succeed as a sporting nation, India might therefore need to convince its population that sport in fact could be a viable career option. The recent success achieved by a few Indian athletes however has seen a slow change, with younger parents being more open to their children pursuing a career in sport (Ramesh, 2019; The Economic Times, 2019; TOI, 2019b). Next, the potential long-standing issue with deploying policies, already an issue within Indian administration (Maheshwari, 2003; Yadav, 2010) was identified as another issue contributing to the limited success achieved by India. Within policy implementation, three main issues were highlighted – cooperation and understanding of the policy between policymakers and implementers, lack of appropriate resources for policy implementation and a lack of appropriate knowledge and skills amongst those responsible for policy implementation. Furthermore, a potential lack of policy learning was also identified as a reason contributing to the limited success achieved by India. Policy learning is the information that emerges from the process and judgements about

what is (and is not) working through formalised evaluation or more ad-hoc observations or information (May, 1992). To get to the ‘right’ answer, a detailed understanding of ways to address the policy problem is needed. Therefore, Section 4.3 explored why particular policies failed or were successful.

#### **4.5 Conclusion**

The current Chapter, being a desk-based study, was a crucial starting point to explore various policy initiatives implemented in India and to formulate some initial research hypotheses that could potentially explain why India is still struggling to achieve sporting success and mass participation (Stewart & Kamins, 1992). Two of the initial conclusions highlighted in this Chapter are the long-standing issues with policy implementation and policy learning. If India were to succeed in sport and increase mass participation, potential ways to overcome these two issues needed to be explored. The next Chapter therefore explores policy implementation literature to identify any potential alternative pathways for India to improve its long-standing issue with deploying policies. Next, with the increased importance given to sport, India certainly is not the only country facing issues with achieving sporting success. Consequently, wider literature will be explored to identify what other countries have done to overcome the issues they faced which might potentially help India reform its strategies and potentially increase its chances of succeeding at sport.

At this point however, I took a conscious decision to focus mainly on excellence in high-performance sport. With the significance given to high-performance success by the Indian government, the role models seeming to have a great impact on the Indian population not just in regard to competitive sport participation but mass participation as well, and the importance of sport in today’s world, exploring ways to develop more successful high-performance athletes was identified to be important. The thesis is therefore focused only on exploring ways for India to succeed at the international level.

## Chapter 5

### Effective policy implementation: Exploring alternative pathways for Indian sport

#### 5.1 Introduction

##### *5.1.1 The context and issue to be investigated in this Chapter*

A disconnect between policymakers and implementers was identified as one of the potential reasons for the long-standing issues with deploying policies in India. Policy implementation, generally, has often been practiced as a top-down or governing-elite phenomenon. Although, an alternative framework stressing a democratic, bottom-up approach has been emphasised as a more beneficial option to successful policy implementation (DeLeon & DeLeon, 2002). As mentioned in previous chapters, India, along with its complex composition, also has a federal system wherein the States are mainly responsible for sport development rather than the Central government (Chelladurai et al., 2011; Green & Oakley, 2001). With co-ordination being slightly problematic in such a federal system (Green & Oakley, 2001) exploring alternative policy implementation approaches was identified to be important (DeLeon & DeLeon, 2002).

In regard to policy learning, as outlined in Chapter 4, India, of course, is not the only country experiencing problems while progressing in sport. With countries generally experiencing similar issues, it has been suggested that it is possible to learn from other countries; indeed, that policies are transferable across national borders (Houlihan, 2002). This is known as policy transfer, whereby one political system uses the knowledge about policies, administrative arrangements, institutions and ideas from another (past or present) to develop their own (Dolowitz & Marsh, 2000; Cairney, 2012). India could therefore, perhaps engage in policy transfer to understand how other countries have dealt with issues it is facing and potentially identify ways to reform its strategies and best possible ways to incorporate these in an Indian context.

To sum, the current Chapter will explore alternative pathways for policy implementation and policy learning that might facilitate India's ongoing efforts of attaining sporting success

### ***5.1.2 Objectives of the Chapter***

Given the aim of exploring alternative options to overcome the long-standing issues with policy implementation and the lack of policy learning, two objectives were identified for the current chapter,

- i. To explore top-down and bottom-up approaches to policy implementation, and;
- ii. To explore policy transfer to identify ways to reform and implement various strategies

### **5.2 Exploring top-down and bottom-up approaches to policy implementation**

Policy implementation is generally practiced as a top-down approach wherein the actual implementers have limited or no contribution at the policymaking stage. It has been recognised, however, that policy implementation practice would be more successful if its practitioners adopted a more participatory and directly democratic orientation. Whilst this top-down approach was seen as a useful way to formulate and implement policies, one of the main disadvantages was that the ground level implementers key for successful policy implementation were being ignored (DeLeon & DeLeon, 2002). Communication in a top-down approach is generally one way, i.e., from top to bottom in the form of orders, directives, notifications and circulars. The implicit assumption that implementers attach the same meaning to policy measures as policy makers is not always right (Cairney, 2012). As good policy-making processes produce policies that can be executed swiftly and successfully, a close involvement at the formulation stage of those who actually implement the policy on the ground-level is essential (Agarwal & Somanathan, 2005). Ground-level implementers therefore criticised the top-down approach as the procedures and rules prescribed in this approach did not always fit the situation and often failed to consider operating ground level realities (Maheshwari, 2003).

A more democratic method was therefore proposed which emphasised that the ground-level implementers should have discretion in how they apply policies (Yadav, 2010). Although a top-down approach argues that implementation failure could occur when one is further away from an authoritarian policymaker, the policymaker imposing the policy could in fact be counseled by select and narrowly focused interest groups. In a genuinely bottom-up approach however, the ground-level implementers would themselves propose a policy that will directly affect them. A bottom-up approach is therefore considered to be more conducive to a democratic approach to policy implementation than a top-down (or a command) approach (DeLeon & DeLeon, 2002). A bottom-up policy implementation providing the implementing agencies a say in where they are going and how they wish to arrive to that point might be beneficial, at both the policy implementation and formulation stages. Of course, this approach would need to be carried out with caution as a degree of centralised control is absolutely necessary so that priorities and interests of implementers do not replace the public interest (DeLeon & DeLeon 2002; Agarwal & Somanathan 2005; Yadav, 2010; Cairney, 2012).

In regard to India, it currently has a top-down approach where the Central government has considerable involvement in promoting sport in general and excellence in sport in particular. Notably, Chelladurai and Nair (2017) suggested that this top-down approach should be reversed, meaning a more bottom-up approach should be introduced. As mentioned in Section 5.1, sport in India is a State subject wherein the State governments are responsible for sport development in their respective States. Second, as mentioned in Chapter 4, sport in general and scouting talent at youth level in particular are mostly embedded in educational institutions which are completely under the jurisdiction of the State governments (Government of India, 2007). Consequently, adopting a bottom-up approach in India may be more feasible and offer greater chance of success.

Along with modifying India's approach to policy formulation and implementation, however, understanding what aspects of the policy need to be reformed and identify the best potential ways to do that would also be required. Despite India being the second most populous country in the world, with a fast growing economy, it is still deemed as an underperformer in sport (Chelladurai & Nair, 2017; The Economic Times, 2019a). As mentioned in Chapter 4, this is clearly not due to lack of importance given to sport, as India has managed to implement numerous initiatives (Government of India, 2011; Chelladurai & Nair, 2017). Policies introduced so far, however, have not led to the establishment of an effective high-performance system. With international sport rapidly expanding, countries as mentioned in Section 5.1, often face similar problems such as drug abuse, violence in sport, and exploitation of young athletes. The increase in similar problems faced by countries resulted in the emergence of policy transfer (Dolowitz & Marsh, 2000). India could, therefore, engage in policy transfer to understand how other countries have dealt with issues it is facing and thereby reform its strategies in the best possible way.

### **5.3 Policy transfer**

Policy transfer is the transfer of policy solutions or ideas from one place to another (Cairney, 2012, p. 250): different aspects of policy may be transferred: "policy goals, policy content, policy instruments, policy programs, institutions, ideologies, ideas and attitudes and negative lessons" from different locations: international, national and local. Rose (1993) noted that transfer is most common between nations with similar policy conditions, ideology and geography, but globalisation means that the source of transfer need not always be a nearby nation. A further consideration of policy transfer emphasised by Dolowitz and Marsh (2000) is the degree of transfer. They propose four levels: copying, emulation, combinations, and inspiration. Copying is the direct replication of a policy into a new space, emulation is the transfer of key principles of the original policy, combinations is mixing different policies

and inspiration is where the original policy inspires the new policy without replicating the original.

Policy transfer is not a new idea and is employed by many nations. Indeed, Cairney (2012: p. 250) notes that “some countries tend to innovate, while others emulate”, which has certainly been true within sport policy, though exactly which nations innovate and which emulate is not fixed due to the ever-developing global elite sport field. The common and objective measures of success by medals or championships won (Shibli et al., 2014) means that ‘successful’ nations are often the focal points of others looking to emulate policy. It should also be noted that nations with specific reputations may be more likely to be the countries that are emulated. Australia’s great success in sport through the 1990s and the early 2000s meant that others sought to emulate Australia. Indeed, many features of the UK high-performance system were transferred (often uncritically - cf. Collins & Cruickshank, 2012) from Australia. For example, the UK’s focus on TID, including the talent stream of the Labour government’s PESSCL and PESSYP programmes and UK Sport’s talent transfer programmes that began in 2006 have many similar features to Australia’s ‘Talent Search’ policy (Bloyce & Smith, 2009, Green, 2004). But things change and so do trend setters! Now that the UK’s success in Olympic sports in particular has grown, it is now a focal nation for countries seeking to learn lessons and develop their high-performance systems.

### ***5.3.1 The role of policy actors***

Policy transfer involves a range of actors- both within and outside of government- to advise and encourage policy transfer (Dolowitz & Marsh, 2000). While governments tend to have ministries/departments responsible for sport, there is a network of non-government organisations at local, national, and international level, plus a growing field of researchers, consultants and other experts that might be involved in policy transfer. Some of these interest groups may be professionals such as coaches or national or international federation

executives and representatives who are regularly exposed to the practices of other nations and therefore may be well suited to advise on learnings from other countries (Tan et al., 2019).

### ***5.3.2 Effectiveness of policy transfer***

The success of policy transfer can depend on a number of variables. Cairney (2012) particularly notes that a full understanding of the transferring policy and whether it will work in practice needs to be considered. In short, there are both high-level policy transfer and implementation considerations. Current research tends to focus on the role of recipient nations in transfer and potential recipient nation factors that could affect policy transfer, but the role of the source and potential source nation factors are often ignored. Policy transfer does, in fact, require consideration of both source and recipient contexts and is certainly not a unilateral decision. Factors from the recipient nation that could affect the successful transfer of a policy include a range of constraints relating to demand (policy demand and potential resistance), programmatic (uniqueness and complexity of the programme), contextual (path dependency, existing institutional structures, political context and degree of politicisation, resources and ideology compatibility) and applications (institutional substitutability and structure, scales of changes and programmatic modification and adjustment). Whereas, willingness of the source nation, training groups (club vs university-based), coaching structures and coaches' economic conditions, the governing system (particularly the rigidity between the sport's governing bodies and coaches), geographical convenience could influence the selection of a source nation or even whether it would be feasible to actually implement the policy transfer ambition (Tan et al., 2019).

When transferring policies, another point for consideration is the possibility of unintended negative consequences. Three factors that can negatively affect success of policy transfer have been highlighted: uninformed transfer, incomplete transfer and inappropriate transfer; one or a combination of these can lead to policy failure (Dolowitz & Marsh, 2000). Uninformed transfer means that there is a lack of information about the policy, incomplete

transfer means that not all components of the policy have been considered and inappropriate transfer means that appropriate measures to adapt the policy for the new context are not apparent (Dolowitz & Marsh, 2000). In their study, Tan et al. (2019) reported some unintended negative consequences that came with policy transfer between Australian and Chinese elite swimming which included the individualism and materialism among top male Chinese swimmers that conflicted with the traditional Chinese values of patriotism and collectivism. China, however, successfully managed to learn from this negative impact and modified its strategy to engage only in technical knowledge transfer as opposed to deeper-level value and ideology related transfer (Tan et al., 2019).

In sum, policy transfer is a complex process and needs consideration at various levels: what is being transferred, where the transfer is occurring and who is involved in the transfer. Specifically, for a country like India that is known for its complex composition, careful consideration of policy transfer aspects such as what is transferred and where it is transferred from was crucial. The following Section therefore explores policy transfer in the Indian context.

## **5.4 The potential for policy transfer in India**

### ***5.4.1 What to transfer and where to transfer it from?***

When considering the potential for policy transfer, it is necessary to consider what specific components of sport policy could be transferred successfully to India. The complexities of the Indian context may mean that transfer of policy which requires specific systems or infrastructure could be problematic. For example, the USA's collegiate sport system has proven to be very successful in terms of developing young talented athletes in a broad range of sports due, at least in part, to it being a well-organised, well accepted, and well-resourced system. However, the structural and political context of the USA generally, and the structure of higher education and infrastructure of college sport more specifically, would make this system very challenging to implement in a country like India.

A better approach might be to focus on transferring policies more related to the *technical* side of sport. As evident from Tan et al.'s (2019) detailed examination of policy transfer for swimming from Australia to China, focusing on a smaller scale and less complex transfer can lead to successful changes in the recipient nation. A key feature highlighted was that technical knowledge may not conflict with the core values of the recipient institution and therefore is more likely to be transferred successfully. Similarly, at present, India hires foreign coaches in almost all sports (e.g., Rasquinha, 2018) but, rather than simply employing foreign coaches to deliver high performance programmes, NSFs could engage in a formal policy transfer process where technical knowledge is transferred from source nation coaches to Indian coaches and athletes. This type of transfer may be simpler and give quicker results than transferring or adopting ideas such as sports governance codes (McLeod et al., 2020).

#### ***5.4.2 Policy transfer from other countries***

In regard to 'where' the policy will be transferred from, India could potentially engage in both cross-border and within nation transfer. Policy transfer in sport generally seems to have the character of role modelling, in which certain nations judged to be successful, either absolutely (in terms of total medals won e.g., USA, the former Eastern Bloc and China) or relative to their size or resources (e.g. Australia, Jamaica and Sweden), are selected as the target for reproduction in the home environment (Collins & Bailey, 2013). If India were to go for a technical knowledge transfer, it could potentially look at the top four countries at the 2016 Olympics, the USA, China, the UK, and Russia, then look for consistencies in their approaches. These countries have consistently been the top four at the 2008, 2012 and 2016 Summer Olympic Games, meaning they might have some valuable inputs to give to India (Kesavan, 2016). The USA, with its sporting performance and cordial relations with India was definitely considered to be a very strong sporting country that could potentially offer a lot (Tamkin, 2020). The issue with the USA, however, could potentially be its 'protection mechanisms' within the university system which might restrict transfer (Tan et

al., 2019). Contrarily, both the UK and Russia consider India to be very important and share good relations with India, which might then increase the chances of successful policy transfer at the technical knowledge level (Price, 2019; Dave, 2020; Tamkin, 2020). It has also been acknowledged that the British rule in India influenced, not just the economic and political systems of the country but also had great social impacts which have shaped the attitudes and tastes of many Indians. The current good relations and the influence Britain has had on India make it a good policy transfer option for India (Aggarwal, n.d.; Rowlett, 2017).

Unfortunately, relations between China and India are not the best with these nations considered to be rivals (Ahmed et al., 2020). Engaging in policy transfer with China might, therefore, not be feasible, even though China is one of the top sporting countries and could offer some valuable inputs. As a further consideration, China's recruitment (and turnover!) of foreign coaches would not suggest that they have everything completely sorted (c.f. Zhaoxia, 2019)! That said, China being a large and complex country like India with a system of overseeing sport at the national level and the provincial level (states in India) can however provide some valuable inputs to India which are explored in the following Sections.

Along with a technical knowledge transfer, India could also potentially learn from other countries' mistakes. For example, after the missed opportunity from the 2012 Olympics, the UK was criticised for prioritising hardware over liveware, i.e. stadia over people (Nicholson et al., 2011; De Bosscher et al., 2015). Despite the criticism, this situation remained largely unchanged in the UK and it, like many other nations, did not give sufficient importance to development of liveware, mainly development of coaches (e.g., Norman, 2008; Nash, et al., 2012). India could therefore learn from the UK's mistake and modify its current pathway by prioritising coaches over stadia.

Next, Russia, along with being an option for technical knowledge transfer, could offer valuable inputs in other areas as well. Russia is also one of the BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India, and China) countries and has successfully hosted the 2014 Winter Olympic Games and the

2018 FIFA World Cup. Another BRIC country that has successfully hosted mega-events is Brazil, with the Pan American Games in 2007 held in Rio de Janeiro, whereby Brazil successfully managed to hide the unsightly parts of the city (the poor neighbourhood and favelas) to organise the event, which then contributed in Brazil winning the bids for the 2014 FIFA World Cup and the 2016 Olympic Games (Curi & Knijnik, 2011; Polson & Whiteside, 2016). In contrast, India, despite the emphasis on the benefits of hosting mega events in the 2011 NSCI (Government of India, 2011) and the heavy focus on infrastructure development, is the only BRIC country that has not even submitted a bid for either of the two premier mega-events, the Olympic Games, and the FIFA World Cup. India however has hosted the under 17 football World Cup (Fifa.com, n.d.; Premchandran, 2017) and the Commonwealth Games in Delhi. Unfortunately, the planning process of the latter was heavily criticised for being rife with corruption behind the scenes (Polson & Whiteside, 2016). Indeed, the 2011 NSCI was introduced precisely due to such instances and aimed to increase transparency and accountability of the sport governing bodies. Although such sport governance codes have not been eagerly embraced in non-Western countries, research highlighted that such codes of governance have in fact already been enshrined in many Western countries (McLeod et al., 2020). With the BRIC countries having rather similar contextual conditions, India could, therefore, potentially use Russia or Brazil as source nations to understand how each of the two countries have managed to utilise their resources to successfully host mega-events (Polson & Whiteside, 2016). Of course, with a transfer from Russia, India would need to be cautious about the potential negative consequences of doping as that was one of the biggest criticisms of Russia prior to the 2012 and 2016 Olympic Games (Hermann, 2019; Pound, 2020).

India could therefore potentially engage in a cross-border transfer focused on technical knowledge or understanding how countries are using their resources to achieve sport development and subsequent success at the international stage. However, with India

being such a large country with a very State-led system, a within country transfer is also considered as a viable option. Although the states in India all have different compositions, they do have many similarities. As it is more likely for countries to learn lessons from others if they share similar political structure, geography and ideology a within transfer might therefore help overcome issues (at least to a certain extent) of differences in ideology and political structure from other countries and ‘fit’ of policies from other nations (Cairney, 2012). The following Section, therefore, explores the possibility of a within transfer in India.

#### ***5.4.3 Policy transfer ‘within’ India***

With India being a State-led country, it might be possible for States to learn from one another and transfer policy, or for the national government to transfer policy from the State level across the nation. Furthermore, with State governments getting involved in promoting and channelling excellence in sport, there is room for interstate rivalry to emerge and be positively exploited. Similarly, as each sport in India has developed to a different level, less-developed sports could potentially learn from the more developed sports (Chelladurai & Nair, 2017). This would mean that efforts in the sport field would emanate from the State governments and the excellence produced at the State level could then move up to the national level. Although it is likely that States or sports may not have policies that are as good as or better than international policies, given India’s complex contextual and application constraints, transferring within India should not be discarded without full consideration. It could be possible that the policy introduced by a State and/or sport might actually be really good, but may need some modifications or potentially be lacking in implementation.

Consequently, an option for internal policy transfer could be to examine sports that have developed a successful system *in spite of* broader national policy issues, with a primary option being cricket. However, cricket remains unique in the context of India due to its aforementioned history and successful record, so transferring the same policies to other sports may result in incomplete or inappropriate policy transfer. The various recipient and source

nation (or sport in this context) factors would therefore need to be considered before engaging in a within transfer between cricket and any other sport in India. The Indian Premier League (IPL) contributes to development of the Indian national cricket team as it provides an opportunity for young players to develop due to the rules around team composition (Agur, 2013). The commercial interest in cricket, and especially the commercial success of the IPL, comes from a well-embedded appreciation for cricket in India with significant public interest plus a long history of success on the part of the Indian cricket team. Furthermore, as nationalistic emotions are not just limited to international events but are also evident at domestic sporting events, encouraging such domestic leagues seems to be important (Government of India, n.d.-b; Lee & Maguire, 2009). Consequently, and given the success achieved by the IPL, both domestically and globally, similar leagues for different sports were introduced with an aim to emulate the IPL's success and popularity (Newsable, 2021). The PKL, Indian Super League (ISL - football) and Premier Badminton League (PBL - badminton) have all successfully incorporated different aspects of the IPL and gained a significant viewership. For instance, similar to the IPL structure, the PBL provided an opportunity for young athletes to spend time with the current Indian champions within the sport (The Economic Times, 2018) and has successfully managed to increase overall player participation and talent identification (Subrahmanyam, 2020). Similarly, taking inspiration from the IPL, the PKL used a strong Bollywood support to increase the probability of the league being successful. The IPL has however still enjoyed a top position with 560 million viewers, which could be due to some of the negative impacts of media such as a bias wherein only the really popular sport gets maximum attention. Despite this bias towards cricket, however the PKL, in its first season itself managed to gain a viewership of over 435 million whereas the ISL had 429 million in the same year (Newsable, 2021).

Another option for internal transfer is a transfer from State level to national level. For example, the Talent Resource Development Wing (TRDW) in cricket was initially launched

by the Karnataka State Cricket Association (KSCA) in 2001 to identify talent in the State. Following its local success however, the BCCI, almost immediately implemented it throughout the country. Talent Resource Development Officers (TRDOs) were appointed to achieve the aims of no bias and selecting players purely based on their on-field performance. As match statistics may not give a complete picture of an athlete's talent, the TRDOs used a predetermined list of attributes to grade each athlete. The selected athletes trained at the National Cricket Academy (NCA) with each athlete being analysed and graded on their performance. A combination of identifying talent and providing necessary opportunities to develop athletes made the scheme a big success, evident from accomplishments achieved by cricketers such as MS Dhoni and Suresh Raina. With the implementation of this prescribed format in TRDW, India hoped to follow Australia who, for a long time, had managed to dominate international cricket because of their rigorous domestic cricket circuit (Dinakar, 2015; Varma, 2016). Less-developed sports in India could therefore implement initiatives similar to the TRDW, with careful consideration of the various factors impacting policy transfer, to potentially improve the TID systems they have in place. Although, as India has generally been identified to have lesser knowledge compared to top sporting countries, it could either take inspiration from another country that has an effective TID system or use a combination of knowledge about new concepts of TID from other countries but using a similar format to TRDW to implement it within India.

The KIYG, is another example of a similar State to national level transfer and is known to have drawn inspiration from Khel Mahakumbh (loosely translated as 'sports gathering'). This Khel Mahakumbh was an initiative organised by the Government of Gujarat to create sporting culture in the State, make sports an inseparable part of youths' life and build a talent pool of outstanding athletes, through a month long Mahakumbh (Outlook, 2010). The KIYG has similar aims but at the national level, whereby competitions are typically conducted at the local, district, state and national level with a hope to promote mass

participation of youth in annual sports competitions, TID, developing sports infrastructure and inculcating a stronger sporting culture within the country (Government of India, n.d.). KIYG are also aimed to create inter-state rivalry, to thereby push State governments to undertake more efforts to develop sport in their own States (Khelo India, n.d.).

The KIYG seem to have a structure similar to China's National Games. In China, like in India, sport operates at the national and provincial level, which not only provides opportunities for more targeted development of sport but also leads to great variation in the level of competitors and the specific sports that are preferred (and that teams excel at). This provincial structure, with the National Games of China as a quadrennial focal point for high-level competition creates a pathway for high performing athletes and related infrastructure (both liveware and hardware) for developing national teams. Zheng et al. (2019) noted the value of these games in national-provincial relationships, as well as in athletes' selections for national teams, although they also found challenges in some provinces prioritising their own prestige over that of the national teams. This model of competition and associated recognition for provincial level structures that have nurtured athletes seems to have created a healthy level of competition within the nation and has contributed to the development of outstanding national squads across a range of sports. The KIYG, having a similar structure, might therefore really be a useful approach for India.

After organising the KIYG for two years, it has been considered to be a big success, with a viewership of over 100 million in 2018 which increased by 45% over three years and participation of over 6000 athletes (Sanyal, 2018; ANI, 2020; Kulkarni, 2020). The KIYG also provided an opportunity to different States to experience what it is like to host a multi-sports event which might help India have more alternatives to host one of the mega-events. Hosting the KIYG in different States also ensures the infrastructure is used and encourages the local authorities to invest in new facilities and promote sports. The experience and ambience of these games therefore seems to provide athletes with a simulation of multi-sports

events which might contribute to better prepare Indian athletes for an international event. Next, talent scouts (similar to the TRDOs) are appointed for TID and the identified athletes are then provided both the opportunity to train at the KIYG accredited academies and a monthly scholarship. Athletes have reported that this scholarship has helped them manage their training needs and other sport specific expenses (Sarangi, 2020). Success of the KIYG is evident from the numerous youth athletes it has successfully identified and developed. For example, Komalika Bari and Anshu Malik who won medals at the World Youth Archery and Cadet Championship and the Asian Cadet Championship respectively (The Bridge Desk, 2020).

Despite the success achieved by KIYG, however, numerous issues may still need to be tackled. One of the potential main problems is that India lacks a culture of appreciation of sporting performance (Chandran, 2016)., reported as a relative strength for China. Authors who have examined the high-performance system in China however have highlighted a well-established culture of appreciation of sporting performance as a relative strength for China as it greatly contributes to the success of the National Games (Zheng et al. 2018; Ma & Kurscheidt, 2019). The other issues reported with the KIYG are policy formulation and implementation related which, as identified earlier, has been an enduring criticism of Indian policymaking in general (Agarwal & Somanathan, 2005). After introducing the KIYG, the following issues were highlighted as issues that may need to be tackled for increased success of the KIYG. First, KIYG aimed to develop, popularise, and encourage participation in those sports that do not receive enough attention, yet a potential bias was observed in the media with already popular sports receiving majority coverage. For instance, sports such as badminton and kabaddi received majority coverage despite them having gained some popularity through the PBL and PKL. Second, a further aim of the KIYG was to identify talent, but the selection of athletes mainly includes top participants from selected inter-school and federation competitions. This essentially means that already established athletes are

selected, defeating the purpose of talent identification. Third, an aim of KIYG was to acknowledge every coach that played a role in an athlete's success but the practicality of this, or rather the system that may be needed to implement it, was not clearly identified (Sanyal, 2018). Finally, the limited success achieved by Indian athletes is often attributed to a lack in infrastructure and funding. India has, however, managed to develop many world-class facilities, but the performance of majority athletes still remains relatively poor (Saad, 2016; National Sports Policy, 2001 n.d.; Dabholkar, 2020). Despite this, India still continues to mainly invest in infrastructure development (The Economic Times, 2020). In fact, for the last few years, significant sports persons from the Indian sports field have been emphasising the need to prioritise development of coaches rather than infrastructure (TOI, 2017; Raj, 2018). There is the potential for Indian coaches to have a major advantage over the currently hired foreign coaches as they would understand how the Indian system and cultures work (Rediff Sports, 2018). Unfortunately, coach development still does not seem to be the topmost priority. With the KIYG, India, seems to have potentially engaged in debating policy decisions after implementing the policy rather than before, possibly highlighting a lack of both learning from past experiences and an understanding of potential best ways to achieve international sporting success.

## **5.5 Summary, discussion and conclusion**

This chapter aimed to explore options India could adopt to tackle the policy implementation and learning issues. Consequently, a need for India to incorporate a bottom-up approach for policy formulation and implementation and to explore policy transfer was highlighted (Agarwal & Somanathan, 2005; Cairney, 2012; Yadav, 2010).

India currently uses a top-down approach which may be impacting the implementation of policy initiatives. A bottom-up approach, which considers the ground-level implementers at the policy implementation stage as they are the ones who are directly affected by any changes to the policies, was therefore suggested as an option India could

explore to increase the probability of successful policy implementation. As identifying the implementing agencies involved and exploring how they operate is crucial in a bottom-up approach, it could, in fact, be taken a step further by including ground-level implementers (those that will be responsible for implementing policies at the ground level) at the policy formulation stage (Lipsky, 1980). Although, as a complete bottom-up approach could involve the risk of losing the degree of centralised control and the priorities and interests of implementers replacing the public interest, a combination of top-down and bottom-up approach might be more ideal (DeLeon & DeLeon, 2002), i.e., involving those that are responsible for making the policies and those that are responsible for implementing them.

The other alternative option explored was policy transfer with an aim to facilitate a better understanding of ways to address the policy issues identified in Chapter 4 and to explore best possible ways to reform strategies. Both across the border and within policy transfer were considered. Notably, policy transfer within the nation was identified to be a better option for India than transferring policies from outside, especially considering the complex composition in India. Two main advantages of a within transfer were highlighted, first, even though the States in India would have differences, the political structures and ideology would still be similar compared to the political structures and ideology of other countries. Such a similarity, as identified in the policy transfer literature, increases the chances of successful policy transfer. Second, an internal transfer might create more openness to the idea of looking 'within' for solutions to issues relating to sporting success. For instance, the TRDW being transferred from a State level to national level which provided the country with some successful players (Dinakar 2015, Varma 2016). Similarly, the KIYG too, was adopted from a State policy and although the KIYG had some ambiguities, overall it did seem to have a positive impact on the Indian population (Sarangi, 2020; The Bridge Desk, 2020a).

Although a within nation transfer was promoted, India could certainly benefit from a cross border transfer as well, especially in regard to transferring technical knowledge from top sporting countries. With due consideration, this Chapter emphasised that a successful across the border transfer could be possible with the UK and Russia as both the countries consider India as very important and would also be able to offer different technical aspects for the transfer. For instance, the UK could offer techniques in TID, coaching and sport sciences, whereas Russia, being one of the BRIC countries to have hosted two mega events (FIFA World Cup and Olympic Games), could potentially contribute to India bidding for and successfully hosting a mega event in the near future (Curi & Knijnik, 2011; Polson & Whiteside, 2016).

To conclude, India could use a combination of policy transfer, using an across the border transfer for the technical knowledge whilst applying within transfer for implementation of the policies. Of course, it is quite likely that the policies within the Indian States and/or sports may not necessarily be of international standards, but they might have greater chances of being successful considering the contextual and application constraints would more or less be the same. Additionally, with sport being a State subject in India, a bottom-up approach within policy transfer might really be advantageous. For instance, a policy that has been successful at the State level implemented at the national level or a policy that has been successful in one sport implemented in other sports. For example, the success achieved by athletes from sports such as badminton, shooting and wrestling acted as role models to popularise the sports and provide a larger pool of talent to select future elite athletes (Nayar, 2019; Olympic Channel, 2020a; Venkat, 2020b). The other sports could therefore learn from the more successful sports and try to replicate the strategies/initiatives they implemented. Thus, a combination of knowledge transfer from other countries along with knowledge of implementation from within could be incorporated in India.

However, to successfully engage in policy transfer, both across borders and within, the first step would be to know what is really happening in India, essentially focus on the strengths and weaknesses of various initiatives implemented by Indian States and sports. Unfortunately, with a limited data about Indian sport, the first empirical study within this thesis was conducted which focused on exploring the current state of Indian sport. Conclusions outlined here were given due consideration when designing and conducting the study presented in Chapter 4, specifically the need to have a combination of top-down and bottom-up approaches at policy formulation stage (Lipsky, 1980).

## Chapter 6

### **The state of play: Evaluation through a sample of key stakeholders in Indian sport**

#### **6.1 Introduction**

##### ***6.1.1 The context and the issue to be investigated in this Chapter***

To overcome the long-standing issues with deploying policies and a potential failure to successfully engage in policy learning, I explored the top-down and bottom-up approach to policy implementation and policy transfer as alternative pathways for Indian sport. However, to avoid repeating the same policy implementation and formulation issues Chapter 5 concluded an urgent need to understand the current situation in Indian sport. Although there is some evidence in the media highlighting that currently invested resources in Indian sport are not being used impactfully (Kulkarni & Magotra, 2017), generally, data about what is really happening in Indian sport and where the resources are potentially being ‘wasted’ is limited. In this regard, whilst India could certainly look at how other countries are prioritising facilities to achieve sporting success and prioritise its own facilities accordingly to avoid wasteful investment of available resources, it would first need to understand its own sporting environment. Consequently, the current Chapter will first contribute an empirically driven rich picture of Indian sport followed by comparing India’s performance against a set of antecedents contributing to sporting success.

##### ***6.1.2 Consideration for participants***

Following the conclusion from Chapter 5, the study presented in the current Chapter incorporated a combination of bottom-up and top-down approach, albeit one focused on the top end of the performance continuum (i.e., leader and consumer of top end policy)! This approach was taken to ensure the opinions of high-performance sport implementers were considered but that their priorities and interests did not completely overpower my perceptions of what is really possible from a policy viewpoint (DeLeon & DeLeon, 2002; Agarwal & Somanathan, 2005; Yadav, 2010; Cairney, 2012). With such an approach, I hoped to better

understand firstly, participants' perceptions about where Indian sport lacked and secondly, what resources according to them could contribute to a better performance at the international level. A decision was therefore taken to include key stakeholders who would either be impacted by any changes to the sports field, (i.e., policy consumers - athletes and coaches) or be the ones exerting the changes, (i.e., policy leaders - administrators and government officials) (cf., Dolowitz & Marsh, 2000). Participants were deliberately recruited from the highest levels referred to as an 'elite' sample (Dexter, 1970) who would best know the Indian sports field and could therefore give me valid insights. I was also aware, however, that approaching such an 'elite' sample may be difficult mainly because I had not worked in the Indian high-performance system. Although I could travel to India to collect data, given that India is such a huge country, there were financial and logistical concerns the participants I was interested in were all scattered all over the country which essentially meant accessing such a sample was particularly difficult. To overcome these issues, I had to use my contacts in the Indian sports field as gatekeepers to approach participants. Whilst I acknowledge that there could be certain limitations of using gatekeepers, for example, the possibility of the sample being biased and the risk of the sample being over-representative (Browne, 2005; Sadler, Lee, Lim, & Fullerton, 2010), this was the best way forward for me.

### ***6.1.3 Objectives of the study***

The study, considering all of the above factors and given the broader aim of gathering data about what is really happening in Indian sports, had the following two objectives,

- i. To contribute an empirically driven rich picture of the current sports environment in India, and;
- ii. To explore India's performance against a commonly used framework of antecedents contributing to high-performance athlete development to encourage strategic planning to high-performance sporting success.

## **6.2 Methodology**

### 6.2.1 Participants

As mentioned in Section 6.1.2, a purposive sample of high-level athletes, coaches, administrators and government officials was chosen. First, eleven athletes were selected from sports at which India has a good record of achievement and/or are rapidly gaining popularity. This resulted in the recruitment of one from badminton, three from shooting, two from chess, one from tennis and four from football, all of whom were international performers of at least three years standing. Chess was included as it is administered within the sports pathway and is an activity at which India enjoys some success (Patki, Anant, 2013; Shah, 2019). Secondly, and in similar fashion, I recruited eight coaches; two from badminton, one from tennis, one from shooting and four from football. All were coaching international-level athletes and/or held national appointments as lead coaches for their sport at the time of the interview. Third, three administrators were recruited, all current heads of their sporting associations and/or organisations. Finally, three government officials were included, all holding high ranking positions in the National Government Ministry. All participants were, therefore, what Dexter (1970) defines as ‘elite’, meaning they were all individuals who held a privileged position in their profession and would be highly influential on the concerned (sport related) issues. High-performance interviews are usually conducted to provide an insight into the mindset of the actors who play an important role in shaping society in general but, for the purpose of the current study, this refers to the Indian sport field. One disadvantage of having an elite sample, however, is accessibility as, by definition, elite are less accessible. Consequently, elite interview samples are inevitably smaller compared to other types of interview samples (Richards, 1996). The demographics of all participants are shown in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1: Participant Characteristics

<b>Athletes</b>	
<b>Age range</b>	18-42 years
<b>Overview</b>	All athletes had played at the international level at least once, with majority of them playing at least one or more international events per year. All athletes had been involved in sports for a minimum five years.
<b>Sport</b>	Badminton (1)   Doubles player

	Shooting (3)	Two were international medallists One had been an international athlete since 2012
	Football (4)	All four were part of the Indian football team
	Tennis (1)	Playing at the international level since 2014
	Chess (2)	Both held the chess grandmaster title
<b>Coaches</b>		
<b>Age range</b>	40-60 years	
<b>Overview</b>	Three coaches had played at the international level whereas the others had played either at the National/State level. All coaches were coaching international-level athletes	
<b>Sport</b>	Badminton (2)	Both held important positions and were also head coaches at two of the badminton academies in India
	Shooting (1)	Head coach at one of the shooting academies in India
	Football (4)	Two coached at one of the football clubs participating in ISL One was at a government academy One was directly involved with the Indian football team
	Tennis (1)	Head coach at one of the tennis academies and is involved with the Indian team at different tournaments
<b>Government officials</b>		
<b>Age range</b>	48-70 years	
<b>Overview</b>	All three held high ranking positions in the National Government Ministry. One of them had been an athlete before taking a position in the Ministry	
<b>Organisation/ Affiliation</b>	Two were part of the National Government Ministry, with one of them being part of the sports ministry	
	One held a high post at the national sports body of India	
<b>High-level administrators</b>		
<b>Age range</b>	48-68 years	
<b>Overview</b>	All three were athletes themselves and had coached before taking an administrative role.	
<b>Organisation/ Affiliation</b>	One was the president at one of the NSFs One was the secretary at one of the state sport associations One worked with the government for development of the sport and also the director of a company responsible for promotion of that sport	

### 6.2.2 Instrumentation

Given the aim to produce practically meaningful data about the complex Indian setting, semi-structured interviews were used for collecting data (Giacobbi, Poczwardowski & Hager, 2005; Gratton & Jones, 2010; Silverman, 2004; Streat, 1998). Semi-structured

interviews, whilst allowing participants a certain degree of flexibility to express their opinions, ideas, feelings and attitudes, do use a pre-planned interview guide containing mainly open-ended questions to direct the interview (Sparkes & Smith, 2013). Consequently, a set of questions that would have allowed me to gather the information I was interested in formed a first draft instrument. Ideally, this first draft would have been piloted with a smaller sample of participants with the same or similar inclusion criteria to ensure the questions were easy to understand and participants do not struggle to provide enough detail in their answers. Unfortunately, as I was targeting an 'elite' sample, I was mindful of not wasting participants' valuable time with under-developed questions or lose any from the already limited list of potential research participants and their inputs to a pilot study.

Therefore, to ensure the questions in the first draft were easy to understand and allowed participants to provide enough details, I used a pre-pilot study inquiry or the 'interviewing the investigator' approach (Chenail, 2011). To use this approach as pilot work would have needed appropriately qualified and experienced participants who were just not available. Taken together, however, my supervisors provided a broad high-level experience of performance coaching and management, plus experience of international liaison and governance. Both actively participated in this process and we thoroughly reviewed the questions until we were all happy with them. Once we had agreed on the final set of questions, to help me gather valuable data from the sample, I prepared the interview schedule containing the questions, guided by the aim to understand the current scenario of high-performance Indian sports. The structure for the interview schedule included a section describing the broad area to be covered and the estimated time questions in that area could take, followed by the main question I would ask the participants. With an anticipation that a few participants may struggle with some questions (either understanding them or not provide enough detail), a section with probes was included, followed by a section with stimuli if the participants still struggled with the main and probe questions. Finally, the last part included a

brief overview of the purpose of that particular question for my reference during the actual interview.

The interview questions mainly revolved around factors contributing to and/or hindering participants' performance. For instance, what factors contributed and/or hindered their/their athletes' success, additional factors that could have helped them succeed and, from a policy viewpoint, what is the current sports system applied in India and where do they feel India lacks. Validity of the data were enhanced by the current active involvement of the 'elite' sample in the sport field, whilst reassurance of anonymisation contributed to participants revealing their 'honest' opinions rather than adjusting any information to avoid being seen in a poor light (Richards, 1996). A list of questions and probes for athletes and coaches and administrators and government officials are presented in Appendix A and B respectively.

The final step at this stage was considering what languages to provide the interviews in. I was aware that participants may not necessarily be fluent in English, and I may need to interview them in a regional language. As I, myself am fluent in Marathi and Hindi, a decision to provide the interviews in all three languages, English, Marathi and Hindi was taken. To ensure the questions produced similar results in Marathi and Hindi a similar 'interviewing the investigator' approach was followed. Two independent researchers, one fluent in Marathi and one in Hindi, replaced my supervisors in the process providing a 'back translation' process to equalise the three schedules (Tyupa, 2011). Again, similar to the process in English, once we were happy with the set of questions, a similar interview schedule was prepared for the other two languages as well.

### **6.2.3 Procedure**

Prior to approaching the participants, ethical approval was obtained from the University's ethics committee. As mentioned in Section 6.1.2, participants were then approached through my contacts in India followed by a snowball sampling wherein the

already recruited participants and/or other contacts within India acted as gatekeepers to recruit other participants (Creswell, 2003).

Once the participants had agreed to participating in the study, a convenient, quiet place was chosen to conduct the interviews. All were given the participant information sheet and signed the consent form prior to the interview following which interviews lasting approximately 40-60 minutes were conducted. With Hindi and English being the most prominently spoken languages among the participants, they did tend to repeat themselves to emphasise a particular point. The interviews were, therefore brought to a close when participant repetition and lack of new information being mentioned was observed (interview saturation - cf. Cotterill, 2018).

#### ***6.2.4 Data Analysis***

With the topic requiring pragmatism to understand the complex Indian context and extending the six-phase thematic analysis proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006), the analysis in this Chapter used a deliberate 'reflexive' approach. Consequently, instead of being purely inductive or deductive, data were coded using both inductive and deductive approaches (Braun et al., 2016). Inductive orientation is when the researcher starts the analysis from the data, working bottom-up to identify meaning without importing ideas. Although as any researcher will approach the data with preconceived ideas based on their existing knowledge and viewpoints, coding inductively does not infer an assumption that the researcher is a blank state. Instead, the assumption is that the starting point of the analysis is with the data rather than existing concepts or theories. Deductive orientation on the other hand is when the researcher approaches the data with various ideas, concepts and theories or even potential codes. Deductive coding in the current context was informed by my previously outlined background as an Indian, involved within Indian sport and knowledge about the wider literature or theoretical cognisance (Braun, Clarke, & Weate, 2016).

For the analysis, as a first step data were transcribed verbatim (translated where necessary), participants were coded, and the transcripts were then re-read to familiarise myself with the content. Next, using a ‘revise, retest, revise’ approach (cf. Taylor, Carson, & Collins, 2020), raw data codes were highlighted using appropriate terms. At this stage, each participant’s intended meaning was critically considered against the knowledge I and my supervisors possessed. This helped me ensure the data were meaningfully analysed through reflexive, thoughtful, transparent engagement thereby working towards a ‘richer more nuanced reading of the data’ (Braun & Clark, 2019, p. 594). Furthermore, with codes not passively emerging but rather being created by the researcher with an aim to not just organise and describe but to interpret data, me and one of my supervisors consciously spent longer reflecting on the selected raw data codes and further assessing them with our own theoretical assumptions before developing a final structure.

Next, to internally scrutinise the coding process, minor adjustments were made which allowed us to clarify the link between the raw data code names and the intended meaning emphasised by participants (Braun & Clarke, 2019). Finally, the raw data codes were compiled to identify similar patterns with shared meaning (earlier thought of as lower-order themes, now known as Shared Meaning Units (SMU)) which were then included into relevant hierarchical Central Organising Concepts (COC; earlier thought of as higher-order themes). Finally, the team (me and my supervisory team) named and defined the COCs, and ultimately reviewed the structure before confirming it (Braun, Clarke, Hayfield, & Terry, 2018). For instance, within coaching, three major issues were highlighted: debate about an experienced coach versus certified coach, knowledge possessed by Indian coaches and funding for Indian coaches. The first two issues related to the quality of coaches and hence were grouped together under one SMU, quality of coaches, whereas the third issue formed a separate SMU, funding for coaches. However, both these SMUs were part of one larger issue, which then formed the COC of coaching system.

### ***6.2.5 Trustworthiness of the data***

Firstly, it is important to note that coding does not occur in an epistemological vacuum. With a reflexive approach being adopted it would be practically impossible to completely free myself from theoretical and epistemological preconceptions. For instance, there were perceptions about factors that may have contributed to the lack of high-performance sporting success in India (Braun & Clarke, 2006). To counter these almost inevitable limitations, efforts to link research goals, methods and findings to the available literature and a thick description of the Indian setting ensured the information gained was within context, highlighting coherence and credibility. Next, my background as mentioned in Chapter 1, placed me in a better position to establish rapport with participants, increasing sincerity and truthfulness of the data. Furthermore, experience of my supervisors in either coach education, performance management or having served in a UK government agency offering support to international sports organisations, also contributed in increasing the sincerity and truthfulness of the data (Tracy, 2010).

Since the interviews were conducted in three different languages, a back-translation process was employed to further enhance the trustworthiness of the data. Back-translation is a process whereby the translated text is re-translated back into the source language by a translator who does not see the original data (cf. Brislin, 1980). To ensure the meaning of the interviews is not lost, the entire process starts with forward translation followed by back-translation and finally a back-translation review is employed. At the back-translation review stage, back-translated data are compared to the original data to identify possible discrepancies. The success of this process depends on the linguistic skills and knowledge of those who engage in back-translation and review of back-translation. I needed to translate a total of four interviews, two were in Marathi and two in Hindi. Thereafter, one researcher, fluent in both Marathi and Hindi back-translated the interviews which were then reviewed by a third researcher fluent in both languages. Given the nature of the content, conceptual as

opposed to literal translations were employed. No discrepancies were found between back-translation and the original text, thereby strengthening the accuracy of the data (Chen & Boore, 2010; Tyupa, 2011).

Finally, I also wanted to conduct member reflections given the importance it holds in enhancing rigor in qualitative research. Member reflections are a process of sharing ideas and findings with participants not to verify the results but to explore the topic of interest more fully. This method allows both participant and researcher to explore connections and differences between the understanding of their accounts and also gives participants a chance to view and provide feedback on the themes generated in the initial research process (B. Smith & McGannon, 2018). Unfortunately, as most of the participants were contacted through gatekeepers, I did not necessarily have direct contact details for majority of them. Furthermore, participants had many time restrictions, given their ‘elite’ status, which meant the member reflection process would have to be done according to their availability and may have therefore taken far too long. The uncertainty of their availability would have thereby impacted my research process. A pragmatic decision to therefore, not do any member reflections had to be accepted.

### 6.3 Results

Results are presented under four COCs – systemic factors, coaching system, sport science support and research. The COCs are further divided into a total of eight SMUs and twelve raw data codes (Table 6.2) that cover the key issues highlighted by participants and are explained by highlighting key quotes. In all cases, quotes from athletes are specified as P (Performers), coaches as C, high-level administrators as A and government officials as G.

Table 6.2: Results of thematic analysis

Central Organising Concepts (COC)	Shared Meaning Units (SMU)	Raw Data Codes ( <i>N</i> participants)	Exemplar Quotes
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System influenced factors	Issues of national concern	Lack of sporting culture (9)	‘I think Indian mentality is that there is no career in sports’
		Popularising sports in the country (8)	‘Right now, it’s like let’s say you see PV Sindhu wins, then everyone wants to join badminton so it’s more drawn from inspiration than structure’
		Mass media (4)	‘If they start showing shooting more on the TV that might help popularise the sport as more people will come to know about the sport’
	Government influenced factors	Education – Sport Balance (3)	“The curriculum burden is so much that there is no time left to do all this”
		System-made vs Self-made athletes (10)	‘If you see any player’s graph, they are all self-made, they are not system generated’
		Differences among sports (3)	‘I think that in badminton we are in a much better position’
		Differences among States (6)	‘Indian states are not uniform in size, or availability of resources, be it land, money or talent.
		Professionalism in sport (5)	‘Until we change this concept and moving from honorary to professional positions it is very difficult for Indian sports to move’
	Infrastructure and resource support for athlete development	Providing and maintaining infrastructure (21)	‘Just want them to start with providing basic infrastructure which is maintained’
		Consistent financial support to athletes (16)	‘One of the most pressing challenges for athletes is the issue of financial security’
		Grassroot level support (9)	‘So, in India the thing is when you achieve something then you know they are overwhelmed with gifts and all this’
		Talent identification and development (10)	‘Some approach towards the raw talent that the only solution is to introduce serious and sincere sports...’
	Coaching system	Quality of coaches	Experienced coaches vs qualified coaches (11)
Knowledge possessed by Indian coaches (7)			‘Look at the quality of coaches that come out of the NIS, they can’t read, they can’t write, most of the literatures are English or French what are they going to read’

	Funding for coaches (6)		‘People get paid Rs 50000-60000 (USD 690-829), chief coach gets paid Rs 1.5 Lakh, what do you do with 1.5 lakh (USD 2071)?’
Sport Science Support	Importance of sport science support (22)		‘What we seriously lack is sport science, we have absolutely no concept of sport science, of training, of biomechanics, of biochemistry, prevention of injury, no concept’
	Lack of knowledge about sport sciences (12)		‘Events, like the individual events like badminton and shooting, chess, snooker where there is no team coordination your own talent you have to fight with that sport psychology matters’
Research	Increasing research base in India (6)		‘I think we need to do far more research, we have no research, we have no data, we don’t have either’

### 6.3.1 Systemic factors

This COC captured constructs highlighted as issues of national concern and relating to the governing or functioning of the Indian sport system. The three SMUs included were *issues of national concern, government influenced factors and infrastructure and resource support for athlete development.*

**Issues of national concern.** Issues of national concern included issues obstructing the progress of the entire sport field on a national level (both mass participation and high-performance sports) and this SMU was further divided into three raw data codes; *lack of sporting culture, popularising sports in the country and mass media.*

The lack of sporting culture was highlighted by nine participants and their comments are exemplified in these quotes: *‘I think Indian mentality is that there is no career in sports’* (C6); *‘That belief to a very large extent is still there, an Indian has to get a qualification, has to be educated. He’s not going to make money from playing football’* (C7). Furthermore, this lack of sporting culture also seemed to affect the second raw data code, popularisation of sport in the country. Currently in India, as mentioned in Chapter 4, sports gain popularity once athletes from that sport succeed at the international level. One participant quoted, *‘The more champions we have, the more idols we will have which means more parents will be*

*convinced that sports can be an option*' (A2). At present, however, the number of role models are quite limited, as repeatedly stated by participants. The famous Indian belief that sports is not a thing to do could, therefore, be forcing youngsters to quit sport, thereby potentially affecting both the sporting culture and the participation in sport.

As evident from previous Chapters, another factor that could potentially be impacting the sporting culture and national identity was mass media. In the interview, A1, highlighted an example of how media had provided insufficient recognition to the coach who was actually responsible for developing one of the medal-winning athletes. This participant further went on to say, *'You know nobody wants to give credit because giving credit is not a story, so, again media is deeply responsible for destroying Indian sport'*. Participants also highlighted a lack of television coverage to sports other than cricket, thereby reinforcing the previously outlined media bias. P11 in this regard also quoted, *'If it comes on TV it'll help the sponsorship and when there is more money, any sport becomes a high-profile sport'*.

Although participants did acknowledge that India's limited sporting success is not only because of a lack of sporting culture or popularisation of sport or media coverage but also because of a deeper set of issues revolving around factors influenced by the government, the next SMU.

**Government influenced factors.** Government influenced factors can be described as issues arising due to the organisation of sport in India and was further divided into five raw data codes; *balancing education and sport, self- versus system-made athletes, differences among sports, differences among States and professionalism in sport.*

India is primarily seen as an education-focused country (Navigus Blogs, 2017), which was reinforced by participants in the study, *'Still academics is dominant over sports to a large extent'*(A2). Furthermore, participants also precisely highlighted an imbalance between the importance given to sports and education, *'I found it really difficult to manage my academics along with sports'* (P6); *'curriculum burden is so much that there is no time left to*

*do sport' (G1)*. Whilst reinforcing a loss of talent because of the ingrained preference and priority given to academics, C8 also emphasised the need to make changes within the schooling system, *'The schooling system can be a little more considerate towards athletes by giving them time off and giving some privileges so that they can pursue sport seriously'*.

Although as highlighted in Chapter 4, education is one area that the government is solely responsible for and has been trying to incorporate sport within the education curriculum. One of the government officials in the current study was a perfect participant to comment on the most recently proposed changes,

Now, the new education policy is also emphasising this aspect of physical education. From this year CBSE has ordered all its 20,000 schools to have one hour of physical activity which can be sports, exercise, PT, any form of physical activity, like running, anything can be done (G1).

Secondly, as India has not been a successful sporting country (Bhogle, 2016; Khair, 2016), most athletes were reported to have succeeded because of their own efforts rather than through a system; i.e., they were self rather than system made. In this regard, one participant observed,

If you really want to compete with China and USA you need to have a system, which is not there. Whoever has come up is because they had their own interest, it was their passion, so they entered the sports field (C1).

Unfortunately, the answer to why India lacks a system is not all that simple. With India being a vast and diverse country, it is only natural to expect at least some (if not a lot of) differences across the regions. Differences on two levels were reported in this study. First are the differences among sports, the third raw data code. In India, some sports are more developed and popular than others: *'Football has come up as a second sport in India now, after cricket and people have also started watching and following it seriously'*(P4); *"...in badminton, compared to many of the federations, the functioning is lot more professional. I*

*think with badminton we are in a much better position than others”* (C8). The development achieved by badminton was further emphasised by C5,

I think whatever we have at the moment; of course, we are getting better step by step, but this platform or this level of support is good enough for a badminton player to reach very high level at an international stage.

This suggestion was, however, contradictory to the perception of an administrator from table tennis,

Today when we want to do international table tennis tournaments, we have nothing. We were getting some two very big tournaments, but we couldn't do it because we don't have the infrastructure and whatever infrastructure is available wherever it is, it is so difficult to procure (A2).

Next, the fourth raw data code was the differences among States, which is mainly because, as mentioned earlier, sport, as per the Constitution of India, is a State rather than a national subject. Consequently, the different States in India do vary a great deal in terms of the sport development they have achieved. G2 justified these differences by stating, *‘Some States have more funds, and a greater focus on sports, whereas some do not’*. Another government official saw such differences as a structural issue, *‘See, basically as per the Constitution, sport is a State subject, so States are expected to take responsibility’* (G3). This difference in States was accurately summarised by A1 wherein a comparison of sport in two states was highlighted. The efforts of one State were criticised, *‘In Maharashtra nothing is being done, nothing. Whatever work that was being done has also been stopped. We used to be one of the top states, but we’ve really fallen’*, whereas another State’s efforts were appreciated, *‘Orrisa, hats off to them, I’ve seen one of the cleanest and ethical states to work with, cleanest in the country, nobody is asking for money and they go overboard to support sports’*.

Despite the differences among sports and States, however, there was an agreement about a lack of professionalism in sport in general which formed the fifth raw data codes. Participants emphasised that many positions in sport are honorary, which could be impacting overall sport development. A3 accurately summarised this by highlighting a need for increased professionalism in sport,

We need to get more professionalism into sport, we need to get more professional people to join the organisation. See today in India all organisations are honorary jobs. I am an honorary guy, so if I feel I have the time I'll do it. It is my passion which is why I'm doing it but maybe not all the people have the same passion or that same vision. So, until we change this concept and move from honorary to professional positions it is very difficult for Indian sports to move ahead.

This lack of professionalism was not only highlighted within the administration sector, but professional employment was seen as a must even within the coaching field which is evident from C1's quote, *'But if you really want dedicated coaches it has to be on roll, it has to be their employment for them'*.

As a solution to this lack of professionalism however, an involvement from the private sector was proposed by participants. A1's quote precisely highlighted the importance of professionalism and how the private sector potentially contribute to developing Indian sport, *'Now if you are a Rs 3000 Crore (USD 414.25 million) profit making company, I think you are a professionally run good company and have all the infrastructure. So, why can't the corporates adopt one sport?'*. A1 further, reinforced,

There are States who are doing good work, but they can't find professionals to run it for them, we don't have professionals in this country so then it all goes back to the Federations depend on someone who is doing nothing.

One of the government officials highlighted the current encouragement being provided from the national government's side for increased involvement from the private

sector, *'Private sector participation, be it in the form of CSR, or contribution to NSDF or in management of stadia, is always a synergetic, welcome move'* (G2). In fact, the private sectors have started investing in certain sports, for example, Indian football, which was supported by a quote from P10, *'Now Indian football developed because Reliance (Reliance Industries Limited is an Indian multinational conglomerate company) developed so many grassroots level coaching camps'*. Participants also reported increased professionalism in football (although not universally, but certainly in some instances), *'Players and coaches abroad are doing it for their bread and butter, so they get their salaries on time which happens only in a few clubs like professional clubs in ISL'*.

The private sector could therefore contribute a lot more to other sports as well to not just ensure effective and professional functioning of sport but also to provide the required resources, which might help reduce the burden on the government. Although the private sector is investing in sport and is being increasingly encouraged to do so, currently the government is still mainly responsible for providing the relevant resources to athletes, the next SMU.

**Infrastructure and resource support for athlete development.** This SMU was further divided into four raw data codes; *providing and maintaining infrastructure, consistent financial support to athletes, grassroots level support and talent identification and development*.

Providing and maintaining infrastructure was mentioned by twenty-one participants and their comments included the following: *'The infrastructure is still poor'* (C7); *'India still lacks good infrastructure'* (C1). Despite many world-class facilities being built in the recent past, Indian athletes' failure is often attributed to the lack of necessary infrastructure being available to support their progress (Saad, 2016). Participants, however, identified the true problem with infrastructure in India,

You can't just build a stadium and be like, there's your stadium, train there and for the next 20 years we are not going to touch it, we are not going to maintain it. So, if you are not maintaining what you are creating, it is going to demolish and go down in terms of quality, which makes the players go down (P3).

The same athlete further observed, *'So, providing that basic infrastructure, where you can, you know train your national team, groom your national team is paramount'* (P3).

Barring the preference for maintained infrastructure, funding was another major factor contributing to an athlete's sporting success which was highlighted as an area that had fortunately changed in the recent past,

The biggest thing that's happened now is they have this thing called the 'Top Scheme' where the Government has actually picked up, I think 10-15 athletes from every sport, and is going to fund them for all the way to the Olympics (C3).

In fact, participants identified that the apprehension about sport not being a good career could be very closely related to both the financial instability and the third raw data code, the issue of post-career support. Fortunately, with the increased involvement of the private sector and continued support from the Government, this situation is also changing. *'A belief that as an athlete you can survive, improve your sport and that now you can receive jobs through sports, even get cash awards, is coming up'* (P9). Increased financial stability during the career and more job security after retirement have certainly contributed to parents (whose influence is still substantial in Indian society) believing in sport a lot more than before.

The fourth raw data code was somewhat related to both of these preceding issues. Namely, the availability of infrastructure and funding: participants identified that India lacks grassroots level support, i.e., athletes do not receive opportunities such as funding and basic infrastructure, until they succeed at the international level. A quote from an athlete accurately summarised this lack of grassroots level support,

Unless someone becomes a hero, till that point, till that journey he is not given the basic stuff that he needs, after he/she has achieved something in life, then everyone pays attention to it, then everyone is like okay we'll provide you this, we'll provide you that (P3).

Participants thus felt that support, financial and otherwise, was provided to athletes only *after* they became champions rather than *during* their journey from before reaching high-performance to high-performance level as might be more logical in a development-focused system.

Another related issue identified by ten participants was identifying and developing talent, the final raw data code related to TID: '*So, I think that identifying and nurturing talent is something we are currently lacking*' (P11). The limited avenues for identifying athletes and nurturing them appropriately, was linked to a lack of a nationally applied athlete development system. Along with the limited avenues, lack of appropriate and efficient personnel to identify and nurture athletes was also highlighted and was closely related to the next COC.

### **6.3.2 Coaching system**

This COC was divided into two SMUs; *quality of coaches* and *funding for coaches* and included factors essential within a coaching system. Detailed exploration acknowledged coaching as an important factor responsible for athlete development and an area India majorly lacks.

**Quality of coaches.** This SMU was further divided into two raw data codes; *experienced coaches versus qualified coaches* and *knowledge possessed by Indian coaches*.

There was general agreement about the poor quality of Indian coaches, for example: '*The level of coach education in this country is abysmal and that's why we don't have good young Indian coaches coaching younger players*' (C7). Even with this agreement, however, and reflecting ongoing debates in the literature, there was great disagreement about the quality of experienced versus certified coaches, the first raw data code under coaching

system. Here, experienced coaches were defined as those who had been athletes themselves and participated at the international or national level, whereas certified coaches were those who may or may not have had any experience as athletes but had pursued formal coach education degrees (i.e., those who were international or national level athletes but had no specialized training as coaches, those who were athletes and who had specialized training as coaches and those who had specialized training as coaches but were not national level athletes). *'Certified coaches are different and experienced coaches like us, who have practical experience of playing at the international level are different'* (C1) which was in contrast to this quote;

Again, being a player does not necessarily mean that he will be a good coach. So, that is what I learned. Being an Olympian did not make me a good coach. So, I had to start from scratch when I started, so it's all about learning all the time (C5).

Despite such contradictory statements however, which certainly are not an issue exclusive to India, the important message from participants was the quality of *knowledge* possessed by Indian coaches, which formed the second raw data code. There were suggestions about the need to have knowledgeable coaches as follows: *'But now, since I got educated, I know how to coach, how much load to give to a certain player, if I see something, if a player is weaker I know how much load I should give'* (C4); *'We don't have good-quality Indian coaches. Therefore, the information going to our young players is not correct'* (C7). This poor quality (whether genuine or perceived) almost forced the need to hire foreign coaches, which was made clear by one of the administrators; *'But coaching is science, so either you have it or you don't; if you don't, you import it, which is the easiest thing'*. Having foreign coaches, however, has major drawbacks, as evident from P6's quote, *'One, there was a language barrier and two there were a lot of cultural difference. He expected something from us, and we were something completely different'*. Aside from the language and cultural barriers, another major drawback was funding for coaches, which formed the next SMU.

**Funding for coaches.** At present, funding for coaches, the second SMU under coaching system, is a serious issue, potentially affecting the perceptions of Indians about the coaching field. The financial support provided to coaches could be linked to the lack of professionalism in sport, wherein coaches struggle to get professional employment. Consequently, just like being an athlete is not seen as a thing to do, coaching is also not considered an attractive career path. A1 summarised this lack of funding in his interview,

So, again it must be made attractive enough for people to be able to get into it.

People get paid Rs 50000-60000 per month (USD 689-829), chief coach gets paid Rs 1.5 Lakh, what do you do with 1.5 lakh a month (USD 2071)? I mean you are paying foreign coaches USD 3000, USD 5000 and some even USD 10,000 a month but you pay them (foreign coaches) because they are of that quality.

To have better quality Indian coaches, India would need to ensure the coaching field is made attractive enough for people to consider it as a viable career option. For example, in following up on his points made in the previous quote, A1 observed that Indian coaches often did not wish to commit the time and effort to achieving the standards possessed by their foreign competitors, *'Nobody wants to come up to that quality'*. In fact, C2's observations further emphasised this in the interview. Despite having achieved the pro license qualification, C2 emphasised that many Indian coaches dropped out of the programme following a perception that they would simply be wasting their money as, ultimately, only the foreign coaches would get all the top ISL jobs.

### ***6.3.3 Sport science support***

A strong link between this COC and the poor knowledge possessed by Indian coaches was established. This COC was further divided into two SMUs; *importance of sport science support* and *lack of knowledge about sport sciences*, and involved acknowledging the lack of sport science support prevalent in India.

**Importance of sport science support.** Twenty-two participants identified sport science support as an area where India is massively lacking. For example, A1 stated, *'What we seriously lack is sport science, we have absolutely no concept of sport science, of training, of biomechanics, of biochemistry, prevention of injury, no concept'*. Most participants acknowledged that India lacks sport psychology support: *'Yeah definitely, psychology is important'* (P1); *'This is extremely important and undervalued experience'* (P11).

Unfortunately, just acknowledging the importance of sport science is not enough. A greater issue appeared to be the misconceptions about sport sciences and sport psychology in specific, which could also be contributing to unsuccessful implementation of these techniques in training.

**Lack of knowledge about sport science.** Misconceptions about sport science and a lack of awareness about its implementation in training was mainly seen in interviews with administrators and coaches. A1 observed, *'But today we sit in the meeting and ask if they want a foreign physio, too often however, the response is 'Oh yeah the malishwala (in most cases a non-qualified/certified masseur), take the malishwala'. A masseur is not a malishwala, he's a doctor'*. As A1 pointed out there seems to be considerable confusion about what specialist does what, a situation common even in British sporting circles (Lebrun, MacNamara, Collins & Rodgers 2020).

Similarly, C7 expressed apprehensions about the way sport science techniques are being implemented by stating, *'I would say that a lot of clubs in the ISL now have adopted the GPS system. However, I would say most of them have no idea how to use the information'*. Regarding the lack of knowledge about sport science support, C3 raised his concerns, *'I am not too sure we have enough people who have studied that subject thoroughly enough to impart that knowledge and help our next generation'*. These highlighted misconceptions do raise concerns about the knowledge prevalent in Indian sports, especially within the coaching field.

Although participants in the current study identified many issues, they also felt that more data needed to be collected to better understand the intricacies of the Indian sports field, which brings us to the last COC.

#### **6.3.4 Research**

This COC covered the need for India to widen its research base in the sport field and was clearly emphasised by participants. For example, P3 stated:

I mean first we have to listen, because people are not ready to listen to all the information that is provided by us Indians, about what we think should be changed or updated, then there is no point, I mean you can look outside as much as you want but if you can't put off a fire that's inside the house, how are you going to put off a fire that's outside?

Evidently, as key stakeholders are primarily responsible for delivering sporting success, understanding their perspective could help formulate better strategies and thereby minimise any potential wastage of resources (Kulkarni & Magotra, 2017). Having an increased research base would also confer an additional advantage, as it would contribute to the generation of a database to monitor each athlete's development. For example,

In my Federation, what we are trying to do is we are trying to tie up with a large company or someone who will sit with us and create a huge database on the basis of which we can do a lot of monitoring, we can do a lot of predicting of performances. There are a lot of models to predict performances, right? But unless you have the data how will you do that? (A1)

Finally, research was thought to be important in coaching and sport sciences as well. A1 stated, *'Today all the coaches from abroad are PhDs, with huge amounts of research'*. Even though available data do not support this contention, this was a generally expressed opinion which is evident from C3's statement, *'His knowledge is very good, he's studied abroad, he's done a lot of research'*. Both these quotes do indicate that knowledge is

considered extremely important. As evident from all the above quotes, research is one area in which India could really improve and get a better understanding of what athletes and coaches want, have a better database to monitor each athlete's (and coach's) progress and have better quality coaches and sport scientists.

## **6.4 Comparing India's performance against a commonly used framework**

### ***6.4.1 Situating findings within the literature***

Having identified potential factors impacting sport development in India and as a broad set of principles or antecedents based on a common framework which can be adopted with subtle domestic variations, Green and Oakley's (2001) model was used to compare India's performance on each of the antecedents specified in the model. For a complex country like India, the 10 factors identified in Green and Oakley's model seemed ideal considering the focus of the model as outlined in Chapter 2. The model also seems to more broadly consider the various factors identified as impacting the Indian sport field in this thesis, such as an accepted notion of excellence in sport being a viable career path, and the role of different agencies in developing high-performance sport. A comparison with Green and Oakley's model would help gain deeper knowledge about India's performance against antecedents contributing to high-performance sporting success in one of the common frameworks used to discuss national sport development systems in the West (e.g., the UK, the USA, Australia, Canada). Consequently, the comparison was thought to provide some important ways forward for India.

Consequently, a comparison against Green and Oakley's (2001) 10 factors highlighted that India is not lacking on all factors and has at least attempted to deal with some of them (highlighted in Table 6.3). The following Sections, therefore, highlight factors India seems to have made some progress on, followed by factors which still require attention.

Table 6.3: Summary of results from the current study

<b>India's performance against Green and Oakley's (2001) 10 factors</b>
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<b>Current Scenario</b>	<b>Factors India has made some progress on</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specified role of different agencies and a clear administration structure</li> <li>• Appropriate funding and jobs provided to athletes</li> <li>• Competition exposure to athletes</li> <li>• Infrastructure provided to athletes</li> <li>• Talent identification and development of athletes</li> <li>• System to monitor progress of athletes</li> </ul>
	<b>Factors India still majorly lacks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sporting culture</li> <li>• Sporting system as a whole</li> <li>• Insufficient focus on a key specific factor - 'coaches'</li> <li>• Unimpactful resource allocation and management</li> </ul>
<b>Main conclusions from the study</b>	<b>Reallocating resources from hardware to liveware</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prioritise liveware over hardware, i.e., focus on 'people' rather than 'stadia'</li> <li>• Manage resources differently by prioritising development of coaches and a coach system</li> </ul>

#### ***6.4.2 Factors on which India has progressed***

First, as mentioned in Chapter 4, at the administration level, the 2001 National Sports Policy clearly outlined roles of different agencies. Both State governments and NSFs are responsible for different aspects of sport development, which as highlighted here and by Chelladurai and colleagues (2002), has resulted in different levels of development achieved by each State and sport. For instance, cricket, badminton and shooting classify as the more developed sports in which participation is higher, and athletes receive more support (Narain, 2016). The national Government still has considerable influence on the sport sector and is responsible for providing facilities to high-performance athletes (Chelladurai & Nair, 2017). Furthermore, and despite such a federal system, whereby co-ordination could be slightly problematic as different States have a degree of political autonomy, like in other federal systems, such as Canada (Green & Oakley, 2001), India has still managed to make some progress, evident from success achieved by certain sports (e.g., badminton) and states (e.g., Haryana) (Duggal, 2018; Kumar, 2018; Sengupta, 2020).

Of the facilities provided by the Government, financial stability had always been highlighted as a consistent concern in the sport field, at least until recently. Participants emphasised that the financial situation in Indian sport is now evolving further and for the better. Many private companies and government schemes are providing jobs and launching numerous schemes to ensure athletes have some financial stability and can potentially train as full-time athletes (Hannon, 2012; “Lakshya Sports,” n.d.; Prasad, 2020). In fact, the jobs could provide lifestyle support by ensuring athletes have a steady income when they retire (Green & Oakley, 2001). Next, the government has also taken efforts to provide enough competition exposure to athletes to better prepare them for the international competitions (e.g., Hussain, 2020). Finally the government, similar to Korea’s initiative of including physical education in the core curriculum of the modern schools, (Bairner , Lee & Tan, 2016; Lee, 2015) has, successfully managed to address the issue of lack of importance given to sport and physical education at the school level, by introducing compulsory health and physical activity classes from grade one to twelve (Government of India, 2019). Furthermore, as mentioned in Chapter 4, the NEP 2020 proposed sport-integrated learning for students in educational institutions to adopt positive attitudes towards fitness, obtain essential life skills and generally achieve desired physical activity levels (Government of India, 2020).

In Chapter 4, I highlighted the need for the private sector needs to take up more responsibility to invest in sport given that the government has limited amount of money it can spend on sport (Mahapatra, 2020; Shirotriya, 2019). China too took support of national enterprises or sponsorships from regional capital investment to run most of the ‘professional clubs’ as a solution to the financial problems arising from the limited government sport budget (Bairner et al., 2016). Participants in the current study however reported that there is a good amount of investment from the private sector in some sports, for example, Indian football. In fact, most of the ISL clubs are currently owned by private sector such as big companies, significant sports persons and Bollywood actors (Chachra, 2019; Explore Sports

Management, 2021). Involvement of the private sector, as specified earlier, became easier with the introduction of CSR (Shirotriya, 2019). Although this is a positive change, the investments need to expand to sport other than football as well. Finally, to ensure India has a continuous supply of athletes, two previously introduced TID schemes, the NSTSS, outlined in Chapter 4, and another one launched in 2014, the Rajiv Gandhi Khel Abhiyan (RGKA) were merged under the more recently introduced KIYG (Srivastava, 2016).

Despite the progress on these factors, much work still needs to be done on other areas of Indian sport. For example, although India has some good infrastructure, the inability to maintain it, as highlighted in the current study, would need to be tackled before India could host mega sporting events (Polson & Whiteside, 2016). I address these in the next Section.

#### ***6.4.3 Factors in which India still lacks***

An embedded lack of sporting culture, as emphasised previously, a relative strength for countries such as China, is often ‘blamed’ for India’s poor performance at international events. In fact, this poor sporting culture could potentially be underpinned by India primarily being an academic and economically focused country and/or it may have originated from the famous Indian saying which roughly translates as, ‘If you study hard you will live like a king but if you play sports you will ruin your life’ (Chandran, 2016; Navigus Blogs, 2017). To tackle this poor sporting culture, along with other policy initiatives, one of the main aims of the KIYG was to inculcate a stronger sporting culture within the country (Khelo India, n.d.). Furthermore, as outlined in Chapter 4, media could have an impact on both inculcating an increased sense of national identity and a stronger sporting culture. In fact, the 2001 National Sports Policy introduced an initiative that encouraged the media to contribute in popularising sport and inculcating a stronger sporting culture within the country (Government of India, n.d). Success achieved by Indian athletes has therefore received consistent media attention which may have had a positive impact on the Indian population (e.g., increased mass participation) (Devan, 2012; India Today, 2018; Nair, 2011; Sarkar, 2019; Srivastava, 2019).

Unfortunately, as reported by participants, media may also have a negative impact on the population. For example, the media coverage bias, highlighted in Chapter 5 as a factor negatively impacting sports was also reinforced by current participants (Newsable, 2021). Furthermore, negative media reports could also have an impact on high-performance athletes and their performance. For example, after consistently winning silver medals, PV Sindhu was being called ‘Silver Sindhu’ which did seem to impact her as she stated in one of her interviews, “So I just wanted to give my 100%. I didn’t want people to say, ‘Silver Sindhu’. At some point of time that gets into your mind” (Chaudhary, 2020). Even cricket, in which, as outlined in Chapter 1, India has achieved great international success also suffers the negative impact of media wherein Indian media savaged the Indian cricket team after their loss against Australia in the 2020 Test match. This however, could also potentially be due to the history and importance of cricket within the country (Young, 2020). As media is believed to condition the society’s vision and understanding of sport, the way media reports various sporting events does seem to be crucial (Pilar, Rafael, Félix, & Gabriel, 2019). With India seeming to follow the virtuous cycle of sport philosophy, however, ensuring current high-performance athletes continue to succeed would be crucial.

In this regard, India could potentially learn from the Korean media. Despite the political tensions in the Korean peninsula, there was successful promotion of a notion of unitary Korean nationalism especially during the 2000 Athens Olympic Games. When North Korea and South Korea were to face each other for a table tennis match, both nations’ media generally attempted to avoid reporting the athletes from the other nation in a negative way and instead used terms such as ‘family members’ or ‘sisters from the North and the South have come across’ (Lee & Maguire, 2011). Despite different political situations, India could certainly learn the media language from the Korean peninsula, (Chaudhary, 2020) whether it is for the most popular sport or for other sports in the country, to ensure the negative impact of media reports is minimised (Pandey, 2019). Using a more positive language might help the

population view performances of the current Indian athletes (whether the desired performance or not) in a more positive light and thereby help inculcate a stronger sporting culture and increase mass participation (Lee & Maguire, 2011; Pilar et al., 2019).

Along with a lack of sporting culture, another major issue is a lack of sporting system, a criticism India receives very often. Boria Majumdar, a leading Indian sports scholar, asserts that Indian athletes who have achieved international success are not actually products of the country's sport system but rather, mere exceptions the country has witnessed (Chandran, 2016). Abhinav Bindra, the only Indian to win an individual Olympic gold medal also supported this systemic drawback by asserting that it is not about supporting a select few athletes, but that the whole system should be such that it ensures the right things reach a larger population (Mutter & Pawlowski, 2014). This, however, is not a case of India failing to invest in developing its sporting system, as there is the current ability to produce a few successful Indian athletes. It, as highlighted previously in this thesis and by the participants, is more likely that the resources invested in the Indian sporting system are being used unimpactful (Kulkarni & Magotra, 2017). For instance, financial resources are allocated to athletes that are already successful rather than athletes that are in the early stages of their journey to excellence (e.g., Bose, 2020). As mentioned previously, however, the public investable funds in India are low due to other issues such as poverty (Mahapatra, 2020). Realising this and with the changes in policies such as the CSR (Shirotriya, 2019), the private sector began contributing to the establishment of excellence centres built for athletes to train at as also other areas mentioned in this Section (e.g., "Padukone - Dravid Centre", n.d.; "Sports Authority of India", n.d.). As reported by the participants however, the problem, despite being included in the 2007 National Sports Policy, was the maintenance of the infrastructure, as even today, most infrastructure was reported to be usually of good standard but not properly maintained, making it less usable and potentially affecting the performance of athletes. In fact, there is a debate within the sporting literature around maintenance of such

mega-structures potentially being quite difficult and such structures not necessarily contributing to the expected economic or developmental benefits (Lee, 2019). However, significant former Indian sportspersons as well as participants have emphasised the need to focus on coach development rather than infrastructure development. Whilst infrastructure is important, over the years India seems to have prioritised facilities such as infrastructure over development of people potentially putting India at risk of prioritising hardware over liveware (i.e., stadia over people). Despite the emphasis on coach development, the coaching system in India is still considered to be the least evolved system in the country (Raj, 2018). To therefore ensure India is using its resources more efficiently, it could potentially reprioritise its available resources from stadia to development of people.

#### ***6.4.4 Reallocating existing resources from hardware to liveware***

High-quality coaching is an oft-cited necessity for a nation's success in high-performance sport (De Bosscher et al., 2007; Green & Oakley, 2001; Houlihan & Green, 2008). Notably, De Bosscher and colleagues (2015) identified Canada, Australia and Switzerland, all western nations that perform well at the Olympic Games, as having particularly strong systems for developing coaches to support high-performance athletes. India, as outlined in Chapter 4, has introduced initiatives to provide coaches to its high-performance athletes (Government of India, n.d., 2007). Unfortunately, however, as mentioned by Gopichand, a well-known Indian badminton coach, the coaching system in India is the most unevolved system in the country (Kulkarni & Magotra, 2017) and could potentially be contributing to the limited sporting success achieved by Indian athletes (Raj, 2018). Participants, whilst agreeing to the lower quality of Indian coaches, also identified three additional factors hindering development of the Indian coaching system: less funding to Indian coaches, knowledge possessed by Indian coaches and an ingrained debate about the experienced coaches being better than certified coaches.

Most sports in India have foreign coaches who are paid comparatively huge amounts of money to train Indian athletes. In contrast, some Indian coaches training the national and junior teams are paid Rs 30,000-50,000 per month (approximately USD 414-690), which makes the coaching field less lucrative for Indians (Rasquinha, 2018). Although Indian coaches could make a positive difference to the development of athletes, due to a fair understanding of both the realities of the sport field in India and the various Indian cultures, foreign coaches still seem to be preferred over Indian coaches (Sarkar, 2018). In fact, even badminton, with a good number of successful quality Indian coaches (Dutta & Bandyopadhyay, 2018), has foreign coaches working with high-performance athletes (Saha, 2019). These foreign coaches seem to be preferred over Indian coaches due to perceived gaps in knowledge between Indian coaches and their foreign counterparts (Rasquinha, 2018). A potential short-term measure to improve relationships between coaches and athletes while foreign coaches remain part of the Indian system would be to implement better induction and psychosocial support for foreign coaches to help them deal with the complex Indian milieu. Exploiting social learning between Indian and foreign coaches would be one good way to address this issue (cf. Stoszkowski & Collins, 2014). There may be another factor in play, however, which would also need to be addressed if India is to achieve more in sport. There is much anecdotal evidence which supports the existence of a preference against Indian coaches. In short, a common feeling that ‘foreigners know better’. This problem is not unique to India, but it does highlight the need to market and promote the strengths of the home-grown products (e.g., Rasquinha, 2018; Sarkar, 2018).

Another issue relates to the challenge of achieving internationally recognised qualifications. Primarily, in India there are two routes to becoming a coach. First is by gaining formal education which is, unfortunately, often viewed as being outdated, lowering the value of the coaches who undertake this route. For example, coaches clearing the NIS course with specialisation in athletics usually tend to fail the International Amateur Athletics

Federation (IAAF) level 1 course, which is the basic level (Business Standard News, 2019). Former athletes, in contrast, are generally believed to have an unusually good opportunity to learn about coaching from their own coaches through observation. Unfortunately, what goes unnoticed is that observing your own coach only gives a partial view of coaching and may fail to reveal the true extent of the coach's role. It also only serves to transmit a 'mixed picture' of strengths and weaknesses which will omit the essential need for effective professional judgement and decision making (PJDM - Abraham & Collins, 2011) as the basis of optimised coaching. The point of entry into coaching, therefore, may not necessarily guarantee the required quality of coaching (Knowles, Borrie, & Telfer, 2005). The key point here is, it is not about arguing over the best method to get into coaching but ensuring that whoever gets in is fully equipped to handle the pressures of the complex process of coaching.

A coach, along with providing constant support and developing their athletes, also needs to co-ordinate and manage other coaches, sport scientists and sports medicine personnel. Sport psychology was specifically discussed in more detail, with participants considering the role it plays in an athlete's success (Kremer & Scully, 2003; Sridhar, 2010). However, a significant lack of knowledge about sport sciences in general and sport psychology in specific was highlighted, especially from interviews with coaches, administrators and government officials. Unfortunately, if coaches do not have the necessary knowledge about sport sciences and sports medicine, it would be almost impossible for them to implement and/or co-ordinate these facilities for their athletes. As noted previously, however, this lack of understanding of roles is not solely a problem in India (Lebrun et al., 2020). Currently, foreign coaches are, to a certain extent, doing all these things for their Indian athletes and this can continue (Rasquinha, 2018). But as mentioned, this does have an impact on the Indian population as it pushes people away from sports and towards the deep-rooted, 'Sports is not a thing to do' belief (Chandran, 2016).

Furthermore, another example regarding the knowledge Indian coaches have could be the TID system. The 2011 NSCI highlighted that national coaches were also responsible for monitoring and evaluating the progress of athletes at coaching camps and making recommendations for inclusion or exclusion of athletes (Government of India, 2011). If the coaches have been accurately criticised for the knowledge they possess, however, the evaluation of athletes may be done by outdated methods as well. For instance, although TID research criticises one-off anthropometric tests, the TID processes in India are still primarily such one-off anthropometric, technical, and competitive testing protocols. Consequently, Indian coaches might be using similar methods to monitor progress of athletes (Abbott et al., 2005; Abbott & Collins, 2004; Pankhurst, 2014). It is, therefore, crucial to invest more resources on developing Indian coaches and ensuring their knowledge is updated and consistent with the most recent research. If India had a well-developed coaching system that developed quality Indian coaches, it could ensure firstly, Indian athletes who cannot make it to the high-performance level can still contribute to sport and secondly, help convince the wider population that sport and specifically coaching too could be a viable career option.

Developing more quality Indian coaches that match up to the level of the currently hired foreign coaches would therefore have many benefits, such as Indian coaches getting better salaries, making the coaching field more lucrative, having a cultural edge over their foreign counterparts and obviously possessing increased ability to develop successful world-class athletes (Sarkar, 2018). All these factors might further contribute to inculcating a stronger sporting culture in India which might facilitate India's efforts of succeeding in sport. In fact, numerous significant sporting figures in India are of the opinion that India needs to shift its focus to coach education (Raj, 2018; Rasquinha, 2018). VVS Laxman, a former batsman, in one of his interviews stressed that coaches are more important in an athlete's career than the infrastructure. He further cited an example of Sachin Tendulkar's (Indian cricketer) coach, saying the iconic batsman was developed by his coach and not by the

ground where he practiced. This is not to say that India has not come a long way from having limited coaches to now being in a position where it does identify the need to have better quality coaches and a more developed coaching system (Gautham, 2017; Kannan, 2020; Raj, 2018). The point, however, is that India would most certainly benefit from managing the resources it invests in sport differently. With coaches playing an important role in developing athletes and given the impact role models have on the Indian population, developing quality coaches might therefore contribute to India's desire of emerging as a top sporting country.

### **6.5 Summary, discussion and conclusion**

The study aimed firstly, to contribute an empirically driven rich picture of the sports environment in India and secondly, compare India's performance against a commonly used framework of antecedents contributing to high-performance sporting success to encourage strategic planning to high-performance athlete development. With a limited research on the Indian sports field, as highlighted throughout the thesis, (Chelladurai et al., 2002; Bandyopadhyay, 2005), this study could be considered as an important step into developing more India-specific knowledge. The use of bottom-up and top-down approach did contribute to understanding what the consumers and leaders of the top end policy really want and can offer. The inclusion of the athletes and coaches (i.e., consumers) was in fact supported by the participants as such a democratic system is generally never used and they are simply asked to follow policy initiatives introduced by the leaders. Comparing India against the 10 antecedents or factors contributing to sporting success that have been used as the basis of discussion for many successful sporting countries, also provided important insights for India to engage in strategic planning to achieve sporting success. The quality, level, and roles of participants were classified as high with all participants being active at the highest level in their sport or government posts at the time of the interviews. The 'elite' sample therefore did provide information most relevant to Indian sport that was potentially not known to the wider

public (Richards, 1996) thereby contributing to an increased understanding of why India has only managed to achieve limited success despite all the policy initiatives it has implemented.

To sum, as evident from the above Sections, India, so far, seems to have prioritised facilities over support development of its athletes. As mentioned in Chapter 5, since policy transfer could be extended to learning from other countries' mistakes, India could therefore, learn from the UK's mistake of overly prioritising stadia over people and shift its focus from development of infrastructure and allied factors to increase the number of quality coaches it develops (Kannan, 2020; Rasquinha, 2018). Secondly, although India has been taking efforts to implement necessary sport science support ever since the 2001 National Sports Policies (Chapter 4 - Government of India, n.d.), results from the current Chapter highlighted a lack of knowledge and use of sport science support within Indian sport. Development of quality coaching and sport science support in India seems to have the potential to not only better develop Indian athletes but also alter the perception of sport more generally as a respectable and worthwhile career path. Finally, another important conclusion from this Chapter, also consistent with the conclusions from previous Chapters, is a need to focus on inculcating a stronger sporting culture in the country. Although changing such a culture might take considerable time, it is certainly a factor that could have an impact on the development of Indian sports (Sorcar, Strauber, Loyalka, Kumar & Goldman, 2017).

Despite a small sample, the study did provide some initial conclusions that promoted the idea of managing the available resources differently. I did acknowledge, however that one study alone is not sufficient to understand and explore the sports environment in a country as complex as India. Furthermore, there were inconsistencies, with mainly administrators, government officials and coaches emphasising the lack of coach education and a coaching system whereas athletes mainly focused on the '*hardware*' rather than a need to develop quality coaches or the '*liveware*'. Therefore, in an attempt to enable generalising and to

triangulate conclusions, the next Chapter explores perceptions about the conclusions highlighted in this and previous Chapters from a wider perspective.

## Chapter 7

### Exploring a broader picture of Indian sport as perceived by a wider sample of pre-elite and elite athletes

#### 7.1 Introduction

##### *7.1.1 The context and the issue to be investigated in this Chapter*

Although a sample of 25 participants provided valuable insights, as reported earlier the sample size was certainly small, especially for a country with a population of 1.4 billion (Srivastava et al., 2020). Therefore, I needed to really be sure that the conclusions could be generalised for the entire country, particularly given the already highlighted inconsistencies. Although a lack of sporting culture and use and knowledge of sport science support were consistent, the need to develop quality Indian coaches was inconsistent. Of the four participant groups in Chapter 6, athletes did not report a need to develop quality Indian coaches. Unfortunately, quality of coaching may have been overpowered by the more fundamental issues Indian athletes reported they were facing, such as support at the grassroots level and poorly maintain infrastructure. That said, it was still particularly interesting as athletes have majority contact with coaches and would therefore be expected to understand the quality of their coaches (Beaumont, Maynard, & Butt, 2015). Athletes are also the ones who would significantly be impacted by any changes to behaviours of their coaches (Côté, Yardley, Hay, Whitney, & Baker, 1999). Consequently, and given that participants from Chapter 6 reinforced the importance of incorporating a bottom-up approach, conscious decision to explore perceptions of athletes, about the sporting culture and use and knowledge of sport science support in general and current coaching practices and behaviours to gain an understanding about the quality of coaches in particular was considered to be important.

##### *7.1.2 Consideration for participants*

As outlined in Section 7.1.1, a decision to include athletes was taken. I was however interested in gaining a wider perspective, which meant restricting my participant criteria to

only high-performance athletes could have limited the sample size as ‘elite’ samples are relatively small due to low accessibility (Richards, 1996). Consequently, the study was set to include both high-performance and athletes on their path to high-performance (referred to as pre-elites henceforth) considering the latter would be more easily accessible and contribute to a larger sample that would be more appropriate for the quantitative approach adopted in the current study. Unfortunately, however, due the pragmatic reasons and limitations outlined in Chapter 6, participants had to be approached through my contacts in Indian sport (Browne, 2005; Sadler et al., 2010).

### ***7.1.3 Objectives of the study***

Given the above considerations, the study had the following objectives,

- i. To evaluate athletes’ perceptions about sporting culture and their motives to participate in sport;
- ii. To evaluate athletes’ perceptions about current coaching practices and behaviours, and;
- iii. To evaluate athletes’ perception about the knowledge and use of sport sciences.

## **7.2 Methodology**

### ***7.2.1 Participants***

For reasons stated in Section 7.1.2, both high-performance athletes and pre-elites were chosen as the target sample. All participants were  $\geq 18$  years of age and the final sample included 113 participants from 12 different sports, both individual and team sports and three levels of competition – international (n=2), national (n=93) and state (n=18), as shown in Table 7.1. Although a sample of 100 participants is considered large by research standards, it is still proportionately tiny for the Indian context. A sample size between 30 to 500 at 5% confidence level, however, is generally considered to be sufficient for most studies (DelÍce, 2001) and given the pragmatic issues mentioned in 7.1.2, the final sample size included 113 participants. Furthermore, to the best of my knowledge such as study has not been conducted

in India so even with a smaller sample, I was able to make an important contribution to the Indian research field.

Table 7.1: Participant Information

<b>Sport</b>			<b>Total participants</b>
	<b>Level</b>	<b>Number of participants</b>	
Badminton	International	1	9
	National	3	
	State	5	
Shooting	National	2	3
	State	1	
Archery	National	15	15
Athletics	International	1	11
	State	10	
Tennis	National	5	5
Swimming	National	1	1
Football	National	32	32
Hockey	National	29	29
Volleyball	National	1	2
	State	1	
Netball	National	1	1
Other	National	1	2
	State	1	
Cricket	National	3	3

Participants were ideally targeted from sports at which India has achieved some success and/or are more popular at the pre-elite level. The category of ‘other’ included two sports, table tennis and sport climbing. Table tennis is extensively played in educational institutions and is considered to be one of the most popular sport in India at that level (Sportskeeda, 2019). Whereas sport climbing was added to the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games during the 129<sup>th</sup> IOC session in Rio de Janeiro 2016 (International Federation of Sport Climbing, n.d.; Tokyo 2020, n.d.) making it a relevant sport for the current thesis. Similarly, although netball is not yet included in the Olympics, it is a part of other international competitions such as the Commonwealth Games, making it another relevant sport (Gwilliam, 2018).

Finally, although I had consciously decided to exclude cricket from the thesis, as mentioned in Chapter 6, even significant former cricketers such as VVS Laxman have emphasised the need for the most popular sport in India to focus on coach development (Thakur, 2019; TOI, 2017). Furthermore, there is a lot of competition in cricket even to receive opportunities to showcase their talent (Veerappa, 2017). Given the massive participation and resulting competition to reach the professional level, I took a deliberate decision to explore grassroots level cricketers' (strictly pre-elites, i.e., state and/or national level) perceptions about the coaches in general and pursuing cricket as a career itself.

### ***7.2.2 Instrumentation***

With an aim to explore a wider picture of Indian sport a survey was administered to the 113 participants. Given that online surveys allow data collection from a geographically dispersed sample, they were considered to be the most appropriate option, especially considering I was based in a different country. Online surveys also improve chances of increasing the validity of responses by maintaining a degree of anonymity with the researcher not physically being present around the participants. With limited to no subjectivity, potential biases in the results are also minimised. Finally, online surveys allow participants to complete the study at their own convenience which could help increase the sample size (Gratton & Jones, 2010). Unfortunately, however I had to limit the survey to one language rather than offer it in different languages. As I was based in the UK, I had limited involvement in recruitment of participants, which meant the meaning of the questions needed to be kept consistent across the sample. Although translation and back-translation processes could have been used to develop the survey in Marathi and Hindi, these versions may not have necessarily shared the same meaning as the survey in English (Tanzer, 2009). English has however been reported as the second-most widely spoken second language in India, making the country the world's second largest English speaking country (Rukmini, 2019; Masani, 2012). Despite being conscious that administering the survey in English would limit my

sample size to a certain extent, I was therefore, fairly confident that I would still be able to reach a large sample. Consequently, a decision to offer the survey only in English as opposed to three languages was taken (Browne, 2005).

After the research tool was decided on, the next step was to design relevant questions. The first step included me revisiting the research objectives to formulate relevant questions and to ensure these questions are consistent with the overall research objectives. Although India is under-researched, the coaching field is certainly not. Consequently, existing coaching surveys were explored to identify the ones that could best contribute to gathering required data about the current coaching practices and behaviours in India. I did acknowledge, however, that the context, sample and temporal framework of a study are very unique to any previous studies and therefore existing surveys may often only serve, at best, as a guide (Andres, 2017). After due consideration, the Leadership Scale for Sports (LSS) and Coaching Behaviour Scale for Sport (CBS-S) were therefore used as a starting point to develop the survey questions (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1980; Côté, Yardley, Hay, Whitney, & Baker, 1999). Relevant items from both LSS and CBS-S were modified to make them suitable for the current study. Furthermore, these questions, wider coaching literature and data from previous Chapters guided the development of new questions targeted at exploring sporting culture, current coaching practices and behaviours and knowledge and use of sport science support. The survey questions were divided into eleven categories – demographics, motives for sport participation, duration and number of coaches, support system used by athletes, support provided by coach, coach behaviours, knowledge possessed by coach, experience of the coach, sport science support, perceived importance of coaching and current coach qualifications in India. All questions were designed to produce meaningful results, included only one thought or idea and used simple language to ensure participants understand the questions (Andres, 2017). I specifically focused on using simple language to ensure I would be able to reach out to a larger population.

Finally, after due consideration, a Likert scale was finalised for the survey. A Likert scale measures the attitude of respondents on a continuum from one extreme to another (Rea & Parker, 2014a). The 10-point rating scale, one of the most commonly used measurement tools was chosen for the survey (Courser & Lavrakas, 2012). Once the questions were developed, a review process was conducted to ensure the questions would really produce meaningful results (Rea & Parker, 2014b). With their background in coach education, two of my supervisors acted as the reviewers. The questions were finalised once I felt that they would provide meaningful results. Finally, relevant instructions were added to guide participants to answer the questions. Appendix C presents the final survey that was administered to participants.

### ***7.2.3 Procedure***

Prior to approaching participants, ethical approval was obtained from the University's ethics committee. As mentioned in Section 7.1.2, participants were then contacted through gatekeepers, followed by a snowball sampling wherein the already recruited participants acted as referrals to contact other participants that satisfied the study criteria (Rahi, Alnaser, & Ghani, 2019; Sparkesb & Smith, 2013). To ensure participants recruited through a snowball sampling were relevant to the study, the criteria were explicitly mentioned within the survey. Once again, these are shown in the survey copy presented in Appendix C.

### ***7.2.4 Data Analysis***

As mentioned in Section 7.2.2, the survey included four different motives to explain involvement of participants in sport. I was, therefore interested in understanding if there were any differences between groups formed from one variable (motives for sport involvement) on the incidence or counts of each category of another variable (level of competition and sport). Consequently, data analysis was based on descriptive statistics across the sample with crosstabulation used to look for trends across the sports and levels of competition (Morgan, Leech, Gloeckner & Barrett, 2004). Next, where inferential statistics were needed, I used

parametric *t* tests to investigate the difference between participant’s perceptions of coaching behaviours and practices and use of sport science support (Morgan, Leech, Gloeckner & Barrett, 2010).

### 7.3 Results

#### 7.3.1 Sporting culture across different sports and levels of competition

Table 7.2 shows the frequency distribution for each of the four motives which provided an overview of how many participants reported that particular motive being important for them. At this point I would like the reader to note that ‘No’ in all the Tables means participants reported that motive to be not important to them whereas ‘Yes’ means it was important to them. Of the four motives, personal achievement and satisfaction seemed to be the most important motive, followed by development as a person, then progression in wider career and finally athletic career itself.

Table 7.2: Frequency distribution for the four motives

Motive	Reported as important or not important		Frequency
Development as a person	Valid	No	56
		Yes	57
Progression in wider career	Valid	No	66
		Yes	47
Athletic Career	Valid	No	67
		Yes	46
Personal achievement and satisfaction	Valid	No	37
		Yes	76

**Motives for sport participation across different sports.** As every sport in India is developed to a different stage (Chelladurai et al., 2002), I was also interested in exploring whether there were any differences in the motives reported across sports (Table 7.3).

The final sample of 12 sports was classified as either individual/team CGS (centimetre, gram, seconds) sports or individual/team skill sports for analysis purposes. Swimming and athletics were both classified as individual-CGS sports and athletes from both these sports reported personal achievement and satisfaction as the highest motive for participation in their sport. Athletes from individual CGS sports therefore did not view sport as a career itself but rather placed more importance on using sport as a medium for personal achievement and satisfaction. The next category was individual-skill sports which included badminton, tennis, shooting and archery. The motives for participation for these sports were slightly different to the individual CGS sports. Athletic career itself was reported to be an important motive by majority athletes from badminton and tennis. All athletes from shooting reported development as a person and progression in a wider career as important motives whereas majority athletes from archery reported progression in wider career and personal achievement and satisfaction as important motives. Some athletes from individual-skill sports therefore did see sport as a career they could pursue, along with progression in wider career as the other motive for sport participation.

Table 7.3: Motive and Sport Crosstabulation

Motive		Sport											Total	
		Athletics	Archery	Football	Hockey	Cricket	Badminton	Volleyball	Swimming	Netball	Tennis	Shooting		Other
Development as a person	No	6	13	13	13	2	2	1	1	0	5	0	0	56
	Yes	5	2	19	16	1	7	1	0	1	0	3	2	57
	<b>Total</b>	11	15	32	29	3	9	2	1	1	5	3	2	113
Progression in wider career	No	9	6	17	14	2	9	1	1	1	5	0	1	66
	Yes	2	9	15	15	1	0	1	0	0	0	3	1	47
	<b>Total</b>	11	15	32	29	3	9	2	1	1	5	3	2	113
Athletic career	No	8	11	13	23	2	3	0	1	0	1	3	2	67
	Yes	3	4	19	6	1	6	2	0	1	4	0	0	46
	<b>Total</b>	11	15	32	29	3	9	2	1	1	5	3	2	113
Personal achievement and satisfaction	No	1	5	4	17	1	3	1	0	0	3	2	0	37
	Yes	10	10	28	12	2	6	1	1	1	2	1	2	76
	<b>Total</b>	11	15	32	29	3	9	2	1	1	5	3	2	113

The next category was team sports wherein football, hockey, volleyball, netball, and cricket were all included within team-skill sports. Majority athletes from football and netball reported development as a person, athletic career itself and personal achievement and satisfaction as important motives for participation in sport. Athletes from hockey, however mainly reported development as a person and progression in wider career as the two main motives. Although India has not achieved great success in volleyball (Venkat, 2020a), athletic career was reported as a main motive by both the athletes from the sport. Finally, for cricket, majority athletes reported personal achievement and satisfaction as the main motive for participation in sport. Finally, athletes from ‘other’ sports reported development as a person and personal achievement and satisfaction as the main motives for participation.

Along with a mix of different sports, the study also included athletes from different levels of competition, i.e., international, national, and state. I therefore also explored motives for sport participation across the different levels of competition.

**Motives for sport participation across different levels of competition.**

Crosstabulation was also used to identify trends between the level of competition and motive to participate in sport (refer to Table 7.4). Athletic career itself was most prominently reported by athletes participating at the international level, i.e., athletes classified as elite in the study. National level athletes, however reported personal achievement and satisfaction as being the main motive. Whereas state level athletes reported both development as a person and personal achievement and satisfaction as the two main motives. Pre-elites (national and state level athletes) in the current study therefore did not see sports as a career itself, but more as an opportunity for their own development and a sense of achievement and satisfaction.

Table 7.4: Motive and Level of performance achieved Crosstabulation

Motive		Level of performance achieved			Total
		International	National	State	
Development as a person	No	1	48	7	56
	Yes	1	45	11	57

	<b>Total</b>	2	93	18	113
Progression in wider career	No	2	49	15	66
	Yes	0	44	3	47
	<b>Total</b>	2	2	93	18
Athletic career	No	0	55	12	67
	Yes	2	38	6	46
	<b>Total</b>	2	93	18	113
Personal achievement and satisfaction	No	1	31	5	37
	Yes	1	62	13	76
	<b>Total</b>	2	93	18	113

Along with a lack of sporting culture, Chapter 6 also highlighted a need to focus on coach development. Although, before investigating any trends across athletes' perceptions about current coaching practices and behaviours, crosstabulation was used to explore the number of coaches athletes across different sports (Table 7.5) and levels of competitions (Table 7.6) had throughout their career. Of all participants, however, one participant did not answer this question. Hence, the total number of participants answering this question were 112 rather than 113.

Table 7.5: Total number of coaches and sport crosstabulation

		Sport											Total	
		Athletics	Archery	Football	Hockey	Cricket	Badminton	Volleyball	Swimming	Netball	Tennis	Shooting		Other
How many coaches have you had	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	1	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
	2	3	0	3	1	0	3	0	1	0	2	1	1	15
	3	3	0	6	0	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	14
	4	0	0	5	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	8
	5	1	4	4	24	0	1	1	0	0	0	2	1	38
	6	0	4	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	9
	7	2	4	3	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	11
	8	0	1	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
	9	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	3
	10	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2
	12	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
<b>Total</b>	11	14	32	29	3	9	2	1	1	5	3	2	112	

As evident from Table 7.5, majority of athletes reported having 5 coaches throughout their career. Notably, there were some differences in the number of coaches that athletes from different sports had. For instance, athletes from football reported having as many as 12 coaches during their careers whereas the number of coaches was generally lower for individual sport athletes with only one participant from archery and one from tennis reporting having 8 and 10 coaches respectively. With level of performance (Table 7.6), national level participants reported working with the highest number of coaches compared to international or state level athletes.

Table 7.6: Total number of coaches and level of performance achieved  
Crosstabulation

		Level of performance achieved			Total
		International	National	State	
How many coaches have you had	0	0	1	0	1
	1	0	2	2	4
	2	2	8	5	15
	3	0	10	4	14
	4	0	6	2	8
	5	0	35	3	38
	6	0	9	0	9
	7	0	9	2	11
	8	0	5	0	5
	9	0	3	0	3
	10	0	2	0	2
	12	0	2	0	2
<b>Total</b>		2	92	18	112

### 7.3.2 Perceptions about coaching behaviours and practices

As specified in Section 7.2.4., independent *t* tests were used to investigate the differences in participants' perceptions of the current coaching practices and behaviours and use and knowledge of support staff. Given the small and very different number of respondents in the international category, inclusion would have likely violated assumptions of the parametric approaches used. Accordingly, the tests presented in Tables 7.7 to 7.12 only

compare national and state level respondents. A full table with all variables has been provided in Appendix D.

I was however aware of the large number of pairwise comparisons which would inflate the Type 1 error. Accordingly, I used the Sequentially Rejective Bonferroni (SRB) procedure (Holland & Copenhaver, 1987), which yielded the unsurprisingly lower but still important number of significant differences between national and state level participants as shown in Tables 7.7 to 7.12. Briefly, this works by sequentially increasing the critical value of the *t* score by adjusting the degrees of freedom. So, the most significant difference (largest *t* score) is tested against the set alpha value (in this case, .05), the next against .05/2, then .05/3 and so on until that particular score fails to reach significance. This offers a more ‘moderately conservative’ test of significance and is particularly useful for larger scale initial investigations such as those reported in this Chapter.

**Difference between the two groups on time spent with support staff.** Participants were asked about the time they have been with their coach, parents, and other support staff such as physiotherapist, biomechanist and sport psychologist (Table 7.7). Of all the support staff, there was a significant difference between the time with the coach, physiotherapist, biomechanist, performance analyst and parents. National level participants reported having spent significantly less time with their coaches as opposed to state level participants. Similarly, with both physiotherapists and biomechanists, national level participants reported having spent lesser time compared to state level participants. A particularly significant difference between the duration of parental support for national level participants and state level participants was reported. Contrarily, national level participants reported having a performance analyst for a lot longer than state level participants.

Table 7.7: Comparing the two groups on perceptions of time spent with support staff  
N.B. \*=*p*<0.05, \*\*=*p*<0.01, \*\*\*=*p*<0.001

Variable		M	SD	<i>t</i> ( <i>df</i> )	<i>p</i>
Coach	National	2.71	2.66	-3.59 (109)	***
	State	5.25	3.12		

Sport psychologist	National	.51	.51	.951 (109)	NS
	State	.36	.96		
Physiotherapist	National	1.37	1.32	-2.32 (107)	*
	State	2.29	2.28		
Biomechanist	National	.00	.00	-2.31 (109)	*
	State	.01	.02		
Strength and conditioning coach	National	1.37	1.52	-.98 (107)	NS
	State	1.78	2.01		
Physiologist	National	.01	.06	.06 (109)	NS
	State	.01	.02		
Nutritionist	National	.64	1.41	-1.87 (109)	NS
	State	1.39	2.17		
Performance analyst	National	.63	1.18	2.26 (108)	*
	State	.00	.00		
Parents	National	3.94	6.91	-5.75 (108)	***
	State	14.11	6.64		

**Difference between the two groups on perceptions of support provided by their coach.** Given the numerous roles a coach plays in athlete development, participants were asked about the support their coaches provide. There were six questions within this category, with only two of them being statistically significant (Table 7.8). A significant difference in support provided to set long- and short-term goals for performance enhancement and ensuring participants are psychologically strong during competitions was reported with national level participants perceiving their coaches supporting them more than state level participants. The difference in perceptions of the two groups on the other factors, coaches supporting physical development, technical support, tactical support and ensuring athletes are physically and mentally prepared was not significant.

Table 7.8: Comparing the two groups on perceptions of support provided by their coach

N.B. \*= $p < 0.05$ , \*\*= $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*= $p < 0.001$

Variable		M	SD	<i>t</i> (df)	<i>p</i>
Physical development	National	8.54	1.55	-.18 (109)	NS
	State	8.61	1.72		
Technical aspects	National	8.69	1.38	.35 (109)	NS
	State	8.56	1.85		
Tactically strong	National	8.62	1.48	-.11 (109)	NS
	State	8.67	1.68		
Physical and mentally prepared	National	8.73	1.62	.76 (109)	NS
	State	8.39	2.30		
Goal setting	National	8.69	1.54	2.15 (109)	*
	State	7.72	2.59		
Psychologically strong	National	8.52	1.53	2.13 (109)	*
	State	7.56	2.64		

#### **Difference between the two groups on perceptions of coaching behaviours.**

Participants were asked to report their perceptions about ten coaching behaviours believed to have an impact on athlete development (Table 7.9) (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1980; Côté et al., 1999). A significant difference between the two groups was observed only on one behaviour, uses power to manipulate, whereby national level participants reported their coaches using power to manipulate them to a larger extent as compared to state level participants.

Table 7.9: Comparing the two groups on perceptions of coaching behaviours

N.B. \*= $p$ ;<0.05, \*\*= $p$ ;<0.01, \*\*\*= $p$ ;<0.001

<b>Variable</b>		<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>t (df)</b>	<b>p</b>
Changes behaviour to suit athlete	National	7.87	2.06	-.99 (109)	NS
	State	8.39	1.88		
Ensures trust	National	7.91	2.44	-.59 (109)	NS
	State	8.28	2.05		
Open to trying new ideas	National	8.69	1.57	.98 (109)	NS
	State	8.22	2.88		
Gives App. Feedback	National	9.27	1.16	1.48 (109)	NS
	State	8.83	1.04		
Shows appreciation	National	8.97	1.61	.33 (109)	NS
	State	8.83	1.51		
Encourages contributions about DM	National	7.59	2.54	-1.28 (109)	NS
	State	8.39	1.58		
Works on team building	National	8.30	2.15	1.27 (109)	NS
	State	7.56	2.92		
Disregards my opinions	National	4.37	3.54	-.48 (107)	NS
	State	4.81	2.99		
Uses power to manipulate	National	6.26	3.49	2.41 (106)	*
	State	4	3.25		
Creates safe environment	National	8.66	1.28	.71 (108)	NS
	State	8.39	2.33		

### **Difference between the two groups on perceptions of coaching qualifications.**

With Chapter 6 highlighting a need to focus on coach education to enhance the quality of coaches developed within the country, it was important to explore perceptions of the current coaching qualifications (Table 7.10). A significant difference regarding the expertise coaches possess to develop participants beyond their current level was identified, with national level participants reporting their coaches having enough expertise to facilitate their development to a larger extent than state level participants.

Table 7.10: Comparing the two groups on perceptions of coaching qualifications

N.B. \*=p;<0.05, \*\*=p;<0.01, \*\*\*=p;<0.001

Variable		M	SD	t (df)	p
Possesses enough knowledge	National	9.23	1.31	1.69 (109)	NS
	State	8.61	1.85		
Possesses enough knowledge for my development	National	8.91	1.36	1.61 (109)	NS
	State	8.28	2.27		
Possesses enough practical experience	National	9.16	1.24	1.30 (109)	NS
	State	8.67	2.38		
Possesses enough expertise to coach me beyond my level	National	9.03	1.24	2.02 (109)	*
	State	8.22	2.69		
Current coach quals are producing good coaches	National	7.95	2.35	.46 (109)	NS
	State	7.67	2.30		
Unified coach qualifications are needed	National	8.51	2.00	-.75 (109)	NS
	State	8.89	1.88		

#### Difference between the two groups on perceived importance of coaching.

Considering athletes in Chapter 6 did not focus on a need to develop coaches, I was interested in understanding if coaching is of any significance to Indian athletes (Table 7.11). There were, however, no significant differences between the two groups of participants on the perceived importance of coaching.

Table 7.11: Comparing the two groups on perceived importance of coaching

N.B. \*=p;<0.05, \*\*=p;<0.01, \*\*\*=p;<0.001

Variable		M	SD	t (df)	p
Quality of coaching most important	National	9.30	1.63	.47 (109)	NS
	State	9.11	1.18		
Coach has necessary knowledge and skills	National	8.97	1.39	.91 (109)	NS
	State	8.61	2.12		
Coach helped me progress to my current level	National	9.09	1.48	1.1 (109)	NS
	State	8.61	2.50		
Coach constantly tries to develop skills and knowledge	National	8.65	1.81	.66 (109)	NS
	State	8.33	1.94		
Plays a significant role in my motivation	National	8.70	2.07	.90 (109)	NS
	State	8.22	1.99		

### Difference between the two groups on perceived use and knowledge of sport

**science support.** As highlighted in the previous chapters, sport science support is essential for athlete development. Unfortunately, as concluded in Chapter 6, India seems to lack insight on the use and knowledge of sport science support. Consequently, participants were asked about their perceptions of the use and knowledge of sport science support (Table 7.12). National level participants reported having a significantly better understanding of sport sciences as compared to the state level participants. Similarly, participants at the national level reported their coaches having a significantly better understanding of sport sciences as compared to participants at the state level.

Table 7.12: Comparing the two groups on perceived use and knowledge of sport science support

N.B. \*= $p < 0.05$ , \*\*= $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*= $p < 0.001$

Variable		M	SD	<i>t</i> (df)	<i>p</i>
Understands sport science (participant)	National	8.22	2.17	2.26 (109)	*
	State	6.89	2.81		
Understands sport science support (coach)	National	8.29	1.43	2.75 (109)	**
	State	7.06	2.92		
Uses sport science support	National	6.99	3.04	.13 (109)	NS
	State	6.89	2.76		
Encourages athlete to use sport science support	National	6.90	2.99	.96 (109)	NS
	State	6.17	2.92		

### 7.4 Summary of findings from the current study against conclusions from previous Chapters

As evident from Tables 7.5 and 7.6, athletes participating at the national level and sports such as football reported having as many as 12 coaches. One of the reasons for this could be that Indian coaching is not as lucrative as it is in other sporting countries resulting in the percentage of population that is attracted to coaching being quite low. Coaches therefore could be at a higher risk of quitting their career as a coach thereby forcing athletes to seek a different coach (Kannan, 2020; TOI, 2014). Along with this broader culture, sport specific culture could also have an impact on the number of coaches an athlete has. For instance,

numbers reported in this study are certainly higher than athletics in the UK with performers at this level reporting an average of four coaches (Power of Ten, 2021). Football coaching experiences in the UK, however, are somewhat similar, owing to the change of coach on an annual basis normal within academies (Mills, Butt, Maynard, & Harwood, 2012).

Another issue within the coaching field is a lack of recognition which could also potentially be contributing to a relatively poor perception of the Indian coaching field. Initiatives have however been undertaken to ensure coaches at all levels receive equal recognition to thereby attract and motivate more coaches to continue within the field (e.g., Khelo India, n.d.). The other reason could be poor accessibility to and/or poor quality of coaches. For example, despite recognising the importance of a coach in athlete development and identifying that the State lacks good coaches at the grassroots level, the Haryana Government failed to explicitly specify any primary roles to coaches in the 2015 policy document (Haryana Sports and Physical Fitness Policy, 2015). Furthermore, rural areas in India do have ‘some limitations’ (!) on the number of coaches which would mean athletes have to actively seek out for coaches away from home, depending on availability of the coaches and limitations of the resources they might have to invest in sport. Similarly, athletes and even parents, especially those that have been exposed to foreign coaches, would really chase quality coaches and might keep changing coaches unless they are happy (Kangkan, 2017; Paul, 2020; Gundra, 2020).

Unfortunately, this perception that sport is not a viable career was not only limited to coaches. The main motives for participation in sport for majority athletes were development as a person and personal achievement and satisfaction rather than an athletic career itself. Athletes from only five sports, badminton, tennis, football, netball, and volleyball, reported athletic career as a main motive for sport participation. Badminton and tennis have both enjoyed some international success which may have contributed to the increased participation and interest in the two sports (Acharya, 2019; Khaleej Times, 2019; Narayanan, 2017).

Football and volleyball too have gained significant popularity with the introduction of the ISL and the Pro Volleyball League which also brought in professionalism within both the sports (Bird, 2019; The Bridge Desk, 2020). Netball, however, has not enjoyed as much success as the other sports, but India hopes to popularise this sport within the country with increased participation at the international stage (DNA, 2010; Team Bridge, 2020).

Remarkably, even athletes from cricket did not report athletic career as their main motive for participation. This could however be because of the lack of opportunities that cricketers get to showcase their talent due to the immense following and high participation there is extensive competition (Veerappa, 2017). Although the introduction of the IPL seems to have had a positive impact on the opportunities cricket players receive, that too could be quite low considering the huge Indian population in general and the high participation in cricket. Overall, therefore, sport was still not viewed as a viable career to pursue by participants which was consistent with the conclusions previously highlighted in this thesis.

Perceptions about coaching practices and behaviours reported here were however not consistent with the conclusions highlighted previously. Although there was a difference in perceptions within national and state level, athletes generally reported positive perceptions about their coaches. The variables that were significantly different between national and state level athletes were the duration with their support staff, with national level athletes having spent less time with their support staff as opposed to state level athletes. Whereas, regarding coaching behaviours, national level athletes perceived their coaches as providing more support, using power to manipulate them to a larger extent compared to state level athletes (explored in more detail in 7.4.2) possessing enough expertise and understanding about sport sciences to facilitate performance enhancement to a greater extent as compared to state level athletes. There was also a significant difference in athletes' understanding of sport sciences at the national and state level. To summarise, there were inconsistencies with conclusions reported previously in the thesis regarding coaching and sport sciences. As both national and

state level athletes generally reported positive perceptions about their coaches, Section 7.5 will consider perceptions of both the groups of athletes as a single group against perceptions and conclusions reported in previous chapters.

## **7.5 Discussion**

The current study aimed to gain a wider picture about Indian sport to triangulate conclusions from previous chapters; a lack of sporting culture, a need to develop quality Indian coaches and a lack of sport science support. As specified in Section 7.4, a lack of sporting culture was consistent with previously outlined conclusions. The Union Sports Minister of India, Kiren Rijiju, whilst acknowledging the lack of sporting culture, also reinforced the importance of incorporating a stronger sporting culture to achieve excellence and thereby become a strong sport powerhouse (TOI, 2020a, 2020b). Although Rijiju highlighted improvements achieved by India in both competitive sport and mass participation with the introduction of the KIYG and the Fit India movement which has attracted more than 1.6 lakh schools to register for the initiative, the sporting culture is still considered to be poor in the country (TOI, 2020a). As identified in previous Chapters, however, a lack of role models could be contributing to only a small percentage of the population pursuing sports as a career (Around the rings, 2020; Nadaph, 2020). Sports such as badminton, shooting and football all have some great role models who could have contributed to the increased popularity and a perception that these sports could be pursued as a career. In fact, some successful former athletes even started their own academies and are now producing multiple successful international athletes (“Padukone - Dravid Centre,” n.d.; Venkat, 2020b).

Despite this success (although quite limited) achieved by different sports, however, there is a general agreement that India really needs to focus on coach development for it to really become a sporting power (Raj, 2018; Rasquinha, 2018; TOI, 2017). In fact, as outlined previously, Gopichand and other significant sportspersons in the country have highlighted that the Indian coaching system is the most un-evolved system and needs immediate attention

if India really wants to succeed at international sports (Kulkarni & Magotra, 2017).

Unfortunately, participants from this study did not report a need for coach development. In fact, athletes generally perceived their coaches positively and reported that their coaches have enough knowledge and expertise, engage in continuous development to facilitate performance enhancement of the athletes and themselves and possess enough knowledge about sport science support. Knowledge about sport science support was evidently contradicting previous conclusions which highlighted significant misconceptions about sport sciences (especially on part of the coaches) and limited use of sport sciences in the Indian sports field. Given the inconsistencies, it could either be a case of the administrator, government officials and coaches from Chapter 6, some significant Indian sportspersons and wider literature being incorrect, or the perceptions of participants reported here could be incorrect. Assuming that participants were actually correct and that Indian coaches are sufficiently knowledgeable, there still are only a handful of Indian athletes that have managed to succeed at the international level and there are also a huge number of foreign coaches that are hired to train Indian athletes (Sarkar, 2018). It is therefore more likely that the previously stated conclusions were more accurate and India does really need to focus on developing quality Indian coaches and increase use and knowledge of sport science support.

One of the main reasons for the inconsistencies in perceptions or even the failure of athletes to report their coaches not having enough knowledge and expertise could be the hierarchical structure prevalent in the Indian society. Generally, a collectivistic society like India tends to be more hierarchical with Indians usually arranging things, persons, relationships, and ideas hierarchically. In fact, India has a strong guru-shishya (teacher-student) relationship wherein there is a degree of hierarchy with the guru taking up the role of a boss whereas the shishya being the subordinate. The guru is believed to guide the shishya in his or her journey of self-discovery and mastery by developing skills, enhancing knowledge and understanding oneself (Kumar & Sankaran, 2007; Ramaswami & Dreher, 2010). The

guru, according to traditional Indian culture, is in fact considered indispensable as he/she is the repository of people's ultimate knowledge and right to action (Mlecko, 1982). Guru-shishya relationship has therefore been considered in the least repressive or authoritarian (Vaidyanathan, 1989). Such an ingrained hierarchical and authoritarian culture might have contributed to the athletes in the current thesis not reporting negative things about their coaches.

As gurus or coaches in the current context are perceived to be the ultimate authority in regard to gaining knowledge, it is possible that athletes perceived their coaches as being knowledgeable and generally having positive traits that contribute to their performance enhancement. Consequently, with the traditional approach of gurus taking on an authoritarian role, athletes might have perceived them to be using their power to manipulate athletes. The administrators, government officials or even coaches themselves, however, were not really in a subordinate position and could therefore highlight the weaknesses within the current coaching field. Secondly, the exposure to foreign coaches seems to be limited to the high-performance Indian athletes, whereas the samples compared in this study included pre-elites which, as evident from Chapter 6, may not necessarily be exposed to necessary facilities, including foreign coaches. Interestingly, athletes that *have* had foreign exposure do seem to have an opinion that there is a wide gap between Indian and foreign coaches. Although, those that have not had a similar exposure would probably believe that their current Indian coaches have sufficient knowledge (Kangkan, 2017; Sportskeeda, 2014).

Furthermore, coaching in India across several sports is seen as old-fashioned and somewhat monotonous. As stated in Chapter 6, with constant support and development of athletes, a coach is also required to co-ordinate and manage other coaches, sport scientists and sports medicine personnel. Although, this limited understanding about a coach's role is not restricted to India, Indian coaches having limited knowledge about sport sciences could make it difficult for them to incorporate appropriate sport science support (Lebrun et al.,

2020). Foreign coaches are however, generally perceived to have more knowledge about sport sciences (Rasquinha, 2018). Consequently, NSFs that have only used Indian coaches to develop their athletes are now acknowledging that more updated inputs potentially from foreign coaches and experts are needed (Kannan, 2020). The perceptions of participants could therefore, either be because they were not exposed to foreign coaches and therefore view their Indian coaches to be the best or the guru-shishya hierarchy contributed to them not reporting their coaches in a negative light (Kangkan, 2017; Sportskeeda, 2014; Vaidyanathan, 1989).

## **7.6 Conclusion**

The current study aimed to explore a wider picture of Indian sport to triangulate the conclusions from the previous Chapters. Perceptions of participants were however not entirely consistent with conclusions reported previously. Although a lack of sporting culture was consistently reported, perceptions about coaching practices and behaviours and use and knowledge of sport science support were not consistent. Given the conclusions, either the athletes in Chapter 6 and the current Chapter were correct and Indian coaches are really of the required quality or administrators, government officials and coaches from Chapter 6 were more accurate. If the athletes' perceptions were more accurate and the Indian coaches are really of the reported quality, why does India still feel the need to hire foreign coaches and why are there only limited successful athletes in the country?

An embedded hierarchical structure in India was explored as a potential reason for the inconsistencies. With coaches assuming the role of 'gurus' or teachers, they are believed to have an authoritarian position over the athletes ('shishya' or students) (Vaidyanathan, 1989). Athletes, therefore, may generally report their coaches in a positive way. Secondly, exposure to foreign coaches is mainly restrictive to high-performance athletes who participate at the international level. The two main groups of athletes compared in the current study were, however, pre-elites, i.e., national and state level. As evident from Chapter 6, athletes struggle

to get even the basic facilities at the grassroots level or until they perform at the international level. It therefore might be possible that pre-elites had not been exposed to foreign coaches resulting in them potentially not knowing what the difference between foreign and Indian coaches is (Kangkan, 2017).

Generally, for reasons presented in Section 7.5 and Chapter 6, a gap in knowledge is believed to give foreign coaches a greater preference in India (Rasquinha, 2018; Sarkar, 2018). Despite the inconsistencies, a need to focus on developing quality Indian coaches and increase the use and knowledge of sport science support was thus reported. As coaches are responsible for incorporating sport science support and given that Indian coaches currently lack the required knowledge of sport sciences, prioritising development of quality Indian coaches that understand sport sciences was concluded. Furthermore, as the coaching system in India has been reported to be unevolved (Kulkarni & Magotra, 2017), and with coaching systems in other countries such as Australia and Canada being strong (Government of India, n.d., 2007), a need to develop a coaching system that would help produce quality Indian coaches was highlighted. Chapter 8, therefore explores ways to develop a coaching system which would contribute to having quality Indian coaches that match-up to the level of foreign coaches.

## Chapter 8

### **Ways forward for Indian coaching: Proposing a context specific coach development model for immediate deployment**

#### **8.1 Introduction**

##### ***8.1.1 The context and the issue to be investigated in this Chapter***

Coaches as evident from the various models presented in Chapter 6 and even the wider literature do play a significant role in athlete development. Consequently, coach education and development is an extensively researched area within sport coaching and is constantly gaining importance (e.g., Trudel & Gilbert, 2006). Countries are in fact continuously trying to implement coach education systems to ensure development of coaches in their country (e.g., Bepomoshchnov & Mikhno, 2017; Hämäläinen & Blomqvist, 2016). Interestingly, like India, countries hiring foreign coaches does seem to be a rather common practice given that each country is trying to achieve sporting success to ultimately avail the numerous benefits of sport (Houlihan & Zheng, 2013; Tan et al., 2019). Having home-grown coaches, however, does have a significant advantage. Realising this importance of home-grown coaches, Australia successfully adopted a contextually appropriate system from the English Football Association's coaching scheme to develop its own system (Hammond, 2001). In the Indian context (which involves even larger cultural dissonance than the Australia - England split), a gap in knowledge (either perceived or real) between the Indian coaches and their foreign counterparts has been highlighted (Kulkarni & Magotra, 2017; Rasquinha, 2018). Despite this criticism about Indian coaches, however, there was acknowledgement that with appropriate training, Indian coaches could be as good as foreign coaches (TOI, 2009; Noronha, 2018). Consequently, even if hiring foreign coaches has resulted in some sporting success at the international level, India still needs to focus on developing its own home-grown coaches as these coaches would really understand the sport

system and the various cultures a lot better than foreign coaches (Firstpost, 2019; Rasquinha, 2018; Sarkar, 2018).

To develop quality coaches, however, a strong coaching system would be required. The Indian coaching system has however been reported to be “extremely unevolved” (Kulkarni & Magotra, 2017). Considering the complex composition of India (Chelladurai et al., 2011), it is particularly true that a generic coaching system blueprint cannot be adopted from another country (De Bosscher et al., 2015) as this might be particularly challenging. A need for India to develop its own coaching system was therefore highlighted which is the focus of the current Chapter.

### ***8.1.2 Objectives of the Chapter***

Given the need for India to focus on developing quality home-grown coaches and the lack of an India-specific coaching system, the current Chapter had the following two objectives,

- i. To explore current Indian coaching field against the wider coach education literature, and;
- ii. To propose a model aimed at developing quality home-grown coaches within the Indian context

## **8.2 Overview of the current coaching field in India**

The Indian coaching field, as outlined in Chapter 6, seems to have four main issues - financial support, debate about experienced versus qualified coaches, knowledge possessed by Indian coaches and an unevolved coaching system. In India, pursuing sport is not really considered to be a viable career option for athletes (Chandran, 2016) which, unfortunately, is also true for Indian coaches (TOI, 2014). With majority sports hiring foreign coaches in India, the home-grown coaches are left with minimal salaries in most cases, thereby making the coaching field even less lucrative for the population. Developing Indian coaches that match up to the level and quality of their foreign counterparts was however identified as one

way that might contribute to Indian coaches getting more jobs and better salaries making the coaching field more lucrative for Indians (Rasquinha, 2018; Sarkar, 2018). Crucially, as Indian coaches with an understanding of both the realities of the sporting field and the various cultures prevalent in the country could make a greater positive difference to the development of athletes, foreign coaches still seem to be the preferred option. Indeed, there seems to be a common feeling that ‘foreigners know better’ a much anecdotal evidence which supports this existence of a preference against Indian coaches. Such a preference for foreign coaches, as outlined previously, has also been evident in other countries. For example, Mexico hires foreign coaches to train high performance athletes and their amateur coaches (Salazar et al., 2017). China, one of the top sporting countries in the world is another country that continues to hire foreign coaches to train their athletes and coaches (Chapter 5 - Connor, 2016; Tan et al., 2019); a trend that has only been exacerbated by the impending Winter Olympics (due in Beijing, 2022). The problem that foreigners know better is therefore not unique to India. Countries however do realise that foreign coaches have some limitations. For example, foreign coaches hired in Chinese football were reported to have weaknesses and problems in their personalities, training, competition command or even understanding of the level of football players in China which ultimately resulted in very limited progress of Chinese football (Lin, Yu Zhang, & Xu, 2019). Consequently, these international trends, with the identified limitations of foreign coaches do highlight the need to ensure, market and promote the strengths of the home-grown products (Hammond, 2001; Sarkar, 2018).

In regard to India, as highlighted previously, the preference for foreign coaches, seems, at least in part, to be due to the gap in knowledge (whether actual or perceived) between home-grown coaches and their foreign counterparts (Rasquinha, 2018). If genuine, the gap in knowledge could potentially be because of weaknesses within the coach education programmes currently prevalent in the country. Primarily, in India there are two routes of becoming a coach. First is by gaining formal education which is often viewed as being

outdated, thus lowering the value of the coaches who undertake this. For example, as highlighted in Chapter 6, coaches from athletics completing the NIS course usually failed the most basic IAAF level 1 course. The quality of coaches coming out of formal pathways are therefore often not perceived to be the best (Business Standard News, 2019). Aside from this, many NSFs have introduced their own sport-specific levels which, being inspired from existing international coach qualifications, are all competency-based. These competency-based qualifications essentially require coaches to prove they have gained the required skills to coach their athletes. This route continues despite increasingly critical research stressing the weaknesses inherent in the approach (e.g., Collins, Burke, Martindale, & Cruickshank, 2014).

With the quality of formal education in India being questioned, however, the more preferred alternative route to becoming a coach is if you have been/are an athlete. Former athletes in India are in fact believed to be more successful coaches given their prior knowledge about the sport. This certainly chimes with trends elsewhere in the world where schemes are designed and pushed to recruit and hothouse former athletes towards coaching appointments (e.g., ECAS for the Premier league or current UK Sport initiatives). Of course, former athletes also have a major disadvantage as they only get a partial view of coaching (PJDM - Abraham & Collins, 2011), focused largely on their own personal pathway. Consequently, it is not about the point of entry into coaching, but rather about the quality of the coach as an individual (Knowles et al., 2005). The competency-based approaches to coach education and the preference for former athletes as coaches therefore have both been criticised within the coach education field (Collins et al., 2014; Rynne, 2014; Nash et al., 2012; Abraham & Collins, 2011; Côté & Gilbert, 2009). India therefore might need to explore alternative approaches to coach education which would enable it to produce quality home-grown coaches that could match up to (or potentially exceed) the level and quality of foreign coaches. Furthermore, this match would need to be both actual *and* perceived, necessitating the active marketing of the new Indian coach milieu. Consequently, to propose

an ideal India-specific coaching model, situating the Indian coaching field against the wider coach education and development literature was important which will now be explored in the following Section.

### **8.3 Situating the current Indian coaching field against wider coach education literature**

#### ***8.3.1 Why is there a need to target ‘quality’ coaches?***

Given the conclusions from Chapter 6 and the impact which sporting role models have been shown to exert on the wider population in India, developing coaches able to develop world-class athletes would be a valuable and important evolution. Currently, India feels the need to hire foreign coaches to train Indian athletes because of the relatively poor quality of Indian coaches (Raj, 2018). Furthermore, as highlighted in Section 6.2, home-grown coaches have a considerable advantage over their foreign counterparts (Sarkar, 2018). Finally, given India’s complex composition, coaches that are culturally appropriate and generally more adaptable, i.e., who can adjust to the varying contexts, coach in a context dependent manner would be extremely important. Consequently, and reflecting on the coaching literature explored in Chapter 2, developing quality coaches by adopting an expertise-based approach was identified as a key element to ensure the homegrown coaches could then develop world-class athletes would be an effective way forward for the country.

#### ***8.3.2 Developing ‘quality’ coaching in India: Adopting an expertise-based approach***

As outlined in previous Sections, coach education, as a largely formal process has its limitations. In fact, to date, coaching research has been increasingly role-specific but arguably too prescriptive, holistic but lacking a genuine and evidence-based mechanism for development (cf. Nash et al., 2012). This could possibly explain the lack of reference to any big picture plan or model in coach development initiatives in sporting countries such as the USA, Canada, and the UK. Notably, within the UK and Canada coaching associations have based their coach development programmes on a competency-based approach. While competencies are very important, especially at the initial stages and for ‘absolute’ elements of

practice, being derived from practical job analyses makes them primarily functional, simplistic, and possessing limited applicability to the development and training of professionals. Indeed, focusing on such competency-based models provides an apparently comprehensive yet ultimately deceptive portrayal of practice requirements (Collins et al., 2014). In fact, the coaching literature often argues that coaching qualifications provide an understanding of sport sciences and technical and tactical awareness of their sport but develop little appreciation of the pedagogical and socio-cultural aspects relating to the coach's role in the coaching process.

As highlighted above, coaches are often subjected to a standardised curriculum which prioritises equipping them with a 'toolbox' of professional knowledge with an aim to ensure they have the required strategies to overcome typical coaching dilemmas in the coaching process. Although, as coaching occurs in a complex and multifaceted environment, coaches are required to be flexible and adapt to the diversity inherent in the coaching process. Consequently, a more expertise-based system of training and accreditation has been proposed. This expertise-based approach is believed to have significant advantages, especially in situations where behavioural adaptability is important (Collins et al., 2014; Nash et al., 2012). Therefore, to ensure coaches are flexible and receptive to alternative ways of responding to specific situations, the 'it depends on the context' perspective to coaching has gained popularity over the more traditional notion of 'right versus wrong' in coaching (Collins et al., 2014; Nelson, Cushion, & Potrac, 2006).

The 'it depends' outcomes of carefully considered critical reflection are often inherently at odds with the 'do it this way to pass' specificity of competency assessments. At least, how they are currently employed in many sports settings (Collins et al., 2014). This 'it depends' approach essentially encourages coaches to move away from a 'learn-drill-do' approach to a more expertise-based approach wherein the *whys/why nots* of coaching are focused on rather than simply understanding the *whats* of coaching (Collins et al., 2014; Nash

et al., 2012). Understanding the ‘why’ coaches do things a particular way is especially important when considering that coaching occurs in multiple and complex contexts. These contexts may vary for different sports and/or cultures, meaning it is crucial for coaches to be adaptable and culturally sensitive. Specific reference to underpinning principles would be required to increase coaches’ ability to make judgements and adapt in different situations to that presented as test environments. The expertise-based approach also promotes a concept that coaching is not a behaviour to be copied but rather, a cognitive decision-making skill to be taught. An elevation in the standards and reputation of coaching as also efficacy of their interactions, therefore, does require a greater emphasis on expertise than currently afforded (Collins et al., 2014). Relevant to this thesis, such an approach will equip coaches with the capacity to address diverse cultural, social and personal profiles; exactly what my research shows is needed in the Indian context.

Research attempting to define coaching expertise has mainly done so through a set of established behaviours or skills which coaches are required to have. Although behavioural observation still has a great deal to offer, it is only so with a significantly greater consideration of the underpinnings, precursors and logic surrounding it that it can be really impactful (Abraham, Collins, Smethurst, & Collins, 1997). In short, a greater consideration of *why* certain options are taken over merely considering *what* is done. Recent research in the area of coaching practice and development has, therefore, moved away from what expert coaches do and how they should do it towards an exploration of why they do it in that particular way (e.g., Collins & Collins, 2020). Simply emphasising whether or not an individual is competent patently neglects the essential subtleties of executional decision making and emphasising on the ‘what’ instead of the ‘why’. In short, this represents satisfaction of a minimum rather than the far more desirable expert standard. Consequently, promoting an expertise-based approach to coach education seems to be important in developing coaches that really understand the rationale for doing a particular thing as

opposed to simply understanding what to do. This inherent need for rationale, especially taken together with India's complex composition and multiple cultures, religions and languages, makes it important for coaches in India to know the theoretical underpinnings of coaching practices whilst also being adaptable and culturally sensitive (Chelladurai et al., 2011; Collins et al., 2014; Nash et al., 2012). Consequently, India needs to focus on developing expert rather than competent coaches.

### ***8.3.3 What would develop 'quality' coaches – Formal or informal education?***

Coaching is undeniably a complex process, although coaches and what they do still remains at the epicentre of the process. Consequently, coach education and development has been considered the key to improved coaching. This emphasis on coach education and development, together with an increase in sport participation in general, resulted in coach education programmes being implemented worldwide. Despite this popularity, however, formal coach education qualifications have been criticised for the curriculum they offer (Milistetd et al., 2016; Nelson et al., 2006). Although these formal qualifications are established along rationalistic lines, they fail to develop necessary, intellectual and practical competencies such as independence and creative thinking skills in relation to meaning making and problem solving. In fact, this rational approach has been criticised for an inherent problem wherein learning becomes decontextualised, resulting in deskilling of the practitioner in terms of cognitive and human interactions, i.e., development of two-dimensional coaches driven by mechanistic considerations who are unable to comprehend and consequently adapt to the dynamic human context (Cushion et al., 2012). Coaches often have to function in multi-faceted environments where, problems of the real-world do not present themselves to practitioners as well-formed structures. In fact, they do not present themselves as problems at all but as messy, indeterminate situations (Schön, 1987). Furthermore, financial and logistical concerns such as cost, location, timing, a lack of context-specific relevance to course content and negative experiences with the consistency

and quality of delivery and perceived lack of support from coach educators and other agencies were also highlighted as potential criticisms of formal coach education (Allen & Shaw, 2009; Stoszkowski & Collins, 2014). These criticisms are of particular relevance in India. For instance, as the financial assistance provided to coaches is quite low, they may find it hard to attain formal qualifications. Similarly, with India being a huge country, reaching out to a majority population would generally be very difficult.

Given these limitations of formal coach education qualifications, both epistemological and pragmatic, coaching experience and observing other coaches are considered to be primary sources of knowledge within the coaching field. In fact, collective understanding and shared meaning of the occupational culture of coaching are believed to best develop by observing the behaviour of more experienced coaches during practice and competitions then questioning them so as to understand the reasons underlying the actions taken (cf. Collins & Kapur, 2014; Collins, Seely Brown, & Holum, 1991). Consequently, a new coach is believed to learn through ongoing interactions in practical coaching context and different informal sources.

In contrast, technical aspects of coaching and the coaching culture, regardless of the method of entry into coaching, are often considered to be acquired through merely observing and listening to more experienced coaches (Cushion et al., 2012). Although coaches need a range of practical and cognitive skills to enable them to construct and question knowledge and connect coaching to a broader sociocultural context, coaching courses reinforce this image of the coach as a technician. Consequently, this view suggests that a coach whilst requiring a high degree of skill, would only need to simply and uncritically transmit knowledge. In fact, coach qualifications are believed to often fragment the process into specific components with gold standards or perceived notions of best practice of coaching to be achieved for each component. Unfortunately, this neither designates context nor prepares

coaches for context, resulting in a lack of perceived fit between coach education and practical needs that then weakens the impact of coach education.

#### ***8.3.4 How to develop a 'quality' coach?***

**What could formal coach education really offer?** Despite the above-mentioned criticisms, formal education is still believed to play a major role in coach development (Abraham, Collins, & Martindale, 2006) as failure to consider the theory and mechanisms of coaching might lead to a copy-paste learning (Olsson, Cruickshank, & Collins, 2017). Furthermore, along with the previously mentioned disadvantage regarding crucial decision making, former athletes have another limitation. Without good reflective and critical skills the experience former athletes have will not be applied effectively as a coach even though their experience could potentially be very useful in providing relevant knowledge and experience (Nash et al., 2012).

Consequently, coach education courses have been encouraged to be less concerned with guarding old ideas and instead explore new knowledge and ways of thinking to develop coaches that are able to think critically and also apply their knowledge in different contexts. Cushion et al. (2012) propose a model of critical thinking that would help coaches develop their own processual expert toolbox as professionals and thereby not blindly following generic or copy the practice of those they observe. Furthermore, coach educators have been encouraged to structure learning around practical, contextualised coaching experience and have practitioners reflect upon it. This would allow the learner to construct, implement and evaluate strategies that attempt to overcome dilemmas specific to their complex coaching process and practice (Nelson & Cushion, 2006). As important additions to this, however, the cognitive apprenticeship ideas presented above are essential if the coach is to be truly conscious of, and adaptable to, the psychosocial challenges of a complex context such as India!

In their attempt to define coaching effectiveness and expertise, Côté and Gilbert (2009) highlighted extensive knowledge as a primary characteristic of those who become expert coaches. The structure of this expert knowledge includes various schemas under which coaches' knowledge may be organised. Abraham et al. (2006) suggested a schematic of coaches' knowledge that included declarative and procedural knowledge, which was built on three sources of knowledge: sport-specific knowledge, pedagogy (communication and skill acquisition) and the 'sciences of coaching' (i.e., 'ologies'). Trudel and Gilbert (2006) added to this by identifying coaching theories as another important source of knowledge for coaches. Simply gaining knowledge in each of these areas, however, is not sufficient. Coaches require relevant experience in applying this knowledge within varied coaching environments (Nash et al., 2012).

**What other forms of coach education can offer?** Indian coaches, as outlined in previous Chapters have been criticised for a lack of continuous upgradation of their knowledge. As much of the coaches' development seems to come through serendipitous means such as reading books, encounters with sport scientists, other coaches and experiences outside sport, encouraging coaches to engage in Continuous Professional Development (CPD) is important (Abraham et al., 2006; Stoszkowski & Collins, 2014). These traditional forms of CPD however, generally take place at specific times and usually occur off-site with minimal follow-up. These traditional CPDs are, therefore, considered to be ineffective as they only offer a little opportunity or support to enable teachers to integrate new learning with practice. On the contrary, reform types of CPD are generally integrated into practice which make them easier to sustain over time and crucially are likely to result in better connections between experience, new learning and existing practice. Despite these criticisms of the traditional forms of CPD, coach development could still potentially be understood as an idiosyncratic process of learning that occurs over a prolonged period and acknowledges different educational needs throughout the coach's career (Milistetd et al., 2016).

Consequently, staying open to these external ‘encouragements’ seems to be an important feature of progress at the top end of coaching (Collins, Abraham & Collins, 2012).

Considering the significant importance given to experience and the observation of other coaches, coach education and CPD can effectively use mentoring and critical reflection to situate learning within specific contexts. Mentoring in its current form, however, seems to be largely unstructured, informal and uneven in terms of the quality and outcome, uncritical in style and seems to reproduce the existing culture, power relations and more importantly existing coaching practices. Consequently, some suggest that a more formalised mentoring programme might be a worthwhile addition to coach development (Cushion, Armour, & Jones, 2003). The effectiveness of a formalised and structured mentoring programme where mentors are selected, accredited and to a certain extent imposed on coaches, however, has been questioned. Consequently, importance given to mentoring and its implementation is very different in various countries of the world. For example, in Finland, only about 43% coaches reported engaging in mentoring compared to other forms of learning such as formal education opportunities (80%). Whereas half of the coaches from the UK reported having a mentor or at least having access to a mentor if they needed one. In fact, coaches in the UK also reported feeling confident and competent if they have either one coaching qualification or if they receive support from a coaching mentor (UK Coaching, 2019).

Despite these differences, coaches still seem to consider formalised and structured mentoring as the most important factor in their development (Cushion et al., 2003; Cassidy & Rossi, 2006). In fact, mentoring is believed to be beneficial not just for the apprentices but also for the mentors as they are able to expand and diversify their own learning experiences when working with apprentices. Including supervised field experiences throughout the coach education courses (potentially in different contexts), might help coaches explore differences, make mistakes, reflect and learn from them and then try it again. Once again, the cognitive apprenticeship ideas are essential. Mentoring in this form would help coaches engage with

multiple opportunities to test and refine knowledge and skills, make coaching judgements that are meaningful within their particular situation and understand the pragmatic constraints of coaching context (Cushion et al., 2003). Given the benefits of mentoring and its general hierarchical structure, it was found to be of particular relevance to the Indian context with its strong guru-shishya relationship (Chapter 7 - Mlecko, 1982; Raina, 2002).

Importantly, however, with such a strong guru-shishya culture, India would particularly need to be careful about choosing the right mentor (Maclean & Lorimer, 2016) as the behaviours and practices of mentors are believed to influence the behaviours and practices of the learners (Nelson et al., 2006). For instance, mentors that restrain from prescribing a 'right' way of coaching and promote the 'it depends' approach would be more ideal given that coaches are required to be flexible and be able to adapt to the inherent diversity in the complex coaching process (Collins et al., 2014; Nelson et al., 2006). Furthermore, mentors that encourage and emphasis appropriate critical reflection would be required to develop quality Indian coaches (Cassidy et al., 2009; Schön, 1987).

Finally, as coaches are social beings operating in a social environment, knowledge for them seems to be socially constituted, socially mediated and open ended. Given the importance of experiential knowledge and informal education, an element of socialising within a subculture with a personal set of coaching views emerging from observation of and interaction with existing coaches of 'how things should be done' seems inherent in the process of learning how to coach (Cushion et al., 2012). In fact, and in contrast to such a prescriptive model, formulation of Communities of Practice (CoP) led by coach educators promoting peer assessment and facilitating the sharing of information, experience and resources could help assist reflective processes (Nelson & Cushion, 2006).

To summarise, given the four issues within the Indian coaching field, developing quality coaches with an emphasis on critical reflection (Schön, 1987; Cassidy et al., 2009; Nelson & Cushion, 2006), an expertise-based approach as opposed a pure competency-based

approach (Collins et al., 2014; Nash et al., 2012) and incorporating a combination of formal and informal methods within the coach education system would be important (Mallett, Trudel, Lyle, & Rynne, 2009; Nelson et al., 2006; Cushion et al., 2012). Finally, CoP, CPD and mentoring were also considered to be important ways contributing to coach development (Cassidy & Rossi, 2006; Cushion et al., 2012; Olsson et al., 2017). Having situated the Indian coaching field within the wider coach education literature and considering the need to develop a coaching system for the Indian context, the following Section will explore a coach development model for implementation in India.

#### **8.4 A coach development model for the Indian context**

Given that India potentially cannot simply copy another country's coaching system, a context specific model is now proposed based on the wider literature and India-specific factors outlined in Section 8.3. First, in regard to structure, as mentioned in Chapter 4, the NSFs were encouraged to develop LTDP as 4-year cycles (Government of India, n.d.-b) and as many other countries use a similar 4-year cycle, a Quadrennial Planning Process (QPP) was considered (c.f. Green & Houlihan, 2005). Consequently, three quadrennials were proposed, with a specific and relevant timeline for sports appearing only in the Olympic, Commonwealth and Asian Games. With adjustment, this quadrennial approach could also be fitted to the FIFA World Cup. A total of four agendas were split between the three quadrennials: *market what good coaching looks like, redefining the role of foreign coaches, modified education pathway for India, promote newly developed Indian coaches and phase out the foreign coaches*. Furthermore, to achieve these agendas, as mentioned in Chapter 5, an attempt was made to explore how other countries may have potentially achieved similar agendas. Relevant reference to other countries' initiatives has therefore been made throughout this Section. Finally, the reader should note that, given its significance, the model specifically targets development of 'quality' coaches (Cassidy et al., 2009; Nelson & Cushion, 2006; Schön, 1983).

I, however, did acknowledge various concerns with this quadrennial structure. A three quadrennial structure could in fact be too long to measure the impact the model may produce. Furthermore, as highlighted by Henry et al., (2020), a more useful approach to evaluate sporting countries would be to cluster them into appropriate performance brackets and compare them with similar sporting profiles. As mentioned in Chapter 1, although India's performance is very limited at the Olympics (Olympic Channel, 2020b), performance at the Commonwealth and Asian Games has improved in the past few years with 66 medals and an overall third rank and 69 medals and an overall eighth rank at the 2018 Commonwealth and Asian Games respectively (Sportskeeda, n.d.; TOI, n.d.). Consequently, one option would be a phased model wherein each phase would be either a 2- or 3-year cycle which would essentially be based on development towards the Commonwealth Games, Asian Games and World Championships to ensure India gets closer to the top sporting countries in these major events. Alternatively, another consideration was implementing a quadrennial cycle with Commonwealth Games, Asian Games and the World Championships used as evaluation points wherein the agendas would work towards these events and their success would be monitored after these games. The proposed model is presented in Table 8.1.

Table 8.1: Proposed model for developing quality coaches in India

Proposed Timelines	Agendas
<p><b>Phase 1</b></p> <p><b>4-year cycle</b></p> <p>1. Olympic sports Timeline: 2021 to 2024</p> <p><b>2- or 3-year cycle or evaluation points</b></p> <p>2. Commonwealth sports Timeline: 2022 to 2026</p> <p>3. Asian Games Timeline: 2022 to 2026</p> <p>4. World Championships Timeline: Sport specific</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Market ‘what good coaching looks like’</b></p> <p>A) <u>The four pillars of coaching</u></p> <p>i.Knowledge ii.Experience iii.Adaptability iv.Cultural Appropriateness</p> <p>B) <u>Adopt an expertise-based approach to coach development</u></p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Redefine role of foreign coaches</b></p> <p>A) <u>Immediate plan</u> Provide cultural sensitivity training to foreign coaches</p> <p>B) <u>Apprenticeship programme – Step one</u></p> <p>i.Hire foreign coaches to train Indian coaches ii.Foreign internships for Indian coaches</p>
<p><b>Potential Pitfalls</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Deciding the best possible sporting body to implement the model</li> <li>- All concerned sporting bodies, agreeing to ‘what good coaching looks like’ (which could be challenging)</li> <li>- Accepting the changing role of foreign coaches from training Indian athletes to Indian coaches</li> <li>- Foreign coaches not encouraging an expertise-based approach and sticking to the competency-based approach in which they were trained</li> <li>- Foreign coaches agreeing to a limited contract time and diminishing ‘job security’</li> <li>- Arranging for foreign internships and also ensuring Indian coaches actually gain something from them</li> <li>- Need to evaluate, monitor, and review implementation of all initiatives to ensure successful implementation of the two main agendas</li> <li>- Financial and logistical limitations impacting the successful implementation of the agendas</li> </ul>

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Phase 2</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>4-year cycle</b></p> <p>1. Olympic sports Timeline: 2024 to 2028</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>2- or 3-year cycle or evaluation points</b></p> <p>2. Commonwealth sports Timeline: 2026 to 2030</p> <p>3. Asian Games Timeline: 2026 to 2030</p> <p>4. World Championships Timeline: Sport specific</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Modified education pathway</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Based on a logically based blend of three learning styles – Pedagogy, Andragogy, Heutagogy</p> <p><i>A) <u>Structure of education pathway</u></i> Appropriate (rather than preferred) combination of formal and informal education</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;"><i>Formal education</i></td> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;"><i>Informal education</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;">           i. Content of coach education              a. Coaching theories              b. Sport-specific knowledge              c. Pedagogy              d. Coach ‘Ologies (e.g., sport psychology)              e. Conditionality of knowledge         </td> <td style="vertical-align: top;">           i. Apprenticeship programme – Step two            Promote newly developed Indian coaches and begin to phase out foreign coaches            ii. Increased experience opportunities            Voluntary and/or paid internships or placements throughout the education pathway         </td> </tr> </table> <p><i>B) <u>Other initiatives (Nonformal education)</u></i>            i. Continuous Professional Development (CPD)            ii. Communities of Practice (CoP)/Knowledge sharing platforms            iii. Promoting conditionality as a principle</p>	<i>Formal education</i>	<i>Informal education</i>	i. Content of coach education a. Coaching theories b. Sport-specific knowledge c. Pedagogy d. Coach ‘Ologies (e.g., sport psychology) e. Conditionality of knowledge	i. Apprenticeship programme – Step two Promote newly developed Indian coaches and begin to phase out foreign coaches ii. Increased experience opportunities Voluntary and/or paid internships or placements throughout the education pathway
<i>Formal education</i>	<i>Informal education</i>				
i. Content of coach education a. Coaching theories b. Sport-specific knowledge c. Pedagogy d. Coach ‘Ologies (e.g., sport psychology) e. Conditionality of knowledge	i. Apprenticeship programme – Step two Promote newly developed Indian coaches and begin to phase out foreign coaches ii. Increased experience opportunities Voluntary and/or paid internships or placements throughout the education pathway				
<p><b>Potential Pitfalls</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Failure to implement initiatives in Phase 1</li> <li>- Education structure optimally incorporating the three learning styles at appropriate levels</li> <li>- Replacing the current strong preference for informal education with a combination of formal and informal education pathway</li> <li>- Indian population accepting Indian coaches over foreign coaches</li> <li>- Availability of internships and placements for aspiring coaches throughout the education pathway</li> <li>- Acceptance and consequent engagement in the process of CPD and CoP by coaches at all levels</li> <li>- Transitioning the coach development programmes by OGQ and the like as CPD courses</li> <li>- Evaluate, monitor, and review implementation of all initiatives to ensure successful implementation of the main agenda</li> </ul>				

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Phase 3</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>4-year cycle</b></p> <p>1. Olympic sports Timeline: 2028 to 2032</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>2- or 3-year cycle or evaluation points</b></p> <p>2. Commonwealth sports Timeline: 2030 to 2034</p> <p>3. Asian Games Timeline: 2030 to 2034</p> <p>4. World Championships Timeline: Sport specific</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Promote the newly developed Indian coaches and phase out the foreign coaches</b></p> <p><i>A) <u>Apprenticeship programme – Step three</u></i> Promote newly developed Indian coaches from Phase 1 &amp; 2 with minimal or no dependence on foreign coaches</p> <p><i>B) <u>Reward what you want</u></i> If you want to coach at ‘X’ level, you need ‘Y’ qualifications</p> <p><i>C) <u>Promote newly qualified Indian coaches as role models</u></i></p>
<p><b>Potential Pitfalls</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Failure to implement initiatives in Phase 1 &amp; 2</li> <li>- Newly developed Indian coaches, still being heavily dependent on foreign coaches</li> <li>- Coach hiring systems not following a reward what you want system</li> <li>- Qualified coaches, still following a competency-based approach rather than an expertise-based approach</li> <li>- Evaluate, monitor, and review implementation of all initiatives to ensure successful implementation of the two main agendas</li> </ul>

#### **8.4.1 Phase 1**

In phase one, two agendas were proposed which would need to be addressed simultaneously. The first was marketing ‘what good coaching looks like’ in the Indian context, specifically to all stakeholders (sporting bodies, coaches, athletes and the wider public). Given that I wanted to target development of ‘quality’ coaches, within this agenda, the two main aims to be promoted were encouraging India to adopt an expertise-based approach to coach development and promoting pillars of impactful coaching as outlined in Section 8.3 – knowledge, experience, adaptability and cultural appropriateness (Collins et al., 2014; Nash et al., 2012). In sum, the first agenda of the model included a need for India to

encourage an expertise-based approach to ensure Indian coaches match up to (and ideally exceed) the level and quality of the foreign coaches, be sufficiently experienced in applying their knowledge, be able to adapt to different context and be culturally appropriate (Collins et al., 2014; Nash et al., 2012). India could potentially look at USA's attempt to promote the ideal expectations from sport coaches. The USA introduced the National Standards for Sports Coaches to provide direction to coach educators, sport administrators, coaches, athletes and their families and the public regarding what to expect from sport coaches (Gano-Overway et al., 2019). Similarly, India could use mass media to promote the common understanding of 'what good coaching looks like' to coach educators, sport administrators, coaches, athletes and their families and the wider public, especially considering the impact media has on the population of a country and with the 2001 National Sports Policy emphasising the role of mass media in developing sport within the country (Chapter 4 - Government of India, n.d.).

The second agenda in phase one was redefining the role of foreign coaches in India to promote a reduced dependence on foreign coaches. Even with India hiring foreign coaches in nearly all sports (cf. Saha, 2019), successful Indian athletes at the international level are still limited (e.g., Dabholkar, 2020). As India is known to be a multi-cultural, multi-lingual and multi-religious country, one potential reason for the limited impact of foreign coaches could be that they might be struggling to adjust to the complex Indian context (Chelladurai et al., 2011). Consequently, as an immediate plan, exploiting social learning between Indian and foreign coaches was proposed through which the foreign coaches could be provided cultural sensitivity training to help them better adjust to the complex India context (cf. Stoszkowski & Collins, 2014). As a longer term plan, however, introducing a mentorship programme which would prioritise development of quality home-grown coaches was proposed (Hammond, 2001; Cassidy & Rossi, 2006).

Given that coaches place a significant importance on experience and the observation of other coaches, mentoring and critical reflection to situate learning within specific contexts

has been highlighted (Cushion et al., 2003). Accordingly, a mentorship programme was identified to be an important initiative to develop ‘quality’ coaches, *so long as* it avoids the directive power dynamics identified by Cushion et al. (2012). Within the apprenticeship/mentorship programme (Coaching Association of Canada, 2019; Olsson et al., 2017), foreign coaches would be hired to train Indian coaches rather than Indian athletes as, in reality, it is the coaches that train athletes and not the other way round. Furthermore, arranging foreign internships for Indian coaches could be another initiative which might in fact be easier to implement with the 2020 NEP’s aim of allowing top 100 foreign Universities to set up their campuses in India (Government of India, 2020). With other countries successfully engaging in such an apprenticeship programme, this initiative was proposed for the Indian market to reduce the perceived (or real) gap between Indian and foreign coaches (Salazar et al., 2017; Tan et al., 2019; UK Coaching, 2019).

To sum, the first phase of the programme was therefore aimed at revising the perceptions of what good coaching is and promoting an expertise-based approach to ensure India develops flexible, reflective and adaptable coaches that move away from the ‘learn-drill-do’ approach to a more ‘it depends on the context’ approach (Collins et al., 2014; Nash et al., 2012). Next, this phase was also aimed to be focused on introducing the idea that India needs to develop quality home-grown coaches rather than completely depend on foreign coaches.

#### **8.4.2 Phase 2**

The second phase considered slightly deeper systemic level changes by proposing a modified education pathway for India, the only agenda in this phase. The first initiative proposed within this agenda was the structure of the education pathway. This, as highlighted in Section 8.3, would be a combination of an emphasis on critical reflection (Schön, 1987), an expertise-based approach as opposed a pure competency-based approach (Collins et al., 2014; Nash et al., 2012) and incorporating a combination of formal and informal methods

(Mallett, Trudel, Lyle, & Rynne, 2009; Nelson et al., 2006). Furthermore, the content of formal education was proposed to include coaching theories, sport-specific knowledge, pedagogy and coach 'ologies, which have all been identified to be key elements for coach development (Abraham et al., 2006; Trudel & Gilbert, 2006). Next, informal education would mainly involve the second step of the apprenticeship programme introduced in phase one, whereby the newly developed Indian coaches will be promoted and the process of phasing out foreign coaches will begin. With coaches preferring to learn through informal self-directed methods rather than more formalised educational settings, one approach that seems to offer a perfect solution is the learner determining the learning path and being the major agent in his/her own learning. This process of self-determined learning by the learner is called heutagogy which is an extension of andragogy (i.e., the art and science of helping adult learners). Being sufficiently reflexive, mentees could become aware of the potential deficits in their current skills, knowledge and/or capabilities through interactions with their environment and devise their own strategies for bridging the gap (Stoszkowski & Collins, 2017). Consequently, given the lack of pedagogical interventions incorporated within the coach qualifications and the importance of learners/mentees being highly autonomous taking personal responsibility for their own development, the modified education pathway was proposed to be based on a logical blend of three different learning styles, pedagogy, andragogy and heutagogy (Milistetd et al., 2016; Nelson et al., 2006; Stoszkowski & Collins, 2017). For instance, Bachelors' or college degrees would still primarily be based on pedagogy principles which would then be replaced by andragogy and heutagogy principles as the coaches' progress through the education pathway. This essentially means that coaches would move from a system that is primarily guided or directed by their teachers/professors to a system where learning is primarily independent and they are responsible for their own development (McCarthy & Stoszkowski, 2018; Stoszkowski & Collins, 2017, 2018; Stoszkowski & McCarthy, 2018). Although at this stage India might still be dependent on

foreign coaches, the main aim in phase two would be start the process of developing ‘quality’ Indian coaches that are gaining increasing independence and also acquainting Indians with the idea of having good quality homegrown coaches. Furthermore, compulsory voluntary and/or paid internships or placements throughout the education pathway would be introduced to ensure aspiring coaches get maximum applied experience.

In regard to implementing an optimal combination of formal and informal education, India could potentially look at transferring policies from elsewhere (Dolowitz & Marsh, 2000). For example, the Russian coach education model is a combination of formal and informal education as coaches are required to have a certain degree or qualification and also specified amount of applied experience before they can move on to the next level of coach certification/qualification (Bespomoshchnov & Mikhno, 2017). The All India Football Federation (AIFF) seems to have adopted a similar combination and is very similar to the one used in Australia (Hammond, 2001). This system requires coaches to have certain formal qualifications and applied experience before they can move on to the next sport-specific level. Similarly, to guide (former) athletes on their journey to becoming a coach, India could look at UK Sport’s ‘athlete to coach’ programme (UK Sport, n.d).

Along with this structure of the education pathway, however, two other initiatives are proposed. Firstly, CPD to encourage Indian coaches to constantly engage in knowledge upgradation, a serious criticism of Indian coaches (Business Standard News, 2019) was proposed. For this, India could implement a compulsory renewal of coaching licences after a set amount of time: for example, in Russia it is every four years (Bespomoshchnov & Mikhno, 2017). India could also promote or introduce coaching courses conducted by private sports organisations such as the Olympic Gold Quest (OGQ) as CPD courses (Olympic Gold Quest, n.d.). Although including mentoring and critical reflection as part of these CPD courses would also be important (Collins et al., 2012; Cushion et al., 2003; Milistetd et al., 2016). Secondly, introducing CoPs for coaches to learn from each other and potentially other

support staff, throughout the education pathway would be important (Stoszkowski & Collins, 2014). For example, peer consultation groups could be introduced in the education pathway to give coaches a chance to engage in CoP and learn from other coaches or even the wider sport science personnel. Finally, the principle of conditionality, i.e., ‘it depends on the context’ was reinforced in this Phase (Collins et al., 2014)

### **8.4.3 Phase 3**

The last phase again had only one agenda which was to promote newly developed Indian coaches and phase out the foreign coaches. The first initiative in this was the final step of the apprenticeship programme. At this stage, India should have ideally reached a point where it no longer needs foreign coaches, and the newly developed Indian coaches can independently develop other Indian coaches. Secondly, India could follow a ‘reward what you want’ system whereby, all coach hiring bodies adhere to, “if you want to coach at X level, you need Y qualifications”. Promoting the qualifications required to coach at a particular level could be adopted, one, to ensure coaches know what level they need to get to and two, to motivate more coaches to undertake higher qualifications. Finally, promoting newly qualified Indian coaches as role models was proposed. For this, India could use an initiative that was implemented in Canada to promote women coaches. Canadian women coaches were encouraged to act as facilitators in coach education programmes (Callary, 2012).

To sum up, the proposed coaching model for India was guided by current research in the coaching field and modified to fit the Indian context. Unfortunately, I was aware that India could potentially encounter numerous pitfalls while trying to implement this model which are now discussed in the following Section.

### **8.5 Potential pitfalls to consider before implementing the proposed model**

To avoid the policy implementation and learning issues highlighted in Chapter 4, specific issues related to the newly proposed model would also need to be considered before

implementing it. First, as outlined in Chapter 4, India has already attempted to introduce numerous initiatives to improve the coaching field and provide quality coaching to Indian athletes. To therefore implement a new model, policy level decisions might need to be considered, for example, who would implement this model – State or Central government or what would happen to the current coach education initiatives and/or systems. Second, the structure would need to be given appropriate consideration, i.e., whether a quadrennial model should be used or a phased approach or a quadrennial model with Commonwealth Games, Asian Games and World Championships acting as evaluation points wherein the agendas would be developed towards these events and success of the agendas would be monitored after these games. Next, given that sport and politics seems to have a complex relationship in the country (Chapter 4), the concerned authorities accepting the proposed principles of coaching (four pillars of coaching and an expertise-based approach) might be a challenge. Moreover, implementation of initiatives such as reward what you want could also be challenging (McLeod et al., 2020).

The next consideration is regarding redefining the role of foreign coaches. To successfully achieve this, a few factors would need to be considered such as the Indian population and its current preference for foreign coaches. Unfortunately, at present there seems to be a strong preference for foreign coaches, with Indians believing that foreigners know better (Rasquinha, 2018). To replace such a belief however, would certainly take some time and serious effort from all concerned authorities (Sorcar et al., 2017). The population, therefore accepting a change in their role and consequent independence from them might be challenging. Similarly, foreign coaches accepting shorter-term contracts might be another issue that would need due consideration. Along with these two concerns, finding foreign coaches that follow an expertise-based approach as opposed to a competency-based approach would also be important. If mentors view coaching knowledge as concrete, owned by higher authorities, and easily measured by simple and isolated competencies - as is often suggested

by current formal coach education - then there is a clear danger that mentoring simply reinforces what sports already have (Olsson et al., 2017). Furthermore, managing to secure foreign internships for Indian coaches and finally Indian coaches agreeing to learning from fellow Indian coaches as opposed to foreign coaches would be the other concerns that would need to be tackled.

Next, although the need to revamp the education system has been identified by some significant Indian sports persons (Business Standard News, 2019), actually implementing those changes and ensuring India has a coherent, smoothly functioning education system that assures continuous supply of good quality coaches might be a challenge. At present, India is taking efforts to enhance the education provided to sports coaches by establishing sports Universities, but as outlined in previous Chapters, India seems to lack quality more than quantity (Business Standard News, 2019; Hindustan Times, 2018). To therefore get the authorities to focus more on the quality provided at the educational institutions as opposed to the quantity would be crucial. Similarly, convincing the population and key stakeholders that a combination of formal and informal education is a must rather than simply having both former athletes get into coaching without any formal education or coaches with only formal education. Furthermore, ensuring an optimal integration of the three learning styles (pedagogy, andragogy and heutagogy) at the appropriate levels, acceptance, and consequent engagement in CPD and CoPs and ensuring sufficient internships and placements are available for coaches throughout the education pathway would also need to be considered. For instance, coaches could feel uneasy to engage in CoP due to them being focused on rapid upward mobility (via impression management), them fearing being exposed in front of their peers or role models, them being particular staunch dualists (knowledge is either black or white, no room for shades of grey), them being easily impressionable (if X says so then it must be true) and finally a combination of all these four issues (Olsson et al., 2017). Another major barrier to having a coherent coaching system was individuals' lack of adaptability to

handle the incessant variation in their environment or the insight and professionalism to engage with critical debate around performer/athlete development (Webb, Collins, & Cruickshank, 2016).

Finally, and probably most importantly, lack of financial resources and logistical issues could potentially be major hinderances when implementing this model. For instance, as the coaching field is currently not very lucrative, Indian coaches might not find it worth investing in formal qualifications (Sarkar, 2018). With India being a vast country, reaching out to coaches from every part of the country might unfortunately be quite difficult. Finally, once India addresses these formulation issues, it would need to ensure that the current state of play is fully understood and all the necessary 'building blocks' or resources required for successful implementation are available. Similarly, ensuring the agendas are feasible would also be important (Chelladurai et al., 2011).

## **8.6 Summary and discussion**

The previously reported issues of a lack of financial support, debate about experienced versus qualified coaches, knowledge possessed by Indian coaches and an unevolved coaching system as the four issues within Indian coaching were explored against the wider coach education literature before proposing a coaching model specifically for the Indian context. The proposed model is aimed at developing coaches that not only understand what they need to coach but are also highly mindful of why they are doing or not doing a particular thing and what and how would their actions impact their athletes. For instance, as outlined in Chapter 7, participants perceived their coaches using power to manipulate them. Although a guru-shishya hierarchy is prevalent in India, if Indian coaches are aware of how and why their potential authoritarian behaviour is impacting the athletes, they could possibly modify their behaviour to have a greater positive impact on the athletes. Incorporating factors such as reflection and cognitive apprenticeship have therefore been proposed.

Coaches, given the complex and multifaceted environment that they need to function in, are required to be highly flexible and adaptable. This was specifically true in the Indian context as India is known to be a multi-cultural, multi-religious and multi-lingual country (Chelladurai et al., 2011). A need for India to therefore move away from the current competency-based approach to a more expertise-based approach which emphasises on the 'whys/why nots' of coaching rather than simply the 'whats' of coaching was highlighted. Next, although the wider literature highlights the importance of formal and informal education, India still seems to have a strong preference for coaches who have been former athletes and have gone through informal education instead of formal education. This, as identified throughout, could potentially be because of the relatively poor quality of formal coach education courses delivered in the country (Business Standard News, 2019). Although, the wider literature does emphasise the importance of formal education to avoid the problem of copy-and-paste learning which might be intensified if theory and mechanisms of coaching are not considered. Furthermore, formal education is also believed to contribute to the development of critical thinking skills which are considered to be important for a coach. To therefore overcome this issue, a modified education pathway has been proposed which would incorporate elements of formal and informal coach education (Abraham et al., 2006; Olsson et al., 2017). Furthermore, given the traditional guru-shishya culture in India and the importance placed on mentorship within the wider literature, the model proposed a three-step apprenticeship programme for India starting with foreign coaches training Indian coaches and finishing with Indian coaches being completely independent of foreign coaches (Callary, 2012; Coaching Association of Canada, 2019). This focus on developing Indian coaches, as highlighted, might contribute to making the coaching field more lucrative for Indians as Indian coaches might then be preferred over their foreign counterparts (Sarkar, 2018). For the proposed model to be successful, India would however need to specifically consider certain potential pitfalls it could face while implementing the model. For instance, the prevalence of

politics impacting the implementation of initiatives such as reward what you want and unwillingness of coaches to engage with CoPs (McLeod et al., 2020; Olsson et al., 2017).

## **8.7 Conclusion**

Even though this Chapter focused on proposing an India-specific coach development model, the fact that there were some inconsistent conclusions cannot be ignored. A need for triangulating data to obtain complementary evidence and a greater understanding of the previous findings was therefore identified (Creswell, 2009; Moran, Matthews & Kirby, 2011). Along with identifying whether developing quality coaches and a coaching system was really the most effective way forward for India, given the already emphasised policy implementation issues, I needed to test the feasibility of the model. Unfortunately, as policy implementation seems to be a particular issue, I was particularly interested in ensuring the same issues highlighted in Chapter 4 and 5, i.e., disconnect between policymakers and implementers, financial resources and appropriate knowledge could be avoided when implementing the current model (Maheshwari, 2003; Yadav, 2010). Given that the model was proposing ideas that do not seem to be very common in India, I was really interested to explore what the Indian population thought about the newly proposed ideas, most importantly, the focus on how to coach (i.e., prioritising *why/why not*s) rather than simply focusing on what to coach. Consequently, and given my pragmatic approach, the next Chapter focuses on exploring perceptions of the Indian population about the Indian coaching field in general and the perceptions of the model in specific.

## Chapter 9

### Is a model really required, and would it work?

#### Exploring the importance and feasibility with key stakeholders

#### 9.1 Introduction

*9.1.1 The context and the issue to be investigated in this Chapter* Despite the content of Chapter 8, given the contradictory conclusions from Chapter 6 and 7, I was really interested in triangulating data (Creswell, 2009; Moran et al., 2011). Furthermore, the issues outlined in the two policy Chapters could significantly impact the successful implementation of the proposed coach development model. Consequently, a decision to conduct another empirical study aimed at gathering rich, in-depth data to understand whether coach development is really the most effective way forward for Indian sport and secondly, the feasibility of the proposed model to reduce the chances of repeating policy implementation mistakes reported earlier.

#### *9.1.2 Consideration for participants*

As I was interested in unwrapping the coaching field and understanding the feasibility of the proposed model in a complex country, an ‘elite’ sample was identified to be the ideal option (Richards, 1996). Furthermore, given the already highlighted importance of incorporating bottom-up and top-down approaches, both policymakers and policy implementers needed to be included (DeLeon & DeLeon, 2002). Consequently, a conscious decision to include administrators involved with strategic decision making, coach educators and coaches coaching international-level athletes was taken.

Unfortunately, the pragmatic issues outlined in Chapter 6 were also applicable here, with the additional complication of the pandemic which essentially meant that I could not travel back to India to collect the data. Despite these limitations, my contacts in Indian sport acted as gatekeepers to further recruit participants (Browne, 2005; Sadler et al., 2010).

However, the accessibility of the ‘elite’ sample was affected due to the constantly changing pandemic situation and consequent changes in their schedules.

### ***9.1.3 Objectives of the chapter***

Given the aforementioned concerns about coach development and feasibility of the proposed model, this Chapter had the following three objectives,

- i. To contribute an empirically driven rich understanding of the current coaching field;
- ii. To explore whether developing quality coaches and a coaching system is the way forward for India, and;
- iii. To explore feasibility of the proposed model

## **9.2 Methodology**

### ***9.2.1 Participants***

As outlined in Section 9.1.2, a purposive ‘elite’ sample of high-level strategic decision makers, coach educators and coaches were selected (DeLeon & DeLeon, 2002; Richards, 1996). The demographics of all participants are highlighted in Table 9.1. The final sample included 13 participants from ten sports – two from athletics, three from tennis and one each from badminton, shooting, gymnastics, football, swimming, basketball, table tennis and judo. Similar to Chapter 6 and 7, a diverse range of sports in which India has a good record of achievement and/or are gaining popularity (e.g., Naik, 2020; Rayan, 2020) was included. With participants having multiple roles within Indian sport, they were divided into five main groups. Group one was participants (n=4) that were heads of their sporting associations and/or organisations at the time of the interviews. Group two included participants that were administrators and coaches coaching international-level athletes (n=3) whereas group three was administrators that were also coach educators (n=1) when the interviews were conducted. Group four included participants that were only coach educators (n=1) and finally, group five was coach educators that were also coaches (n=4) at the time of

the interviews. With these participants also being at the highest positions within their sport, were all classified as ‘elite’ (Richards, 1996).

Table 9.1: Participant Characteristics

<b>Group 1: Administrator</b>	
<b>Age range</b>	55-63
<b>Overview</b>	All four were either national or international level athletes before they got involved in administration. Two of them were coaches after they retired and before they got into administration
<b>Organisation/ Affiliations and roles</b>	All four held high-ranking positions in the Federations/Associations and/or organisations. One was the president at one of the NSF One was working with the government for development of the sport and also the director of a company responsible for promotion of that sport One was associated with various international bodies for the sport and the vice-president for one of the district associations One was the secretary of one of the state sport associations
<b>Group 2: Administrator and coach</b>	
<b>Age range</b>	36-60
<b>Overview</b>	All three participants were athletes before they got involved with coaching and administration
<b>Organisation/ Affiliations and roles</b>	One was the vice president for one of the state sport associations and a leading coach in the sport One was the general secretary for one of the state sport associations and a leading coach in the sport One was part of the committee for one of the state sport associations and a leading coach in the sport
<b>Group 3: Administrator and coach educator</b>	
<b>Age</b>	63
<b>Overview</b>	Participant was an athlete and a coach before getting into administration
<b>Organisation/ Affiliations and roles</b>	Was the secretary at one of the state sport associations and involved with the coach development committee within the sport
<b>Group 4: Coach educator</b>	
<b>Age</b>	36
<b>Overview</b>	Participant was an athlete and a coach before moving to a coach educator role
<b>Organisation/ Affiliations and roles</b>	Was the coach educator at one of the NSF
<b>Group 5: Coach educator and coach</b>	
<b>Age range</b>	55-65
<b>Overview</b>	All four participants were athletes before they got into coaching and coach education

<b>Organisation/ Affiliations and roles</b>	<p>One was a leading coach in the sport and part of one of the state coach education teams</p> <p>One was the deputy chief national coach and director of coach development</p> <p>One was a leading coach and part of one of the state coaching committees</p> <p>One was a leading coach and part of the coaching committee for the international body in the sport</p>
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### **9.2.2 Instrumentation**

Similar to Chapter 6, I was interested in obtaining practically meaningful data about the Indian coaching field and participants' views about the proposed model. Therefore, semi-structured interviews were used for data collection (Giacobbi et al., 2005; Gratton & Jones, 2010; Silverman, 2004; Streaan, 1998). Unfortunately, for this study I could not travel to India for conducting the interview due to the travel restrictions in place. Whilst this could have helped increase the sample size to the elimination of the financial and logistical concerns mentioned in Chapter 6, the constantly changing situation due to the pandemic created additional issues which did have an impact on the final sample.

The same procedure outlined in Chapter 6 was followed to develop the interview schedule (see Appendix E for full interview schedule). Unfortunately, for the same reasons, pilot interviews could not be conducted. Instead pre-pilot study inquiry and the interviewing the investigator approach was used, wherein my supervisory team were active participants (Chenail, 2011). The interview structure included questions guided by the aim to explore the current Indian coaching field and perceptions about the proposed model. For example, what the current coaching system in India is and perceptions about the solutions in the proposed model. Active involvement of the elite sample helped increase the validity of data. Furthermore, reassurance of anonymisation of data contributed to honest opinions from the participants (Richards, 1996). Finally, a decision to provide the interview in all three languages was taken. Consequently, a back-translation process was used with two

independent researchers replacing my supervisors and questions were finalised when we were happy with them (Tyupa, 2011).

### ***9.2.3 Procedure***

Prior to approaching the participants, the University ethics committee's approval was obtained. As mentioned in Section 7.1.2, participants were contacted through my contacts in India who then acted as gatekeepers to help recruit more participants. After initial contact and having read the information sheet, the proposed model, a paper highlighting the development of the model, a summary of the paper and consent form were emailed to each participant. Thereafter, a convenient time was chosen for the interview and, as specified earlier, all interviews were conducted on an online platform due to the pandemic. Interviews lasted approximately 40-60 minutes and were terminated once participants were found to be repeating themselves with no new information to provide (cf. Cotterill, 2018).

### ***9.2.4 Data analysis***

A procedure similar to the one used in Chapter 6 was employed for analysing data. Extending the Braun and Clarke (2006) six-phase thematic analysis, a deliberate reflexive approach was used. Steps incorporated in this Chapter were the same as those used earlier. For instance, transcribing the interviews (and translating where necessary), coding participants and incorporating a 'revise, retest, revise' approach. Reflecting qualitative innovations by Braun and colleagues (e.g., Braun & Clarke, 2019), raw data codes were compiled to identify shared meanings, followed by hierarchical COCs (Braun et al., 2018) to combine the identified SMUs. Finally, the team (me and my supervisory team) named and defined the COCs then finally, reviewed the structure before confirming it (Braun et al., 2018). For example, regarding the prevalence of foreign coaches in India, seven main factors were highlighted; pathway to coaching, current coach qualifications, limitations of the current coach education system, limitations of Indian coaches, India specific characteristics, lack of accountability and process of hiring coaches. Notably, the first three factors were related to

the coach education system and were therefore included in one SMU which was current coach education system. The next two were included in the characteristics of Indian coaches SMU, whereas the final two formed the final SMU which was professionalism in Indian sport. These three SMUs were part of one larger COC, limitations of the Indian coaching field (see Table 9.2).

### ***9.2.5 Trustworthiness of the data***

Considering that coding does not occur in an epistemological vacuum and the almost inevitable limitations outlined in Chapter 6, similar procedures to enhance the trustworthiness were used. Attempts were made to link research objectives, methods and findings to the available literature and a thick description about the Indian coaching field and perceptions about the proposed model gained was contextual, thereby highlighting coherence and credibility. Furthermore, my background, as outlined in the previous Chapters, placed me in a better position to build rapport with participants thereby contributing to the sincerity and truthfulness of the data. My supervisory teams' background also helped further enhance the sincerity and truthfulness of the data (Tracy, 2010).

Next, of all the 13 interviews, only one needed to be conducted in Marathi. Consequently, a back-translation process as mentioned in Chapter 6 was used to enhance the trustworthiness of the data. Conceptual translations were used in this Chapter as well and once the interview was translated one researcher fluent in Marathi back-translated it which was then reviewed by a third researcher fluent in Marathi (Chen & Boore, 2010; Tyupa, 2011). The accuracy of the data was further strengthened as no discrepancies were found between back-translation and the original text. Finally, I wanted to conduct member reflections (Smith & McGannon, 2018). Unfortunately, even after contacting participants multiple times to engage with reflection process the response rate was very poor and only one participant engaged.

## **9.3 Results**

Results are presented under four COCs; *wider Indian sports field, limitations of the Indian coaching field, overcoming limitations of the Indian coaching field* and *the proposed model*. These COCs were further divided into ten SMUs and 25 raw data codes (Table 9.2). Throughout this Section, exemplar quotes are represented as per the code number given to each participant (e.g., P1 for participant 1). Overall, perceptions of participants were largely in keeping with arguments presented in previous Chapters, although there were some exceptions which are covered in the later Sections.

Table 9.2: Results from thematic analysis

Central Organising Concept (COC)	Shared Meaning Units (SMUs)	Raw Data Codes	Exemplar Quotes
Wider Indian sports field	Sporting culture	Sport as a career (8)	“We are still a country where sports is not considered a profession”
		Coaching as a career (3)	“In India, coaching is not a profession yet”
	Medal-driven approach	Impact of sporting success (2)	“In India we are only behind medals”
	Systemic factors	Sport and education (3)	“You have to have sports as part of your education system”
		Sport and politics (3)	“Currently the politics within the NSFs has increased considerably”
		Lack of research (2)	“Research, there needs to be work on the research field”
		Focus on hardware versus liveware (9)	“In our sport according to me, out of the top 10 ranges in the world, four are in India”
Limitations of the Indian coaching field	Current coach education system	Pathway to coaching (13)	“There are two types of coaches, one are those that have cleared the NIS course and the others are those that were former athletes who picked up coaching”
		Current coach qualifications (13)	“We don’t have a professional system where a coach is trained in India”
		Limitations of current coach education system (12)	“NIS is basically you might say, they are still using really old literature”
	Characteristics of Indian coaches	Limitations of Indian coaches (7)	“We are great coaches technically, but there is no doubt that there is one area we are still lacking, it is the sport sciences”

		India specific characteristics (6)	“The Indian coach thinks he knows everything because he is a frog in a well and he does not know there is an ocean out there”
	Professionalism	Accountability (4)	“We have zero accountability in Indian sport right now”
		Process of hiring system (3)	“There is no fixed system right now. Every NSF has its own system...”
Overcoming limitations of the Indian coaching field	Dependence on foreign coaches	Need for foreign coaches (5)	“Foreign coaches that we bring, they are scientifically very very strong”
	Disadvantages of hiring foreign coaches	Financial impacts and restrictions (8)	“The compensation paid to the foreign coach and that paid to Indian coach is not even worth mentioning”
		Current hiring system (3)	“No foreign coach can come here and do miracles unless he is given a long-term contract”
		Characteristics impacting success (6)	“Some of the foreign coaches are not willing to transfer their knowledge”
		Role in India (3)	“Foreign coaches coming in and teaching coaches how to teach as opposed to teaching players how to play, I think that part is spot on”
The proposed model	Perceptions about the model	Acceptance of the model (11)	“Your model is in the right direction”
		Concerns about the model (2)	“All these solutions which you are trying to suggest are theoretical solutions”
	Implementation of the model	Systemic factors (10)	“How to make the decision makers understand the value of this?”
		Time limitations (3)	“Let’s say you select 32 coaches, but we do not know how many will continue in the system”
		Demographic factors (4)	“The volume itself is a major challenge for us”
		Focus of the model (6)	“So basically your model is more of quality oriented than quantity oriented. But initially you will also have to focus on a quantity model”

### 9.3.1 Wider Indian sports field

This COC focused on factors that impacted the overall sport field in India and included three SMUs, *sporting culture*, *medal-driven approach* and *systemic factors*.

**Sporting culture.** This SMU captured constructs highlighted as an issue for the Indian sport field in general and included two further raw data codes; *sports as a career* and *coaching as a career*.

First, a general lack of sporting culture in the country as compared to other countries was reported, *'We are still a country where sports is not considered a profession. To a large extent that has changed, but even today it is highly prevalent, far more prevalent than in the West (P7)'; 'Sports culture which you may have in many advanced countries that are doing well in sport, that kind of culture is still not developed in India'; 'We don't have culture, we don't have the history to follow (P4)'*. Furthermore, to emphasise the importance of history created by role models, P8 stated,

Indian badminton to a certain extent has changed, now we have Sindhu, before that we had Saina Nehwal so when we have people coming in like that who are successful at some level we have people coming into that sport so we need to start creating history.

Second, similar to the perceptions about pursuing sports as a career for athletes, participants also highlighted coaching not being considered: evident from the following quote, *'In India, coaching is not a profession yet'*. Whilst agreeing to this lack of sporting culture, P5 also highlighted that the situation has changed in certain sports, *'Basic challenge in India is that coaching is still not considered as a career except in games like cricket or football. But still there are many games which have not moved forward'*.

Similar to athletes, participants also emphasised the impact of role models in coaching, *'There are many Indian coaches that have produced a lot of Olympic medallists, so that has brought in confidence to many other coaches that this is becoming a good profession to follow (P5)'*. This perception that achieving international sporting success could help inculcate a stronger sporting culture and convince the population that sports is in fact a viable career option may have emphasised a medal-driven approach, the second factor impacting the Indian sports field.

**Medal-driven approach.** In India, as in many other countries, succeeding at the international level is considered a priority (Grix & Carmichael, 2012). In this regard, P11

confirmed the medal-driven approach whilst also highlighting a potential negative impact it might be having, *'In India we are only behind medals. Even under 12 girls and everybody wants medals, nobody is thinking of an Olympic medal. A long-term plan is missing in India'*. Similarly, P3 quoted, *'For me, it is the medal that is of value'*. P3 further quoted,

Why am I paying Coach A \$5000, Coach B \$10,000, because that's his price, but then with that price what did he deliver? He delivered six medals for me at the Commonwealth games. We got 12 medals; one coach delivered six of them. The other guy at \$5000 delivered two.

One of the probable reasons for this medal-driven funding could be the limited financial resources. P13 further reinforced this performance-based funding but also highlighted a potential issue with this by stating, *'It is a vicious circle, if you perform the government supports you but if the government doesn't support you, then how will you perform'*.

This significant focus on winning medals did seem to have a negative impact on athlete development which was accurately summarised by P1,

I know if we ask them to produce results, they will start overtraining the athletes. So, the challenges are early specialisation and overtraining which do not allow us to perform at the high-performance level or the world class level or Olympic level.

Notably, this issue of overtraining athletes was not reported just because of the medal-driven mindset but also due to certain characteristics of Indian coaches and the coaching system which will be outlined in more detail in Section 7.3.2. Aside from sporting culture and medal-driven approach, another factor impacting the overall sport field are the systemic level factors, the final SMU in this COC.

**Systemic factors.** This SMU further included four raw data codes; *sport and education, sport and politics, lack of research and focus on hardware versus liveware.*

First, participants emphasised the importance of the relationship between sport and education in the country, quoting, *'You have to have sports as a part of your education system, that is the basic thing'* (P4); *'I am of the opinion that every child should play some sport right from the school level'* (P13). Second, prevalence of politics within Indian sport was also highlighted, *'Currently, the politics within the Federations has increased considerably, there are less sport-minded people and more people who have other interests which does impact sports as a whole'* (P13); *'The problem in Indian sports is that guys at the head of the sports federations are mostly politicians'* (P10). Next, participants also highlighted a lack of research done on Indian sport, *'Research, there needs to be work done within the research field'* (P13); *'Sports research or sports data analysis have not developed in India as much as it should have'* (P9); *'There is not enough research done on the sport field'* (P10). Finally, participants also highlighted the availability of sufficient infrastructure as evident from the following quotes, *'We had a dearth of infrastructure, but I think now that has been corrected (P2)'; 'In our sport according to me, out of the top 10 ranges in the world, four are in India (P10)'*. P7, further confirmed this by quoting,

If you look 10-15 years back, yes, I would have said there are challenges of you know, we don't have enough infrastructure, we don't have enough good tennis balls, we don't have enough equipment but all that is out of the window now.

One of the participants, however, highlighted a lack of accessibility of the infrastructure, *'Coaches don't have spaces, they have to literally run around due to inadequate infrastructure. Like in table tennis they will just put tables in a classroom, there is no public infrastructure where coaches can go and coach'* (P5). Overall, despite inaccessible infrastructure being reported by one participant, there was general agreement that infrastructure is no longer an issue for India. However, one area that was identified as an

issue was the lack of quality coaches; '*The quality of coaching is fallen tremendously*' (P3) and a subsequent need to focus on coach development or the *liveware*,

We need to create our own coaches; we need to accept the fact that these are our coaches, okay if you think that they are not good enough, like if the players are not what do we do with them? We expose them, we give them training and we make them better. Similarly, we should make the coaches better so over a period of time they will become good (P5).

This need to develop coaches was especially emphasised for the grassroot level, '*It is very important that athletes get good coaches not at the performance level but at the lower level*' (P9);

In the formative years when they are learning, if the technique is not corrected it is very difficult for us to do that when they are training at the competitive level. The one who teach them in the beginning, the education should go to them. Unless those coaches are educated, we will not get a solid foundation in the system (P8).

Furthermore, P12 quoted,

What is missing is an education system: this is unstructured in India. Why do we need foreign coaches? It is because we do not have enough coaches at that level who can try to inculcate or transfer that philosophy right from grassroot to elite level. We are missing that pyramid or the pathway.

Along with an agreement about the need to prioritise coach education, participants also highlighted some limitations of the current Indian coaching field which formed the next COC.

### ***9.3.2 Limitations of the Indian coaching field***

This COC included three SMUs; *current coach education system, characteristics of Indian coaches and professionalism in Indian sport.*

**Current coach education system.** This SMU was further divided into three raw data codes; *pathway to coaching*, *current coach qualifications*, and *limitations of the current coach education system* and included details about the important factors prevalent within coach education systems.

First, in regard to the points of entry into coaching, a preference for experienced coaches, i.e., former athletes who have started coaching, rather than qualified coaches was reported, *'Those who are former athletes they are getting into coaching on a large scale. While they do not have formal education about the various coaching aspects, their expertise and experience is very useful in developing players at the international level'* (P4). Interestingly, however, participants still did acknowledge the importance of formal education as evident from the following quotes, *'It has to be both (practical and theory knowledge), there is no way you can say that I am a good table tennis player and I do not know theory, sorry you can't be a good coach'* (P5); *'Practical and theory should be done together'* (P13) and,

There is no question about the fact that there has to be formal education. So, I may be a fabulous tennis player, but when it comes to teaching tennis, I may not know anything about the subject as far as teaching is concerned (P7).

In fact, one of the positive consequences of coach education was highlighted to be an increased understanding of the workload to be given to athletes as evident from P1's quote,

Even parents enjoy the training our internationally qualified coaches are providing because athletes are not tired after training and can still study. If the athlete does a 2-3 hour training in the morning he/she will sleep in class, similarly if they do a 2-3 hour strenuous programme in the evening they will not be able to study.

Given this importance of formal education, former athletes were also given an opportunity to gain formal education as a way to provide post-career support to them, *'So we*

*are tying up with the government to make sure our athletes have education and have a degree so that then later in life, they can make themselves useful’.*

Along with an acknowledgement of the importance of formal coach education, a lack of coach development systems was highlighted as a potential factor contributing to the relatively poor quality of Indian coaches. *‘We don’t have a professional system where a coach is trained in India’* (P6); *‘There is no structured coach development system in India (P4)’*; *‘Till date there is no coach development system in India, I don’t think in any sport, forget shooting, in any sport apart from cricket’* (P10). Although a lack of structure was highlighted, participants still reported two main options for formal coach education currently available to Indian coaches. *‘There is this institution called the National Institute of Sport (NIS), Patiala, that runs coach education programmes as a proper degree and certification course’* (P4). Contrarily, however certain sports were not included as part of the NIS, *‘As a curriculum or University and all that, shooting is not part of the NIS’* (P10). The quality of coaches from the NIS was also majorly criticised by five participants, *‘In the 60s, NIS brought out brilliant coaches, but it got worse and worse, even the quality of the lecturers are really poor, people who join the coaching programmes, their quality is really poor (P3)’.*

Aside from NIS, P3 highlighted, *‘Each sport has its own international coaching programmes’.* Although judo did not have such a programme, *‘In judo in India, sport-specific levels have not been developed yet’* (P13), other sports did have their own NSF conducted sport-specific programmes for coach education, for example, *‘Now there is the International Tennis Federation coming in and doing courses at different levels’* (P7). In fact, given the limitations of the NIS, coaches qualified through the NIS were given a chance to get an appropriate sport-specific level, *‘So now what we are doing is we will conduct a session for NIS coaches and based on their performance, we may give them the equalisation certificate, maybe at the D level or maybe at the C level’* (P12).

Contrary to the above criticisms of system quality, however, there were participants that reported the coaching systems in the country to be good, '*When you are a NIS coach, you are considered to be of a certain standard*' (P5), '*I think India is one of the better coaching systems in the world*' (P2). The same participant further highlighted, '*The Indian certification system has been awarded a gold certification by the International Tennis Federation. So that means we are at par with any International coaching standards*'. P5 however, quoted, '*It is like in 7 days there is very limited practical experience but with the NIS they have both formal and informal education equally. The levels are not widely accepted, especially for government jobs*'. Finally, along with the NIS and the NSF sport-specific levels, private organisations such as the OGQ have also introduced their own coach education programmes. Although one participant highlighted a difference in expectations between coaches and those implementing coach education programmes as a factor potentially impacting the success of the coach education programme introduced by OGQ,

What OGQ were trying to do was to empower coaches holistically. But what coaches wanted was, it's like I am running a business and I am just coming to you for this certificate and by getting the certificate I'll just be able to get more clients (P10).

Despite differing perceptions of quality for coach education, participants did, rather consistently, emphasise certain limitations of the current coach education system. First, P6 highlighted, '*The education courses or programmes are absolutely a copy paste system*'. Although another participant emphasised this copy paste coaching to be prevalent worldwide rather than just specific to Indian coaches, '*Everything does not fit, one does not fit everybody. So, being individualistic is very important but also copy paste coaching is going on everywhere*' (P8). Unfortunately, this copy-paste coaching was highlighted to be prevalent not just within the coach education programmes but among coaches as well; '*After the*

*lecture, some of the Indian coaches even had the audacity to ask the instructor, alright but can you just give us the training plan that we should give our athletes?’(P10).*

Next, a lack of knowledge upgradation was emphasised as a potential reason contributing to the perceived poor quality of Indian coaches as evident from the following quotes, *‘To tell you very honestly, I think over the past 40 years, I seriously doubt if there’s been any kind of upgradation in the NIS’ (P7); ‘NIS is basically you might say, they are still using really old literature (P6)’; ‘I feel the NIS curriculum is very outdated’ (P12).* The lack of upgradation was not only highlighted as a limitation with the NIS, but it was also reported as a limitation of the Indian coaches as evident from the quote, *‘So the problem with our coaches is, they don’t learn, they don’t try to upgrade their knowledge’ (P1).* Participants however did reinforce the importance of coaches engaging in constant upgradation of knowledge and sharing their knowledge with others. This was accurately summarised by P1, *‘Continually learning and upgrading of knowledge and it is not only upgrading but imparting it wherever possible, sharing it with my friends to educate more people’.* P12 further reinforced this by quoting, *‘I feel knowledge is something that if you share, you will gain more. You know, if you keep it with yourself, that is not going to help you or the others’.* P10 however reported a lack of systems as the main reason for Indian coaches’ failure to upgrade their knowledge, *‘I don’t think coaches would have an issue upgrading the knowledge. But we do not have a system to upgrade knowledge’.*

Next, financial limitations impacting coach qualifications were also reported. For example, *‘Certain certifications are very expensive, so the coaches are unable to spend’ (P9).* Finally, language and consequent understanding of the material were also highlighted as a factor negatively impacting coach education system in the country. This was accurately summarised by in the following quotes, *‘In India when we do some formal education, the language is English and there are so many coaches who cannot understand English’ (P12); ‘Two barriers were the language and the understanding of the subject at the lower levels’*

(P7). Positively, participants highlighted the coach education material being translated into regional languages to overcome these language barriers, *'So now what we have done is we have understood that education does not deal with languages so now we have started translating our curriculums into regional languages'* (P12); *'To tackle that now we have translated all our work into Hindi and in cases in Maharashtra we have translated it into Marathi'* (P7).

Along with the coach education system, certain coach characteristics were also highlighted by participants as issues that might be impacting the Indian coaching field.

**Characteristics of Indian coaches.** This SMU was further divided into two raw data codes; *limitations of Indian coaches*, and *India specific characteristics*.

First, given the poor quality of coach education in the country, Indian coaches were criticised for the knowledge they possess, for instance, *'We are great coaches technically, but there is no doubt that there is one area we are still lacking, it is the sport sciences (P7)'*.

Sports sciences was in fact highlighted by six other participants as a major area in which Indian coaches lack, *'Today my athletes are 3-5% behind the international standard. This 3-5% comes from science (P8)'*; *'We do not have enough knowledge about sport sciences (P13)'*; *'We are very much behind as long as sport science is concerned. Somehow, I do not know why but sport science has not developed'* (P9). In fact, this lack of sport sciences was also highlighted as a potential factor negatively contributing to development of athletes;

The other issue that we have is overtraining because the coach knows nothing, does not know how much load to give a youngster, how much load to give a kid, how much will not burn that child. It is complete ignorance of science and scientific data and scientific knowledge (P3).

Furthermore, coaches were criticised for lack of implementation of knowledge, *'In India many times the coaches are sent to different programmes to get knowledge, but I don't think they are using it'* (P11).

Second, five India-specific characteristics were highlighted as factors hindering sporting success achieved by athletes. To begin with, a need to be recognised and the consequent failure to transfer the athletes to higher-level coaches was reported, '*Indian coaches want to hold on to their athletes, they do not want to give up their athletes just so they will get Dronacharya award or the national award*' (P3), and;

Some of our coaches, basically the coaches that are not much educated do not transfer their athletes to the higher level. They keep thinking they will get some awards. So even if he may not have the ability to develop the athlete to higher potential, he will overtrain them at the end stage (P1).

Furthermore, P11 also quoted, '*I do not want to hand over my girls to anyone*'; whereas P12 quoted a coach saying, '*Sir we did all the hard work, we did the major work and now you will just do the last bit and take credit. So that sense of insecurity that his name will be made, mine will be left out*'. This failure to transfer athletes resulted in athletes having the same coach throughout their journey as evident from this quote, '*In India one coach teaches right from the beginner's level to elite level*' (P2). Furthermore, the sense of insecurity highlighted in the above quote from P12 was also reported to have a negative impact on implementation of knowledge sharing processes such as the CoP;

There is this sense of insecurity and everybody is trying to have their own group of shooters and there is a reluctance to share knowledge because it is my knowledge, my USP and if I share my secret and his athletes start doing as well then my future is jeopardised (P10).

Next, the attitude of Indian coaches was also highlighted as another factor impacting athlete development, '*The Indian coach thinks he knows everything because he is a frog in a well and he does not know there is an ocean out there*' (P3); '*Indian coaches come with the 'I know everything' attitude and just teach backhands and forehands, which is not enough in*

*modern days*' (P9). Next, a prevalence of guru-shishya hierarchy was also highlighted as another factor negatively impacting progress of Indian athletes;

We have this 'Guru' thing. The problem in India is teachers are given so much of importance or such a high stature that everything is about the coach. You know that we are older to you, you need to respect your elders and all that nonsense. I think that should be the first step to understand that athletes are more important than you and you need to understand that you are the one working for them (P10).

The same participant further highlighted another potential negative impact of the hierarchical structure, '*The athletes are going to be scared to speak up against a coach because in India, instead of the athlete being on the top, the athletes are at the bottom*'. This negative impact of the guru-shishya hierarchy was also reinforced by P3, '*I am your guru, now you are leaving me. Coaches don't let them go, saying 'Why? Am I bad? I made you*'. Finally, a lack of discipline was also highlighted as a potential limitation of Indian coaches,

So, I think I am very clear that we are still definitely lacking in discipline. I see even today that players are playing, coaches are sitting down or taking a break, or you know, just having a cup of tea or on the phone and this is something that you are not going to see in Spain or France or wherever the big academies today are based (P7)

**Professionalism in Indian sport.** The final SMU of this COC included issues related to the lack of professional practices within the Indian coaching field. This SMU was further divided into two raw data codes; *accountability* and *process of hiring coaches*.

First, a lack of accountability was highlighted by participants, '*We have zero accountability in Indian sport right now*' (P10); and,

Mainly with the NIS coaches, they have no accountability. You get qualified, you get a job, but even after 5-10 years there is no accountability, nobody asks

you, 'What did you do? How many players did you develop? What is your performance?' Nobody asks that (P13).

However, renewal of coaching licenses was emphasised as a way to introduce accountability by participants with P1 describing the license renewal system within athletics as,

We are introducing that every three years you have to renew you license, there is no license in India but every three years for level one and two you have to do a refresher course if you do not reach the standard, you will not be allowed to stay in that level.

Although P11 quoted the prevalence of politics that might impact the success of such processes, '*This idea is very good on paper, but how will it work if the coaches have influence within the office*'. Renewal of license was however not prevalent in all sports as evident from P4's quote, '*Unfortunately, no. But renewal of license is important and must be done because currently the psychology of every person is once I've got my certificate, I'm done*'. Although to avoid this, P4 further suggested,

Monitoring what the coaches, say a level one coach is doing, whether he is trying to implement that knowledge and what kind of projects is he undertaking and making the coach eligible for upgradation if he has consistently done it for one or two years.

In fact, a similar system was highlighted by P12 as something they have recently introduced within the sport,

From this year onward we have started the revalidation process for three years they need to go on the field do active coaching, collect minimum amount of points to continue their coaching license. If they do not continue coaching then their coaching license will be revoked.

Providing fixed term contracts to coaches with specific measures to evaluate the coach's performance was also proposed as a potential solution to inculcate professionalism and also help reduce insecurities Indian coaches are believed to have. This was accurately summarised by P10,

First thing is we need to have a system in place from the SAI or NSFs that this is how the coaching system needs to be and then you hire coaches accordingly. The NSF should give 8-12 year contracts which specifically state for example, if we don't work together we stand a chance of losing our spot.

Second, in regard to the system of hiring coaches, P5 quoted,

There is no fixed system right now. Every NSF has its own system, sometimes they will appoint a very senior former athlete because of his relationship to the sport, sometimes it is because of seniority. Now people are realising that it should be based on merit because earlier there wasn't much responsibility but now the responsibility has become wider and it like is a full-time job.

Similarly, P10 also reported,

Indian coaches when they are hired, there is no interview system which selects you as the best suited person to lead the group of athletes. I mean can you imagine you are given the task of leading the country, the athletes to the best to the highest level of sport without even being checked whether you are competent enough or not.

In this regard, P7 however identified the need to have qualified coaches by stating an example from tennis,

A French Open champion, top five athlete from France, after he quit tennis wanted to start teaching tennis, obviously his expertise was at the highest level. But when he applied to the French Tennis Federation, they were very

clear, they said, no, you may have all the expertise but you don't have the formal education.

Unfortunately, given these limitations of the Indian coaches and coach system, hiring foreign coaches was identified as the best possible option which formed the next COC.

### ***9.3.3 Overcoming limitations of the Indian coaching field***

This COC further included two SMUs, *dependence on foreign coaches* and *disadvantages of hiring foreign coaches*.

**Dependence on foreign coaches.** This SMU included only one raw data code; *need for foreign coaches*. With the above-mentioned limitations of Indian coaches and coaching system, foreign coaches were reported to be the highly preferred choice for athlete development. For instance, P12 quoted, *'So the administration will say, leave this, if I appoint Coach A she will create issues and if I appoint him Coach B will create issues; best is we appoint a foreigner, everybody will be quiet then'*. A need to hire foreign coaches at the high-performance rather than grassroot level was however emphasised, *'To get into the top 100 obviously we need foreign experts'* (P2); *'At the performance level, there has to be a foreign coach'* (P9).

Furthermore, potential areas where foreign coaches do seem to have a considerable advantage were also reported, *'Foreign coaches that we bring, they are scientifically very very strong (P3)'*; *'Foreign coaches bring in a sense of discipline, they bring in a sense of ethics and they bring in a sense of intensity on court (P7)'*; *'Foreign coaches come with the sports science knowledge. They really grind themselves; they are systematic, well structured, hard-working, passionate and they know how to give the value for money (P9)'*.

Despite these advantages, participants also highlighted some disadvantages of hiring foreign coaches, the second SMU within this COC.

**Disadvantages of hiring foreign coaches.** This SMU further included four major issues; *financial impacts and restrictions, characteristics impacting success, current role in India and current hiring system.*

A significant difference in the salaries provided to foreign and Indian coaches was reported, *'The compensation paid to the foreign coach and that paid to Indian coach is not even worth mentioning'* (P5); *'Firstly Indian coaches think why should I be paid Rs 50,000 (USD 689) a month as salary and the foreign coach is paid USD5,000 a month'* (P3); *'There was a salary cap of Rs 2 lakhs (USD 2756) for Indian coaches whereas foreign coaches could be given up to Rs 8-10 lakhs (USD 11,026-13,783) per month'* (P13). Along with the difference in salaries paid to foreign and Indian coaches, another issue highlighted by participants was the financial limitations on hiring top level foreign coaches, *'So we want top level coaches to come and train our athletes but then that costs a lot of money and governments do not have that budget'* (P8); *'No good coach is going to come to you for Rs 5 lakhs (USD 6891) a month'* (P10).

This was closely linked to who India hires; *'If you are going to go out with peanuts in your pockets as salary, you are going to get the third level coaches. Just because they are white skinned does not mean they are either technically or knowledge wise superior'* (P10). The same participant further emphasised a need to change this system and hire the best coaches to avoid the risk of developing poor quality coaches, *'Imagine what you are going to do, you are going to get a lousy coach and then he is going to come and train our coaches and what have we done? We have just multiplied those many lousy coaches'*. How long coaches are hired for was also highlighted as a concern, *'So one foreign coach would come to India for 45 days and there used to be two-week training camps thrice a year. That is not coaching'* (P10); *'No foreign coach can come here and do miracles unless he is given a long-term contract'* (P8).

Second, participants highlighted concerns about certain characteristics of foreign coaches that might be impacting the success achieved by Indian athletes, '*Some of the foreign coaches are not willing to transfer their knowledge (P1)*'; '*These foreign coaches when they come, I am not talking about all, but some of them come with a predetermined mind that Indians do not know anything, whatever we teach them will be a kind of wisdom for them (P12)*'; '*Foreign coaches just do not know the education system, that is one big factor. Second is the language barrier (P6)*'. Furthermore, cultural sensitivity was also highlighted as another area where foreign coaches lack, '*Cultural appropriateness definitely has to be taught to foreign coaches*' (P7); '*Sensitising them to our culture because it is very different*' (P3). Although, the same participant further highlighted a need to sensitise athletes as well,

I think we also have to do it for athletes that this is the Western system and you don't expect the guy to push you to do whatever needs to be done, he is not going to play with you and hang around with you pick up your bag and walk behind you.

An agreement that Indian coaches would be better able to understand Indian athletes was however reinforced, '*Because the culture and us Indians will be best understood only by an Indian*' (P12); '*One of the best ways to understand a player is language, culture and believing that he is one of me*' (P5).

Third, participants reported a disagreement with the current roles of foreign coaches in India,

I have this major problem with the way we are using the foreign coaches. One foreign coach if he is hired for four years can say train 200 athletes, but if one foreign coach is hired for four years is going to train 20 coaches, those 20 coaches are in turn going to train 4000 athletes (P10).

Other quotes in this regard included, '*Foreign coaches coming in and teaching coaches how to teach as opposed to teaching players how to play, I think that part is spot on*

(P7); *'I think that home grown coaches, gaining knowledge from foreign coaches coupled with the scientific support is what I am asking for'* (P8). To further strengthen the point, P10 quoted, *'I mean look at China, in the 50s and 60s they got coaches from the USSR to train their coaches'*. This was closely linked to another point participants raised about adopting strategies from other sporting powers to facilitate sport development in the, *'To become a sporting power in the world, we need to take some good things from the sporting powers, we need to learn from them, why are they good?'* (P5).

In fact, along with hiring foreign coaches to train Indian coaches, a need for foreign internships or exposure was also highlighted. In this regard P13 quoted, *'In fact it is not necessary just for foreign coaches to train Indian coaches, Indian coaches too need the exposure of what is happening at the international level'*; P10 supported this by stating, *'A major advantage of foreign internships would be that we get to see what the world is doing'*. Although a potential issue with previous foreign internships was highlighted by P10, *'The guys were there at the University of Birmingham attending the course where 90% of them did not know English. Can you imagine the amount of money spent by the country'*.

Generally, however, given the limitations of foreign coaches, participants also quoted, *'A psyche that foreign coach is better is not a fact; it may be true in many cases, but it is a myth or a perception that has been created over a number of years'* (P5). P3 in this regard highlighted that it is not about foreign or Indian coaches but about who the best coach is,

If you want to compete with the best of the world, you will need to get the best guy, if he is an Indian so be it, if he is a Japanese so be it, if it is a Korean so be it, if it is an American so be it. I do not think we need to have this differentiation of Indian coach, foreign coach or whatever.

Given the above-mentioned limitations, interestingly, participants reported, *'Today in India foreign coaches are nothing but a distraction, a temptation. I do not think people have a problem training under Indian coaches'* (P10). Although, P12 quoted, *'It is a*

*mixed reaction, few of the coaches are happy with Indian coaches, but other coaches want foreign coaches'.*

These limitations of foreign coaches, advantages Indian coaches could have over their foreign counterparts and a positive change in the preference for Indian coaches, therefore reinforced the need for India to develop home-grown coaches which brings us to the final COC, perceptions about the model and its feasibility.

#### **9.3.4 The proposed model**

The final COC included participant's views about the solutions proposed in the model and its feasibility in the country and was further divided into two SMUs; *perceptions about the model and implementation of the model.*

**Perceptions about the proposed model.** This SMU further included *acceptance of the model and concerns about the model.*

Overall, participants seemed to perceive the model positively as apparent from these quotes, *'Your model is in the right direction'* (P13); *'I think you have covered almost everything in your model. I mean otherwise I would have simply said that all the things you have said would just be okay in lala world. But no... this is the right way'* (P10). Although the majority of participants accepted the model, some concerns about its practicality were highlighted. For instance, P4 quoted, *'All these solutions which you are trying to suggest are theoretical solutions'*; whereas P3 quoted, *'We tried to put in place a similar system but the practicality of it is we failed'*. The next SMU, therefore included specific concerns regarding implementation of the model.

**Implementation of the model.** Within implementation of the model, four raw data codes were included which focused on the specific concerns about the model; *systemic factors, time limitations, demographic factors and focus of the model.*

First, within systemic factors, participants highlighted politics, identifying final decision makers and financial resources as the three main concerns *'Who makes the final*

*decisions, ego issues or the hierarchical issues will be the three main constraints according to me* (P4); *'How to make the decision makers understand the value of this?'* (P10); *'Where is the government going to get the funding to train the coaches'* (P6).

Including the private sector was however proposed as a solution for both putting appropriate systems in place and ensuring enough funding, *'Like if you give this model to a corporate guy, he would obviously say that yeah, of course, it is supposed to be like this'* (P10). The same participant also stated, *'So, if you get a corporate guy who does not have any sports background, all that he does is to have systems in place and develops performance measuring criteria, then if you do not meet those criteria, you are fired'*. Exemplar quotes from other participants included, *'Federations do not have the money. The government should appoint sponsors for each sport, for example encourage the sponsors to adopt one other sport along with one popular sport, only then something will happen'* (P13). P12 further quoted,

If one corporate can do it, why not the others? Just divide it amongst yourselves, one works at the high-performance level, one at the pre-high-performance level, one at the youth level and one at the grassroots level because the associations do not have that much money, they are entirely dependent on sponsors for funds, but corporates have no dependence for anything.

Second, various issues with the time required to achieve success with such a model were also highlighted. For example, a concern about coaches continuing within the system for the entire duration of the model, *'Let's say you select 32 coaches, but we do not know how many will continue in the system'* (P5). P3 extended the previously quoted concern about practicality by further stating,

These (foreign) guys have produced Olympic medallists, working with them for 10-15 years, it is not easy for an Indian coach to learn everything in 1 or 3

or even 5 years. How will you give experience of 30 years to somebody you coach for 3 years?

Although, this was contradictory to an example from tennis,

Some of us who were seniors learnt from a foreign coach and then he actually helped us through it. So, it was only after about two years that we actually took on the matter of teaching these courses. But for the first two years we had learnt from him as to how to teach, not the sport, but how do you teach teachers how to teach (P7).

In fact, participants really reinforced the need to understand 'how to teach' as one of the main factors in the coaching process, *'I would say a good coach needs more than all this basic knowledge of expertise and experience, he must have the proper skill of teaching'* (P4); *'A coach with no communication ability will not be able to give any feedback, will not be able to give any instructions'* (P1).

Third, along with systemic and time limitation issues, some demographic issues were also highlighted. In this regard P4 stated, *'If you are given say 10 people, and you develop those 10 people in this model, but as you know, India needs huge numbers. The volume itself is a major challenge for us'*. Whilst this was acknowledged to be a challenge, participants proposed certain suggestions to overcome these challenges,

The international association has been sending down coaches who are in turn training our coaches, they have named the programme 'train the trainer'.

Basically, they have tapped into the school physical teachers because they feel all these teachers in turn have access to lots of kids (P6).

A slightly different suggestion of focusing on developing sport systems within each State was proposed by P8,

Take one State and one sport, if you find another sport in the same state that is improving well help them set it up in that State. You know what happens right

now is people put little sugar into the sea, so this is what I want to conclude with, we have a huge population and that is a resource, use the resources wisely.

The same participant further reinforced the need to develop our own system given the complex Indian composition as evident from the following quote,

If you are looking for a future, develop our own system, our own culture, our own scientific things, get things in India and get it to as many places as possible because it does not work the same everywhere, north, south, east and west all work in different ways.

Whilst agreeing to these differences within the various parts of India, P12 provided an example of how football has implemented a regional process,

So, what we have tried to do is put India in zones: north, south, east, west and central. So, we have those five zones and now we are working zonally. So, now we have just chalked out our processes and we are trying to have at least two or three senior coach educators in each zone, and we only connect to those coach educators and further, those coach educators can go down and work in their designated three or four States.

Finally, a debate about quality versus quantity was highlighted. In this regard, P4 quoted, *'So basically, your model is more of quality oriented than quantity oriented. But initially you will also have to focus on a quantity model'*. Although, P8 quoted a need to increase quality coaches, *'The rate of successful coaches has to increase in our country to produce results. With a very high level of competition among coaches and athletes the standard improves'*. Similarly, P5, as highlighted in Section 7.3.1 also highlighted the need to have successful coaches who would then help attract more people into coaching. In fact, along with the importance of 'quality' coaches, participants also reinforced the importance of incorporating an expertise-based approach, *'A good coach should be able to question himself*

*rather than blindly coach, I think the 'why' principle is very important' (P9); 'One size does not fit all' (P10); 'Having knowledge and then you implement that depending on what is required at which level' (P8).*

## **9.4 Summary of findings from the current study against conclusions from previous Chapters**

### ***9.4.1 What is the status of the Indian sport field in general?***

First, as evident from Section 9.3.1, a lack of research on the Indian sport field was reinforced by participants as an area that needs attention. Next, sporting culture was once again highlighted as a weakness of the Indian sport field. Sport was generally not perceived as a career for athletes as well as coaches. Participants did however highlight that the virtuous cycle of sport philosophy might be prevalent in the coaching field as well (Grix & Carmichael, 2012). Indian coaches who have achieved success at the international level were reported to be acting as role models, convincing the population to pursue coaching as a career (Sharma, 2020). This coupled with the fact that success in sport is often measured by the number of medals won (De Bosscher et al., 2007), a medal-winning approach seems to be prevalent within the sport field. Furthermore, a performance-based funding also seemed to be evident whereby sports that are doing well receive more funding from the government whereas the other sports do not. Although this performance-based funding is not unique to India alone, for instance countries such as the UK also follow a similar funding system (BBC, 2018), participants still criticised it by stating that a particular sport would need funding and support for it to succeed. In fact, this seems to be similar to the previously highlighted criticism about athletes receiving support only after they succeed rather than during their journey to success (Kumar, 2018). Although the private sector has contributed to development of certain sports, for example football, overall, funding to sports that are not successful or not commercial is still minimal (Barua, 2019; Shirotriya, 2019).

Despite the limited funding, infrastructure in general seems to be one area where India has certainly made some progress. Providing enough infrastructure was included in all the previously mentioned sport policies (Government of India, n.d.-b, 2007, 2011). The progress made in this regard was confirmed by participants from both the current Chapter and Chapter 6. In contrast, *accessibility* of the infrastructure, even though it was mentioned in the 2007 National Sports Policy as an area India needs to work on, was still reported to be a problem by participants (Government of India, 2007). Generally, participants did agree that infrastructure is no longer an issue for India. A relative lack of quality of Indian coaches was however reported. Consequently, a need to focus on *liveware*, i.e., development of coaches was strongly reinforced by participants. To however answer if developing Indian coaches and a coaching system is really the best way forward, a holistic understanding of the current Indian coaching field needs to be explored.

#### ***9.4.2 What is the current status of the Indian coaching field?***

**Pathway to getting into coaching.** Although a general lack of a coaching system was reported, three potential pathways were highlighted for getting into coaching. First was obtaining a coach qualification from the NIS, the second was sport-specific levels introduced by the NSFs and finally former athletes getting into coaching was also reported as a significant route to becoming a coach. Aside from these, coach education programmes are also being provided by private organisations, for example the coach excellence programme by OGQ (OGQ | CEP, n.d.).

There were some contradictions regarding the quality of education delivered by the NIS. Some participants acknowledged that the NIS coaches are considered to be good whereas majority others criticised them for having outdated knowledge. Unfortunately, one of the main challenges India is currently facing is ensuring provision of quality education (Sheikh, 2017) and this is evidently no different for the education provided within Indian sport. Given the relatively poor quality of education provided at the NIS, the NSFs have

introduced sport-specific levels which were generally perceived to be better than the NIS. The only criticism regarding these sport-specific levels highlighted by participants was the limited informal education that these courses provided. Given the relatively better quality of sport-specific levels, many sports were reported to be offering NIS coaches a chance to get a sport-specific certification based on their knowledge. Unfortunately, another factor potentially impacting the coach education was a difference between what coaches expect and what coach education programmes offer. To engage coaches in the educational practice, however, ensuring alignment between coaches' expectations and both course content and form is considered to be crucial (Voldby & Klein-Døssing, 2020).

Overall, however, given the relatively poor quality of coach education, a preference for experienced athletes as the best recruits seemed to be somewhat prevalent. Contrary to Chapter 6, this preference was not as strong. Although, given its importance, informal education was emphasised as a necessary factor within coach education (Mallett et al., 2009; Nelson et al., 2006), participants also acknowledged the importance of considering theory and mechanisms of coaching. In fact, given the importance of formal education, participants also highlighted the need for former athletes to pursue formal coach education before they start coaching (Nelson et al., 2006). This is similar to the 'athlete to coach' programmes in the UK (UK Sport, n.d.-a). In India, as evident from Section 9.3.2, some sports are giving former athletes opportunities to pursue sport-specific level to help them have a decent career post retirement. While this is an important initiative to provide post-career support to athletes, there however, is a need to be cautious about potentially strengthening the current bias towards former athletes and possible ignorance of those that are not from a sporting background.

**Why is formal education necessary?** Participants linked the current lack of formal education to an existing pattern of 'everything fits all' approach and a copy-paste type of coaching. Unfortunately, this meant a failure to acknowledge that coaching is contextual and

needs to be tailored to suit individual athlete's needs (Allen & Muir, 2020) as also a failure to strive for an expertise-based approach (Collins et al., 2014; Nash et al., 2012). Despite such patterns, participants however did emphasise the need for Indian coaches to change this approach and move towards a more individualistic, 'it depends' approach (Collins et al., 2014).

A lack of sufficient formal education was also linked to potential negative impacts on athlete development. The most profound one being overtraining athletes and consequently impacting the number of successful high-performance athletes India could have. Overtraining was linked to an increased training burden which could potentially hinder the athlete's ability to balance sport and school. Ultimately, given the importance placed on education, this was linked to increased chances of parents potentially withdrawing the athlete from sport to focus on school (Gupta, 2020), a trend that is definitely not unique to India, with the USA also reporting high drop-out rates at the age of 11 (Lee, 2017). Interestingly, however, in Chapter 6 participants highlighted a need to reduce the curriculum burden on students to ensure they have enough time left to engage in sport (Section 6.3.1). Consequently, the NEP 2020 introduced compulsory one-hour physical activity in schools to ensure students can engage with any sport, exercise or any other form of physical activity (Government of India, 2020). Participants in this study however emphasised the need to reduce the burden of training to ensure athletes have enough time to balance their schoolwork. To do so, understanding potential reasons for overtraining athletes in India need to be explored.

Overtraining athletes was generally attributed to two main reasons by participants, firstly, the heavy focus on winning medals and secondly a lack of knowledge about sport sciences. A lack of knowledge about sport sciences has consistently been reported as a major factor limiting performance of Indian coaches throughout this thesis (Rasquinha, 2018). Participants however reported coaches that are educated and have enough knowledge about sport sciences to understand the training they should give to athletes to make it enjoyable yet

contributing to positive development of athletes. As outlined in Chapter 8, quality coaches are believed to be able to make training more enjoyable. Therefore, coach education programmes focusing on quality coaches could really prove to be an advantage for India (Cassidy et al., 2009). Together, a multi-direction push wherein changes to the education policy to encourage sport and physical activity at schools as also developing quality coaches that ensure athletes are given the accurate amount of training could be an ideal solution to ensure athletes can balance sport and schoolwork. Despite the increased preference for formal education, however, participants also highlighted financial limitations, language barriers and understanding of the material as issues that might be impacting coach education in India. Such issues, mainly the financial restrictions have in fact also been identified in the wider literature as a significant factor limiting the ability of coaches engaging in coach qualifications (Allen & Shaw, 2009).

Although participants reported an increased need to engage in formal education, there were certain characteristics of Indian coaches themselves that were reported to be limiting their development and consequent performance.

**India-specific characteristics.** Indian coaches were reported to have a significant need to be recognised. Although the 2001 National Sports Policy and the KIYG introduced initiatives to recognise coaches, it still seems to be an issue (Government of India, n.d.-b; Sanyal, 2018). This lack of recognition was in fact reported to be one of the main reasons for coaches not transferring their athletes to higher level coaches thereby impacting development of those athletes. This was another area where participants reinforced the need to have coaches that are educated so they would understand the need to transfer their athletes to higher level coaches. Another limitation of Indian coaches was reported to be an attitude that they know everything. This however could be linked to a lack of exposure to what good coaching looks like leaving the coaches with a biased understanding of their coaching (Kangkan, 2017; Sportskeeda, 2014). Finally, the guru-shishya hierarchy outlined in Chapter

7 was confirmed in this Chapter with participants highlighting the negative impact it is having on Indian sport, for example a lack of transfer of athletes and athletes not being able to speak against their coaches (Mlecko, 1982; Raina, 2002).

Another major criticism of Indian coaches reported throughout has been a failure to engage in continuous upgradation of knowledge (Business Standard News, 2019). Although participants did acknowledge the importance of constant knowledge upgradation, there were inconsistencies about the willingness to engage with it. There were reports of coaches just not wanting to engage in any CPD activities. Whereas some participants also highlighted a significant willingness to do it, but a lack of CPD systems in India. A lack of system, in general, does seem to be one of the significant issues hampering the Indian coaching field (Raj, 2018). Furthermore, participants also reinforced the need for coaches to engage in CoP but reported that the ingrained insecurities might be stopping Indian coaches from engaging in CoP. Along with the previously mentioned factors, insecurities could therefore be another factor that could potentially be having a negative impact on the success of CoP (Olsson et al., 2017). Another factor that could potentially impact coaches engaging with other coaches could be the competition between them (Allen & Shaw, 2009). Healthy competition, however, is believed to nurture experiences of intensity levels that are necessary to stimulate behaviour modifications, either performance-based or development-based depending on the objectives to be achieved. If there is only limited competition, there is also limited exposure to values such as commitment, work ethic, discipline and perseverance which are all important to perform and succeed in competitive settings (Camiré, 2016). In fact, Indonesian coaches from badminton have reported the benefits healthy competition could have by stating that despite an intense competition in Jakarta with athletes trying to push each other to greater heights there however still is camaraderie amongst athletes (Nadkarni, 2019). Unfortunately, participants from the current Chapter, whilst highlighting the need to have more competition

among coaches, also reported a potential failure of Indian coaches to share knowledge with a fear of losing their athletes.

Finally, a general lack of professionalism of the structures and processes have been identified, by participants and the wider literature as potential factors impacting sporting success (Siegfried, Schlesinger, Bayle, & Giauque, 2015). Specifically, a lack of professional ways to hire coaches, as well as coaches not being held accountable for their athletes' performances resulting in a lack of motivation were emphasised. Although renewal of coaching licenses was highlighted as a way to make coaches accountable, a need to monitor whether coaches really implement the acquired knowledge was reported. As outlined in Chapter 6, providing fixed, but longer-term contracts were also highlighted as a way to get dedicated coaches willing to produce successful athletes. The provision of long-term contracts was also reported as a way to reduce the insecurities within coaches, enable them to engage in CoP and transfer their athletes to higher coaches which might contribute to developing adaptable, independent and resilient athletes that would have higher chances of succeeding (Webb et al., 2016). Unfortunately, with the prevalence of politics, one concern about initiatives such as renewal of license or 'reward what you want' could be coaches manipulating the system to get their licenses or authorities hiring coaches close to them instead of those that might be more suitable for the role (McLeod et al., 2020).

Given the limitations of Indian coaches and coaching system, foreign coaches are currently hired in the country. The advantages and disadvantages of hiring foreign coaches will now be discussed.

#### ***9.4.3 What is the current status of foreign coaches in India?***

**Strengths of hiring foreign coaches.** As outlined earlier, India is currently hiring foreign coaches in nearly all sports (Sarkar, 2018). Participants justified this by stating that foreign coaches have more scientific knowledge, are disciplined and more professional (Rasquinha, 2018). Until now, India has mainly been hiring foreign coaches to train Indian

athletes. Notably, however, a need to change the role of foreign coaches was expressed by participants. As coaches are the ones that train athletes and not the other way round, a strong preference for foreign coaches training Indian coaches rather than Indian athletes was highlighted. In fact, efforts to implement this change in role have already started in certain sports, with the ‘train the trainer’ initiative introduced in basketball. This initiative is also introduced at the school level considering that school physical education teachers would have access to a larger population and could therefore have an greater impact on the population (Ramu, 2020). Furthermore, importance of foreign internships for Indian coaches was also reported. Given the feasibility issue with Indian policy initiatives and the example outlined in this Chapter, however, there certainly is a need to ensure the coaches that are selected for such foreign internships know English (Chelladurai et al., 2011) to avoid wasteful investment of resources.

**Limitations of foreign coaches.** Despite the current preference for foreign coaches, however, certain limitations of hiring foreign coaches were also highlighted. A failure to find the best foreign coaches due to financial limitations was reported as one of the main issues. A huge amount of money needs to be paid to get the best foreign coaches which seems evident from the policy transfer example between China and Australia, wherein financial remuneration was one of the major reasons for the Australian coaches to accept the offer to coach Chinese swimmers (Tan et al., 2019). Unfortunately, given this need to pay heavy salaries, a difference in salaries between foreign and Indian coaches was reported which, as previously outlined, seems to negatively impact the Indian population (Sarkar, 2018). Furthermore, foreign coaches’ unwillingness to transfer knowledge, coming in with preconceptions about knowledge Indians have, lack of understanding about both the systems in India and the various cultures in the country were some of the limitations of foreign coaches reported in this study. With cultural sensitivity, however, one participant also highlighted the need to sensitise Indian athletes along with foreign coaches, especially given

the strong guru-shishya culture that is very specific to India (Mlecko, 1982; Raina, 2002) and other India-specific factors. For instance, an Indonesian coach hired to train badminton athletes was reported quoting in one of the Indian newspapers, 'In India the foreign coaches are helpless in imposing discipline on the players. If we want to impose some penalty on them, they simply laugh it off' (Nadkarni, 2019). Indian athletes therefore need to be made aware of the particular culture their foreign coaches come from which might help the athletes adjust better to the different system foreign coaches might want to implement. The limitations were however not entirely due to the characteristics or personalities of foreign coaches (Lin et al., 2019), but also a result of the Indian systems.

**Limitations of Indian system potentially hindering performance of foreign coaches.** Provision of short-term contracts given to foreign coaches were highlighted as a potential reason limiting the impact they could have on developing athletes (George, 2021). The current Sports Minister, however, has introduced an initiative which would provide a 4-year contract to foreign coaches which might help them adjust better to the Indian context and thereby have more of an impact on Indian athletes (TOI, 2020c). Finally, participants also criticised the current process used to hire foreign coaches by emphasising that foreign coaches are currently being hired in a non-professional manner. In this regard, the SAI however has now introduced more objective methods to select foreign coaches and Indian athletes would also be given a chance to evaluate the foreign coaches that would be associated with their sport (Hussain, 2020b). Furthermore a need to make foreign coaches more accountable has also been identified (Business Standard, 2020).

Although some of the limitations of foreign coaches were attributed to limitations of the Indian system, the belief that foreign coaches are the best was generally criticised by participants. This was evidently contradictory to conclusions from previous Chapters which have highlighted a strong preference for foreign coaches over Indian coaches. Participants in

this study however emphasised that it is not about foreign or Indian coaches, it is more about who the best coach could be.

#### **9.4.4 Perceptions about the proposed model**

Perceptions of participants about the model were generally very positive with participants strongly reinforcing the initiatives proposed in the model. There however, were certain concerns about the practicality of the model. The above-stated prevalence of politics and the federal structure of Indian sport, was reported to reinforce the previously mentioned potential pitfall of who would implement the model (Chelladurai et al., 2011). Next, as already reported, with India having more basic needs to tackle financial resources could be a major concern in successful implementation of the model (Mahapatra, 2020). As reinforced, reprioritising resources from a focus on hardware to liveware could however be incorporated to increase the chances of successful implementation of the model. Furthermore, involvement of the private sector might also help gather more financial resources. Next, a general preference for foreign coaches was reported in previous Chapters. Participants in this Chapter however reported that Indians may not necessarily have any issues learning from Indian coaches and do not particularly need only foreign coaches to train them.

Another challenge was the continuation of the same coaches throughout the model. Concerns about having committed, motivated people working over a long period of time, (e.g., eight to ten years) has generally been identified as a problem even within the wider mass media reports. In this regard, Gopichand highlighted that unless coaching becomes very lucrative and rewarding people are not going to take this as a profession (TOI, 2014). He also emphasised the need to respect, reward and recognise coaches for their efforts to motivate them to pursue coaching as a career (Business Standard, 2017). Moreover, similar to foreign coaches being held accountable for their performance, Indian coaches too need to be held accountable for their performance, something that Indian sports seriously seems to lack (Business Standard, 2020). In this regard, monitoring progress of coaches was proposed by

participants from the current Chapter as a way to increase the accountability. As outlined in the previous Section, having fixed longer-term contracts, for example a 4-year cycle for coaches, both foreign and Indian to transfer and gain knowledge and make a positive impact on Indian sports seems to be crucial and something India has already started implementing (TOI, 2020c). A concern about how foreign coaches would transfer their immense knowledge and experience over to Indian coaches in a shorter span of 2 to 5 years was however reported by one of the participants.

As highlighted in Chapter 8, however, coaching is not a behaviour to be copied but rather a cognitive decision-making skill to be taught (Collins et al., 2014). Consequently, processes such as the PJDM could be included within the coach education content to ensure appropriate development of Indian coaches even in a short period of time could be possible. Expert coaches are believed to employ a range of practical management strategies to make judgement and decisions in practice. These include pedagogic approaches, span of control and time management approaches to facilitate decision-making regarding aims, objectives, session content and differentiation of the coaching process. Furthermore, given the importance of reflection within the coaching context and more specifically within PJDM, incorporating appropriate reflection in the coach education programmes could be beneficial. Within the PJDM context, reflection has been suggested to be beneficial by assisting practitioners in making sense of their experiences, managing the self and increasing personal and professional effectiveness (Crowther, Collins, & Holder, 2018). Incorporating processes such as the PJDM that would help coaches develop not just skills but be more reflective and efficient decision-makers would therefore be important (Collins & Collins, 2015, 2016). Furthermore, the example from tennis in Section 9.3.4, particularly contradicted this concern as the participant highlighted a few senior coaches gaining knowledge from a foreign coach in two years and then successful transferring that knowledge to other Indian coaches. In this

regard, a need for coaches to learn ‘*how to coach*’ rather than *what to coach* was strongly emphasised (Collins et al., 2014).

Next, with India being a huge country, demographic issues were highlighted, for example, a concern about reaching all parts of the country. Participants suggested solutions such as dividing India and working zonally or each State focusing on developing one sport. In fact, the Olympic Task Force (OTF), a committee launched by the MYAS to achieve its aim of succeeding at the Olympics, given the demographic issues, had proposed a one State one sport policy wherein each State would adopt at least one Olympic sport and take responsibility to develop that sport (Singh, 2017). Given the size of the country, participants however highlighted a rather fragmented effort to develop sport in the country which was also presented as a criticism in Chelladurai et al.'s (2011) report. Their report emphasised that India’s efforts seem to be uncoordinated, inconsistent in quality and financially wasteful. In regard to coach education this could be the prevalence of numerous coach education qualifications, for instance, the NIS has its own coach qualifications, NSFs have their own sport-specific levels and finally private organisations such as the OGQ also offer their own coach education programmes (“Olympic Gold Quest,” n.d.; The Economic Times, 2018b). A more unified structure could however contribute to reducing the unimpactful investment of resources.

Finally, a concern about the focus of the model was highlighted. The model is evidently focused on quality rather than quantity of coaches. Considering the size and population of India, participants however reported that focusing on quantity would be important. There however was contradiction in this regard as some participants highlighted the need to have more coaches at the grassroots level, whereas others emphasised the need for having quality (potentially foreign) coaches at the high-performance level. Even at the grassroots level however, a need to have educated coaches that know the sport well was identified. Overall, however, a need to have quality coaches was concluded.

## 9.5 Summary and conclusion

This Chapter aimed to explore firstly, the Indian coaching field, secondly, whether developing quality coaches and a coaching system is really the best way forward for India and finally perceptions about the feasibility of the proposed model. Perceptions of participants largely supported conclusions from previous Chapters, albeit with some inconsistencies. Given that each State and sport has developed to a different level, there unfortunately might always be some inconsistencies in perceptions reported by participants. Moreover, like Chapter 6, given that participants were 'elite', the sample size could be considered small, especially for a country with a population of 1.4 billion (Srivastava et al., 2020). The active involvement of participants in the sport field however did provide an overall rich data which contributed to a better understanding about the Indian coaching field and the proposed model (Richards, 1996).

The consistently highlighted sporting culture was strongly emphasised even in this Chapter as an area India needs to work on in order to convince both athletes and coaches that sport could be a viable career option. Another repeatedly outlined lack of research on Indian sport (Bandyopadhyay, 2005) was also reinforced as an area for India to improve. Next, although participants reported a preference for former athletes as coaches, a stronger preference for coaches to engage with formal education was highlighted. A combination of formal and informal education was therefore concluded which was slightly different to the previously outlined emphasis on having experienced coaches (Chapter 6).

Participants also reinforced the relatively poor quality of Indian coaches, specifically a lack of knowledge about aspects such as sport sciences, discipline (evident in coaches and athletes) and professionalism (Nadkarni, 2019; Rasquinha, 2018). Furthermore, the attitude of Indian coaches, insecurities, need to be recognised and the guru-shishya hierarchy were also highlighted as characteristics negatively impacting the Indian coaching field (Gopichand, 2020; Mlecko, 1982; Raina, 2002). These limitations of Indian coaches were reported as the

main reason India is currently hiring foreign coaches. Despite an agreement about the limitations of Indian coaches, however, participants also concluded that the currently hired foreign coaches too have certain limitations. For example, a lack of knowledge transfer and a failure to adjust to the Indian context.

To sum, participants did acknowledge that the only gap in knowledge between foreign and Indian coaches was regarding knowledge about sport sciences, 'how to teach', discipline and professionalism rather than technique and sport-specific knowledge (Abraham et al., 2006; Trudel & Gilbert, 2006). Despite the relatively poor quality of Indian coaches, the fact that Indian coaches would be able to understand the complex Indian setting much better than their foreign counterparts was emphasised. Consequently, focusing on hiring foreign coaches that can train Indian coaches in the abovementioned aspects was proposed as a potential way to ensure Indian coaches are able to develop successful athletes. Moreover, along with these limitations of both Indian and foreign coaches, a general lack of systems was also highlighted. A consequent need for India to implement more professional systems to potentially facilitate its ongoing efforts of achieving sporting success was concluded (Raj, 2018). Therefore, after due consideration of the Indian coaching field as a whole and that provision of hardware being reported as an area India has made progress in, developing quality Indian coaches and a coaching system was concluded as the most effective way forward for Indian sport.

Finally, in regard to the proposed model, participants generally perceived it to be a positive contribution to the Indian coaching field and something that the country really needs. Along with the previously outlined potential pitfalls such as who would implement the model and ensuring enough financial resources are available to successfully implement the model a few more concerns about the practicality of the model were highlighted. Given that India is a huge country, demographic issues were emphasised. Next, concerns about continuity of the same people, transferring required knowledge within a relatively shorter time period,

prevalence of politics and finally the focus of the model being quality rather than quantity were also reported (Kulkarni & Magotra, 2017; TOI, 2014). Although the model was perceived to be positive, there were certain concerns that needed to be addressed. Consequently, along with concluding the thesis, the next Chapter will also propose modifications to the model based on the data from participants in this Chapter.

## Chapter 10

### Where next – General discussion, conclusions and recommendations for future research

#### 10.1 Revisiting the research question

Sport has gained significant importance due perhaps to the various benefits it could have. With this realisation, the academic interest within the sport field and the importance given to sport in government interventions increased significantly (Houlihan, 2002). Consequently, nations of the world began introducing distinct policy initiatives and constant funding to support high-performance and community sport development (Hoye et al., 2010). However, not all nations have been able to achieve sporting success, with India being one of them. Despite a huge population, which could be used to develop high-performance athletes that could then be used as resources to avail the numerous benefits of sport and introduction of various policy initiatives, India's performance, especially at the Olympics is not very impressive. The specific aim of the current thesis, therefore was:

*To contribute solutions to solving the Rubik's cube of Indian sport by exploring impactful factors and alternative ways to facilitate success*

Consistent with my background as an Indian national and my aspiration to develop and, if possible, apply practical knowledge (Giacobbi et al., 2005), various aspects of Indian sport were explored throughout this thesis. A summary of the findings is discussed in the following Section.

#### 10.2 Summary of the findings

Chapter 4 focused on Indian sport from a policy viewpoint and concluded a long-standing issue with policy implementation and policy learning as the main reasons that could be negatively impacting sporting success achieved by the country (Maheshwari, 2003; Yadav, 2010). Consequently, in Chapter 5 I proposed two alternative options for Indian sport. After due consideration, a combination of bottom-up and top-down approaches was proposed as a way to overcome the policy implementation issues (Lipsky, 1980). Secondly, policy

transfer, both within and across the border was proposed. In fact, a combination of knowledge transfer from other countries along with knowledge of implementation from within India was also highlighted (Cairney, 2012; Dolowitz & Marsh, 2000). For policy transfer to be effective, however, a need to fully understand the Indian sport field was concluded.

The first empirical study of this thesis was therefore conducted, as discussed in Chapter 6, using a combination of top-down and bottom-up approaches. I would just like to reinforce here that this combination was one focused on the top end of the performance continuum, so involving the leader and consumers at this top end policy level. The recruitment of a sample of 25 participants that can be termed 'elite' due to their roles within the sport system (Richards, 1996) highlighted a lack of sporting culture, a need to focus on developing quality Indian coaches and a coaching system and finally increasing the use and knowledge of sport sciences. As coaches have to perform multiple roles, including incorporating sport science support, and given that the Indian coaching system is an extremely unevolved system, a need to develop quality Indian coaches and a coaching system was concluded.

However, there were notable inconsistencies within the participant groups which then required me to conduct another empirical study to triangulate data. Given the rather limited sample, I chose to explore Indian sport from a wider perspective, as discussed in Chapter 7. Consequently, a sample of 113 high-performance athletes and pre-elites were administered a survey. Consistent with previous Chapters, a lack of sporting culture was highlighted, whilst perceptions about the coaching behaviours and practices and use and knowledge of sport science support were inconsistent. Prevalence of a strong guru-shishya hierarchy and lack of exposure to foreign coaches were reported as the two main reasons for the inconsistencies. In conclusion, both these data and the wider literature significantly emphasised an importance of

coach development. Consequently, a need to focus on developing quality Indian coaches and a coaching system was concluded.

Unfortunately, as already shown in my earlier 'desktop' studies, one model or system cannot simply be copied from one country to another (De Bosscher et al., 2015).

Accordingly, Chapter 8 proposed an India-specific model for developing quality home-grown coaches and a coaching system. I was very aware of the implementation issues highlighted in previous Chapters. Furthermore, given the inconsistencies in conclusions, I really wanted to be sure that coach development was the most effective way forward for India. Consequently, Chapter 9, the final empirical study of this thesis was conducted with a sample of 13 'elite' participants (Richards, 1996). Overall conclusions from this Chapter were largely consistent with previous Chapters, with only a few exceptions. Despite perceptions of participants about the proposed model being positive, some concerns about the practicality of the model were raised. Having explored these concerns in Chapter 9, relevant modifications to the model will now be proposed.

### ***10.2.1 Revised model for developing quality coaches and a coaching system***

The first modification in the proposed model would be the timeline with a decision to choose a 4-year cycle with evaluation points at 2-3 years. Firstly, like many other countries, a 4-year cycle has been promoted in India from as early as the 2001 National Sports Policy (Government of India, n.d.-b; Green & Houlihan, 2005). As India is far behind top sporting countries at the Olympics but has made considerable progress at the Commonwealth and Asian Games (Sportskeeda, n.d.; TOI, n.d.), having evaluation points at these Games might be useful. It would help cluster India with countries that are within the same performance brackets and have similar sporting profiles, rather than with top sporting countries at the Olympics (Henry et al., 2020). India could thereby move up on the comparison ladder with an ultimate goal of succeeding at the Olympics.

Second, along with foreign coaches, providing cultural sensitivity to Indian athletes to enable them to better understand their foreign coaches' culture was also proposed. Next, within the apprenticeship programme, a need to hire both foreign and Indian coaches for a period of 8 years with redefined roles at the start of the second phase of the model was proposed (George, 2021; TOI, 2020c). This was specifically included considering both the concerns regarding short-term contracts and to have continuity of the same people within the system to keep the principles and initiatives implemented consistent throughout (Hussain, 2020b). Despite a concern about people's continuity, participants in Chapter 9 also emphasised that if coaches had fixed contracts it would help make the field more lucrative and coaches would also feel more secure and actively engage in processes such as CoPs (Business Standard, 2017; TOI, 2014). Furthermore, these contracts were also proposed to be performance-based to make coaches more accountable for their performance (Business Standard, 2020). Monitoring coaches' performance within the renewal of coaching license process was also proposed to maintain a degree of accountability. This might in fact work very well with the previously proposed evaluation points as coaches' performance could be easily monitored for each phase and professional contracts with specific terms and conditions might further help increase the accountability.

Another time-related concern was regarding the inability of foreign coaches to transfer all their knowledge to Indian coaches in a relatively shorter time period. As highlighted in Chapter 8, however, coaching is not a behaviour to be copied but rather a cognitive decision-making skill to be taught (Collins et al., 2014). Consequently, and as outlined in Chapter 9, processes such as PJDM should be included within the coach education content to ensure appropriate development of Indian coaches even in a short period of time (Abraham & Collins, 2011). In simple terms, as coaches acquire new skills (whether in a short, intense period or over time) they should be able to make increasingly nuanced decisions from a growing range of tool options. Furthermore, focusing on teaching coaches

‘how to coach’ with a specific emphasis on the ‘*why/why not*s’ of coaching rather than simply ‘*what*’ they need to coach would be crucial. This is particularly significant for the Indian context as participants in Chapter 9 highlighted that Indian coaches do have the required technical and sport-specific knowledge but lacked knowledge about the pedagogy of coaching.

Next, concern about the focus of the model was also reported with participants emphasising that India needs quantity given its huge population rather than a focus on quality. Whilst quantity would be important, role models do seem to have a positive impact on the population (Dutta, 2020; Grix & Carmichael, 2012; Sharma, 2020). Furthermore, as outlined in Chapter 8, developing quality coaches can really have a positive impact on performance of athletes (Allen & Hodge, 2006; Cassidy et al., 2009; Nelson & Cushion, 2006). In fact, even though participants in Chapter 9 highlighted the need to have a high number of coaches at grassroots level, a need to ensure those coaches have the required knowledge and do not negatively impact the athlete’s sporting career was emphasised. Focusing on quality, which would then help bring in the quantity, was therefore thought to be the best option for India. Next, as highlighted, it is not about whether the practitioner is a foreign coach or an Indian, the key is to ensure athletes are provided with the best quality coaches. Consequently, the final initiative was inclusion of any Indian coaches that were already considered to be good quality within the apprenticeship programme which might help exploit social learning between Indian and foreign coaches and thereby address the issue of lack of cultural sensitivity (cf. Stoszowski & Collins, 2014). Furthermore, given that Indians are generally willing to learn from other Indian coaches, Indian coaches working with foreign coaches in Phase 1 itself might act as role models for other Indian coaches, thereby contributing to making the coaching field in general and the model in specific more attractive (Sharma, 2020). Generally, within the apprenticeship programme, whether Indian coaches work with foreign coaches in Phase 1 itself or take up responsibility in Phase 2, India could

learn from China. The Chinese basketball coaches work with foreign coaches as a team wherein they guide athletes mainly on the fighting style, whereas foreign coaches mainly focus on specific training of skills and tactics. This essentially helps keep the game in its excellent traditional style, but also ensure incorporation of advanced training concepts and learning from each other contributes to covering the potential limitations of each other (Junhua, 2019). Finally, given the demographic concerns, and learning from the experiences of football, the apprenticeship programme could be implemented at a zonal level, i.e., by dividing India into zones rather than targeting coaches in the entire country together.

Along with these revisions, suggestions regarding the challenges India could face were also incorporated within the new model. Despite introduction of the NSCI code (Government of India, 2011), as highlighted in previous Chapters, there still seems to be a significant involvement of politics within the Indian sport field which was further reinforced in Chapter 9. Although India seems to be implementing this in certain cases (Chapter 4 - Singh, 2020) and some States have also been reported to have clean and ethical systems that are not corrupt (e.g., Orrisa - Chapter 6, Section 6.3.1), introducing clearer systems with minimal politics was still reinforced. Similarly, another concern could be politics impacting the implementation of the reward what you want or the license renewal systems. Finally, to ensure feasibility of the initiatives and reduced wastage of financial resources, a need to select Indian coaches that actually understand English before investing in them learning from foreign coaches would be important. The revised model is presented in Table 10.1 with the changes marked in colour.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Need to evaluate, monitor, and review implementation of all initiatives to ensure successful implementation of the two main agendas</li> </ul>														
<p><b>Phase 2</b></p> <p><b>4-year cycle</b> Olympic sports Timeline: 2024 to 2028</p> <p><b>Timeline for evaluation points</b></p> <p>5. Commonwealth sports Timeline: 2026 to 2030</p> <p>6. Asian Games Timeline: 2026 to 2030</p> <p>7. World Championships Timeline: Sport specific</p>	<p align="center"><b>Modified education pathway</b></p> <p align="center">Based on a logically based blend of three learning styles – Pedagogy, Andragogy, Heutagogy</p> <p align="center">Appropriate (rather than preferred) combination of formal and informal education</p> <p>A) <u>Structure of education pathway</u></p> <table border="0"> <thead> <tr> <th align="center"><i>Formal education</i></th> <th align="center"><i>Informal education</i></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>i. Content of coach education</td> <td>i. Apprenticeship programme – Step two</td> </tr> <tr> <td>f. Coaching theories</td> <td><b>Change in role of coaches -</b> Promote newly developed Indian coaches and begin to phase out foreign coaches</td> </tr> <tr> <td>g. Sport-specific knowledge</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>h. Pedagogy</td> <td>ii. Increased experience opportunities</td> </tr> <tr> <td>i. Coach ‘Ologies (e.g., sport psychology)</td> <td>Voluntary and/or paid internships or placements throughout the education pathway</td> </tr> <tr> <td>j. Conditionality of knowledge</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>B) <u>Other initiatives</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continuous Professional Development (CPD)</li> <li>Communities of Practice (CoP)/Knowledge sharing platforms</li> <li>Promoting conditionality as a principle</li> </ol>	<i>Formal education</i>	<i>Informal education</i>	i. Content of coach education	i. Apprenticeship programme – Step two	f. Coaching theories	<b>Change in role of coaches -</b> Promote newly developed Indian coaches and begin to phase out foreign coaches	g. Sport-specific knowledge		h. Pedagogy	ii. Increased experience opportunities	i. Coach ‘Ologies (e.g., sport psychology)	Voluntary and/or paid internships or placements throughout the education pathway	j. Conditionality of knowledge	
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j. Conditionality of knowledge															
<b>Potential Pitfalls</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Failure to implement initiatives in Phase 1</li> <li>- <b>Introducing cleaner systems, with minimal politics</b></li> <li>- Education structure optimally incorporating the three learning styles at appropriate levels</li> <li>- Replacing the current strong preference for informal education with a combination of formal and informal education pathway</li> <li>- Indian population accepting Indian coaches over foreign coaches</li> <li>- Availability of internships and placements for aspiring coaches throughout the education pathway</li> <li>- Acceptance and consequent engagement in the process of CPD in practice and CoP by coaches at all levels</li> <li>- Transitioning the coach development programmes by OGQ and the like as traditional CPD courses</li> <li>- Evaluate, monitor, and review implementation of all initiatives to ensure successful implementation of the main agenda</li> <li>- Financial and logistical limitations impacting the successful implementation of the agendas</li> </ul>														

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Phase 3</b></p> <p><b>4-year cycle</b> Olympic sports Timeline: 2028 to 2032</p> <p><b>Timeline for evaluation points</b></p> <p>1. Commonwealth sports Timeline: 2030 to 2034</p> <p>2. Asian Games Timeline: 2030 to 2034</p> <p>3. World Championships Timeline: Sport specific</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Promote the newly developed Indian coaches and phase out the foreign coaches</b></p> <p>A) <u>Apprenticeship programme – Step three</u> Promote newly developed Indian coaches from Phase 1 &amp; 2 with minimal or no dependence on foreign coaches</p> <p>B) <u>Reward what you want</u> If you want to coach at ‘X’ level, you need ‘Y’ qualifications</p> <p>C) <u>Promote newly qualified Indian coaches as role models</u></p>
<p><b>Potential Pitfalls</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Failure to implement initiatives in Phase 1 &amp; 2</li> <li>- Newly developed Indian coaches, still being heavily dependent on foreign coaches</li> <li>- Coach hiring systems not following a reward what you want system</li> <li>- Politics affecting the reward what you want system</li> <li>- Qualified coaches, still following a competency-based approach rather than an expertise-based approach</li> <li>- Evaluate, monitor, and review implementation of all initiatives to ensure successful implementation of the two main agendas</li> <li>- Financial and logistical limitations impacting the successful implementation of the agendas</li> <li>- Prevalence of politics within the systems</li> </ul>

### 10.3 Strengths and limitations of the thesis

Considering that academic interest on Indian sport has been low (Bandyopadhyay, 2005), the studies in this thesis could be considered an important step in towards ‘unwrapping’ Indian sport. The quality of participants throughout the thesis was a particular strength given that they were all active at, or on the path to, the highest level of sport in the country. Consequently, data collected from such an ‘elite’ sample did provide valuable and rich conclusions that were potentially lesser known to the wider public (Bandyopadhyay,

2005; Richards, 1996). As already highlighted, being an Indian national who could speak two regional languages, was certainly a significant strength as I could target a diverse sample (Sivakumar, 2018) and was also able to develop a rapport with participants quite easily. With my background in sport at the national level, I also had a lot of contacts within Indian sport which helped me target a larger 'elite' sample. Next, my pragmatic approach allowed selection of a combination of method, to address the various complexities of Indian sport outlined throughout the thesis (Johnson et al., 2013). Another strength was that the use of thematic analysis (Chapter 6 and 9) further enabled me to gain a rich, detailed and complex account of data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Next, exploring Indian sport from a policy viewpoint and further gathering empirical data about the Indian sport field, really contributed to providing a holistic picture of the sport field in the country. Finally, my supervisors involvement throughout the research really helped reduce (although not completely) the subjectivity my background may have contributed (Peshkin & Peshkin, 1988).

Despite these strengths the thesis was not without limitations. First, grey literature was used throughout the thesis, which may be considered to lack quality compared to articles published in journals (Rothstein & Hopewell, 2009). To counter this, however, the literature was evaluated against Scott's (1990) four criteria; authenticity, credibility, representativeness and meaning (Zheng, 2015). Next, even though my contacts helped me obtain an 'elite' sample, using gatekeepers as outlined in previous Chapters does have some disadvantages such as potential for selection bias and risk of an over-representative sample (Browne, 2005; Sadler et al., 2010). Other pragmatic issues highlighted earlier included, one, financial and logistical restrictions that limited accessibility to participants in India and second that I was based in the UK (for Chapter 9 and 7), whereas the participants were based in India. Furthermore, for Chapter 9, with the Covid-19 pandemic, availability of participants was a real issue which might have contributed to a smaller sample. At this point, I would like to reinforce that this thesis has used a series of small samples that cannot be considered entirely

representative for a huge country that has a population of 1.4 billion ( Srivastava et al., 2020). As one of the strengths of qualitative research is the closeness of truth, at least a context-delimited version (Greenhalgh & Taylor, 1997), in the two qualitative studies (Chapter 6 and 9) I was able to collect rich data from truly ‘elite’ samples. I however cannot undermine the limitations of the small samples. Similarly, for the quantitative study (Chapter 7) I would like to reinforce the already acknowledged limitations of the use of parametric statistics and the number of statistics I have used.

#### **10.4 Future directions for research**

Given the limited research, various aspects of Indian sport could be explored, those relevant to the current thesis and those that are more generally relevant to the Indian sport field as a whole. Unfortunately, however, stating all of them might not be possible and realistic. I therefore will only present a few of the suggestions I feel would really benefit the Indian sport field.

##### ***10.4.1 Suggestions for research specific to the thesis***

**Policy studies.** To begin with, a more detailed analysis of policies, for instance impact of policies and policy learning could be conducted. With this thesis not being a thesis on sport policies, the analysis was very limited. However, if India really wishes to understand why the numerous policies are only having a limited impact, a more detailed exploration would be needed. Fuller evaluations of policies and engaging in policy learning could therefore be another area of focus for India. In fact, data from analysis of policy learning might further help formulate better strategies that could potentially ensure resources are invested impactfully, such policy analysis would be important. India could thereby also use theoretical frameworks such as the Reach, Effectiveness, Adoption, Implementation and Maintenance (RE-AIM) to determine which policy initiatives are worth continuing investment in and identify those that work in the real-world (Lynch et al., 2018).

Unfortunately, as every sport and State has developed to a different level, it might be worth

exploring each of them separately to understand potential reasons for the successes and failures of different sport and State. Furthermore, exploring the fundamental question of ‘why does India even care about sport’ and gathering proof, aside from the grey literature used in this thesis, of whether the virtuous cycle of sport philosophy is really true in the Indian context would be crucial. Another policy related suggestion would be to explore the potential of policy transfer in more detail with due consideration given to the characteristics of the source nation(s). Given that India might be more similar to other Asian countries rather than Western countries, exploring policy transfer with Asian countries other than China, for instance, Japan, Korea and Indonesia would be important. As outlined previously, however, to increase the chances of successful policy transfer, a better understanding of the Indian sport field would be required. Consequently, more research about what is happening in the Indian sport field is essential.

**Contextual studies.** Considering limitations with the sample size, one of the main suggestions for further empirical studies would be to consider a larger sample to gain more data. The empirical studies in this thesis have a varied sample from multiple sports. To therefore formulate sport specific strategies or even generalise the conclusions for any particular sport, gathering more data from each sport would be important. Despite the relatively small sample in the context of the nation, however, the quality of data I could gather from two qualitative and one quantitative study indicates that there is much that can be learned about sport in India, and a stronger understanding could ultimately facilitate success. Next, India is still one country that has not been involved in many comparative studies (if any at all). Although the current thesis compared India’s performance against Green & Oakley’s (2001) 10-factors, more comparative research might definitely be useful. As highlighted by Henry et al. (2020), clustering India with countries that have similar performances would be a better starting point rather than comparing India to top Olympic countries such as the USA or the UK. Additionally, although Green and Oakley’s (2001) model provides a holistic set of

antecedents contributing to sporting success, other models could also be explored for the comparative studies. In fact, given that India is a complex country, due consideration to any antecedents particularly relevant to the Indian context needs to be given.

**Coaching studies.** In regard to the proposed coaching model, given that the model I am proposing is very different to the currently used models, ways to promote and market the new ideas would be important. For instance, how could India better use media, what role could the media play in promoting what good coaching looks like, what could be the best strategies to promote newer concepts within the Indian sport field in general. Secondly, although this thesis has explored some changes to be introduced, a way to incorporate the change, the people involved in the process and the context of change, i.e., changes to the system (Lynch et al., 2018), a more detailed evaluation of how coaches would react to such a change in their career pathway would be required. This might further strengthen the chances of successfully implementing the proposed model. For instance, Sorcar et al's. (2017) study successfully identified an ideal software that helped educate tens of thousands of Indian school students about HIV. Given the cultural taboos around HIV in India, the study explored perceptions about various aspects of the software such as graphics and language to ensure it is culturally appropriate yet delivers the required message. Alternatively, theoretical approaches such as the Theoretical Domains Framework (TDF) could be explored given the need for behaviour change. The TDF was developed for cross-disciplinary implementation and other behaviour change research would help assess implementation and other behavioural problems which could then inform intervention design. Finally, given that India is a huge country, further exploration of how some of the proposed principles might work would be needed. For instance, the practicality of implementing CoPs within the country would need to be understood. Whilst suggestions about dividing India into zones was provided by participants in Chapter 9, how that would really look like and whether that would really be an

ideal solution would need to be explored. As highlighted earlier, although the feasibility of the proposed model has been tested, it would need to be tested again before implementation.

#### ***10.4.2 Suggestions for general research about Indian sport***

With a lack of sport science in India, research about implementation and impact of sport science disciplines in the Indian context is also very limited. Consequently, research on specific sport science disciplines could be one area India explores in more detail. Next, the majority of athletes in India currently seem to be coming from the rural as opposed to urban areas of the country. Whilst this certainly is a good thing, as these athletes are performing well and it would help them have a secure future, is India really getting the most gifted athletes? Are gifted athletes from urban areas being left behind one of the main reasons why India is not succeeding beyond a certain point? This is not to say that the rural athletes are not doing well, they certainly are. But with India being so diverse, a stronger understanding of athletes' who succeed and those who drop out from sport might help in identifying specific attributes that aid or hinder their development to becoming high performance athletes. Starting with geographical background seems logical given current trends, and it is noted that talent identification should not only be considered from a biological perspective, but from a psychosocial perspective as well (Pankhurst, 2014).

Next, as politics seems to be an issue in Indian sport in general, exploring best possible ways to structure and manage sport might be very important for the overall development of Indian sport. Other areas that could be explored include (but in no way are restricted to this list) commercialisation of sport, tourism and sport and further exploration of the impact of media not just on stakeholders in sport but also on the wider population. Finally, I would also like to extend the suggestions to physical activity in general as Indians at the moment seem to be rather inactive. Although sporting success has been identified to have a positive impact on mass participation, exploring other ways to increase participation in physical activity would be important. This could mean researching aspects such as which

sports are preferred by the population as recreational sport, ensuring accessible infrastructure is available to the population especially in the urban areas and what factors are negatively impacting physical activity of the population could also be studied. For instance, city planning impacting the available spaces to engage in recreational sport and increased sedentary lifestyle in workplaces and even among the younger population (Gupta & Bansal, 2020; Imam & Banerjee, 2016; Mukherjee et al., 2017; Singh & Purohit, 2012). Although there is research about these issues, given the constantly changing and urbanising India, continuous research would be important.

### **10.5 Conclusion**

Given the lack of academic interest on Indian sport (Bandyopadhyay, 2005), this thesis has hopefully provided some valuable insights that might facilitate sporting success in the country. The studies conducted were based on experiences and expertise of ‘elite’ and pre-elite participants across different roles and sports in India. Furthermore, with a pragmatic approach to this thesis, pragmatic conclusions have clearly been highlighted. Of particular significance, even though it continues to be contested, is a common emphasis on the virtuous cycle of sport philosophy, which states that developing successful athletes that could then inculcate national pride which would in turn help increase mass participation that would then provide a larger talent pool from which to choose future successful athletes (Grix and Carmichael, 2011). Next, given the policy-related issues, engaging in policy learning and transfer has also been highlighted (Cairney, 2012; Dolowitz & Marsh, 2000; May, 1992). Moreover, a need to explore a bottom-up and top-down approach has also been emphasised. Although currently a top-down approach is more prevalent, a bottom-up approach has really been promoted, which is also particularly relevant to India given that sport is a State subject (Chelladurai & Nair, 2017). Such a bottom-up approach would enable the ground-level implementers to propose a policy that will directly affect them rather than policymakers

imposing the policy that might be impacted by select and narrowly focused interest groups (DeLeon & DeLeon, 2002).

Although considering that India would first need to understand the current picture of Indian sport empirical studies were conducted. These studies provided three significant conclusions: firstly, a need to inculcate a stronger sporting culture that would help convince the population that sport is certainly a career to pursue. Secondly, a need for coaches to increase the use and knowledge of sport science support was also highlighted which is particularly important given that coaches are largely responsible for implementing such support. Thirdly, a coaching model focused on developing quality Indian coaches and a coaching system has been proposed. Given the importance of coaches in the development of an athlete and the significance of home-grown coaches, the thesis has concluded with a need to focus on development of liveware, i.e., coaches. This however is not to say that India should not focus on other elements, but what I want to communicate through my research is the potential benefit for India from a unified effort of prioritising coach development. At this point I would however really like to reinforce that even though the feasibility of the initial model was tested, given the complex Indian context the feasibility of the revised model might need to be tested again, for instance, after deciding who will implement the model, to avoid the long-standing policy implementation issues.

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**Appendix A - Interview Schedule for athletes and coaches (As per Chapter 6)**

<b>Sections + estimated time</b>	<b>Question</b> <i>What ‘open’ question do you need to ask to achieve this purpose?</i>	<b>Probes</b> <i>What ‘open’ question can I ask to get info on the things I want to know if they don’t seem to understand the main question? Or if they don’t provide enough detail in their answer?</i>	<b>Stimuli</b> <i>If they still don’t give me the information that I’m most interested in then what can I ask them to directly comment on?</i>	<b>Purpose</b> <i>What do you want to know or find out?</i>
Descriptive information (5 min)  <b>About them</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For the record, could you briefly introduce yourself, your past experiences in your sport and your background experiences in the real world?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For how long have you played/coached? At what level?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How old are you?</li> <li>For both – What is your educational background or do you hold any professional qualifications? If so, what and to what level?</li> </ul>	Demographic + background info
Time Frame (10-15 mins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Could you please draw a graph of your progress as an athlete/coach from when you started playing or coaching the sport?</li> <li>Put phases in or dates (e.g. when your finish school)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What does your career graph look like?</li> <li>How does your experience sub divide into phases?</li> <li>Times when you had peaks and dips in your career?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When do you think you performed the best? When do you think you performed poorly?</li> <li>The time you were at the top and the time you struggled to perform at your best?</li> </ul>	Get a sense of their progress chart, then move on to asking what helped them during their journey and what else could have helped them. Facilities they did not have at the time but would have benefited from.

<p>What were you doing that helped you succeed? What got in the way? (10-15 mins)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Athlete – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In terms of training what did you do that helped you succeed?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Coach – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- As a coach what helped you to succeed in your career?</li> <li>- As a coach what all facilities could you access and provide to athletes?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Athlete – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What factors contributed to your success as an athlete?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Coach – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What according to you helped the athletes to excel in their career?</li> <li>- What factors contributed to your success as a coach?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What all facilities were included in your training sessions that helped you succeed as an athlete, for e.g., physiotherapy, sports psychology, biomechanics, sports massage etc?</li> </ul>	<p>An overview of the context in which they succeeded</p>
<p>What specifically helped you/to help your athlete to perform in competition? What hindered? (10 mins)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Athlete – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What helped you achieve?</li> <li>- Against what pressures/challenges?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Coach – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What helped you help them to achieve?</li> <li>- Against what pressures/challenges?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Athlete – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What factors negatively impacted your performance in competitions?</li> <li>- What factors contributed to your performance in competitions? How did you overcome the challenges?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Coach – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What hindrances did you face when helping your athletes achieve?</li> <li>- What helped you support your athletes' achievement? How did you overcome the challenges?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What factors stopped you/your athlete from performing at competitions? What factors contributed to overcoming challenges faced, for e.g., sports psychology, infrastructure, financial assistance, physiotherapy etc?</li> </ul>	<p>Overview of challenges faced and how/how well they overcame them</p>
<p>What could have helped you more in your journey? (10 mins) -in training?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Athlete – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Apart from the facilities already available to you, do you feel there was something that was missing? Something</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Aside from the current facilities such as infrastructure, do you think any added facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Do you feel having sport science support as part of your regular training could have helped you/your athlete more?</li> </ul>	<p>Explore additional support they feel would have benefitted them in</p>

<p>- in competition??</p>	<p>that could have contributed towards and helped you more to success?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coach –</li> <li>- As a coach what added support would you have liked to help your athletes perform better?</li> </ul>	<p>could have helped you perform better?</p>	<p>- How do you think sport psychology would have helped you in your/your athletes' career?</p>	<p>performance enhancement</p>
<p>Anything else? (5 mins)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As you look back now/compare your experiences with others, is there anything else that would have been useful?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any help from the Government or other bodies in terms of funding, training facilities, promotion of sports?</li> <li>• Any help with things OUTSIDE sport that impacted on performance INSIDE?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What added support would you have liked from your NSF, club, other government bodies to help you/your athlete perform better?</li> </ul>	<p>To check if there are any other factors that the athletes and coaches find important which aren't covered in the interview yet are extremely important to them.</p>

Total of 50 minutes. Allow for 60

**Appendix A - Interview Schedule for administrators and government officials (As per Chapter 6)**

<b>Sections + estimated time</b>	<b>Question</b> <i>What ‘open’ question do you need to ask to achieve this purpose?</i>	<b>Probes</b> <i>What ‘open’ question can I ask to get info on the things I want to know if they don’t seem to understand the main question? Or if they don’t provide enough detail in their answer?</i>	<b>Stimuli</b> <i>If they still don’t give me the information that I’m most interested in then what can I ask them to directly comment on?</i>	<b>Purpose</b> <i>What do you want to know or find out?</i>
Descriptive information (5 min)  <b>About them</b>	For the record, could you briefly introduce yourself, your past experiences in the sports field and your experiences in the administrative or government position so far?	For how long have you been in the administrative or government position?	For how long have you been at the administrative or government role? What has your journey within administration been so far?	Demographic + background info
From a policy viewpoint, what is the current sports system used in India and what does the Government wish to achieve through the current system?  (10 mins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the structure of the sports system in India?</li> <li>• What is the focus of the Government for the Indian sports system?</li> <li>• Is it increasing participation in sports or is it enhancing performance of high-performance athletes and coaches or is it something else?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the Indian sports system federally led or state led?</li> <li>• Is it increasing participation in sports or is it enhancing performance of high-performance athletes and coaches or is it something else?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If it’s a combination, what would be your perceived balance between the different components?</li> <li>• Private funding – seen quotes from you about trying and getting more private funding. How would you like that balance to be?</li> </ul>	Get a sense of their perception of progress made in terms of the facilities provided to athletes, then move on to asking them the role of sport psychology in Indian high-performance sport systems
Strengths of the Indian sports system – What are the major strengths of the current	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What strategies are currently being implemented that are helping Indian sports progress?</li> <li>• What aspects of strategies helped</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any specific strategies that India was using which helped them accelerate progress in sport, for e.g., funding, infrastructure, sport</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What all facilities are provided to athletes and coaches that contribute to their success?</li> </ul>	An overview of which current strategies are benefitting India

<p>Indian sports system?</p> <p>(10 mins)</p>	<p>India make the progress it has achieved so far?</p>	<p>science, world-class coaches etc.?</p>	<p>e.g., funding, physiotherapy, sports psychology, biomechanics, sports massage etc?</p>	
<p>Weaknesses of the Indian sports system – What are the major challenges India is facing in terms of the sports system?</p> <p>(10 mins)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where does India lack?</li> <li>• e.g. – lacks in funding? Or Infrastructure? Sport science? Research base? Etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apart from the current facilities provided, what other facilities should be provided to the athletes?</li> <li>• What would be your ‘wish list’ of changes for the next, say, five years</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you feel India lacks in the sport science support it offers athletes?</li> <li>• Do you think conducting research in the Indian setting would prove to be beneficial to solve the issues specific to the Indian setting</li> </ul>	<p>Overview of challenges faced by India</p>
<p>Any variations you would want in this current structure of implementing policies/in the Indian sports system?</p> <p>(10 mins)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you feel India would benefit from having a single sports policy for all sports that includes training facilities, funding, sport sciences?</li> <li>• Would having a single centrally run system in place that takes care of the entire Indian sports field prove more beneficial?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Would having a single centrally run system in place that takes care of the entire Indian sports field prove more beneficial?</li> <li>• Would this system need to vary by region? At lower levels??</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any additional strategies that you could think of including in the current system to further help India excel in sports?</li> <li>• Along with the current strategies, what other strategies could the Government implement to help India progress? e.g., Khelo India, OTF committee etc?</li> </ul>	<p>Overview of their perceptions of introducing a different sports structure in India</p>
<p>Anything else?</p> <p>(5 mins)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anything else that you feel would</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any help from the Government or other</li> </ul>		<p>To check if there are any other factors that</p>

	help India excel in sports?	bodies in terms of funding, training facilities, promotion of sports?		they find important which aren't covered in the interview yet are extremely important for the Indian sports system.
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Total of 50 minutes. Allow for 60

## Appendix C (As per Chapter 7)

### Survey

**Consent:** By proceeding you agree to participating in the survey and thereby give permission for your anonymous data to be used as part of the research project. As the data is anonymous there is no way to identify any participants, hence withdrawal of your data will not be possible once you have submitted the data.

**Note:** If you want to receive the results for this study please fill in your email address below –

\_\_\_\_\_

#### I. Participant Information –

Age	
Sport	
How long have you been playing?	

**Please complete the survey ONLY if more than one of the following sentences apply to you –**

1. You train/practice at least 5 times per week
2. You make some life decisions (e.g. where you live/study) and choices (e.g. diet) based on what is needed for your support
3. You think about your sport and progress almost daily

**If the sentences do not apply to you, please feel free to quit the survey right now. The survey is meant for committed athletes who are serious about their sport**

#### II. Details about your sport

- A. What is the main reason for being involved in sport?
1. Development as a person
  2. To support progression in a wider career
  3. As a career in itself
  4. For personal achievement and satisfaction
- B. How long have you been with your current coach? (e.g. 4 years, 5 years & 2 months, 6 months etc)

\_\_\_\_\_

- C. How many coaches have you had since you started playing your current sport?

\_\_\_\_\_

D. Who all are included in your support system? Select from the options given below  
(Please tick (✓) all the relevant options)

1. Coach (developing athletes technically and tactically)
2. Sport psychologists (to work with the mental preparation with an aim to enhance performance)
3. Physiotherapists (treating injury or deformity by physical methods such as massage, heat treatment and exercise)
4. Bio mechanists (analysis of human movement and technique to identify areas of weakness, prevent injury and increase productivity of sport specific movements)
5. Strength and conditioning coach (is responsible for building the strength, size and endurance of the skeletal muscles)
6. Physiologist (strategies to ensure optimal performance is achieved at certain points throughout the training cycle. For example, fitness tests, working with the coach to monitor the athlete's body responses to training programmes and competition and so on)
7. Nutritionist (to advise on what's best to eat and drink to enhance performance)
8. Performance analyst (using a range of computer software and video technology to assess performance)
9. Parents

E. How long has your support system been with you? Please specify number of years or months. If the support system does not apply to you, write a '0', for e.g., if you have never been with a bio mechanist, write a '0'

Coach	
Sport psychologist	
Physiotherapist	
Bio mechanist	
Strengthen and conditioning coach	
Physiologist	
Nutritionist	
Performance analyst	
Parents	

## Survey

Using the following scale, please circle a number from 0 to 10 to indicate your level of agreement with each of the statements regarding your coach. Please circle **ONLY** one of the options.

**0 = My coach does not have the mentioned quality at all**

**10 = My coach does have the mentioned quality in abundance**

**A. Support provided by my coach**

My coach <b>does not</b> have the mentione d quality at all	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	My coach <b>does</b> have the mentioned quality in abundance
--	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----	---

My coach...

1. Designs a challenging training programme for me to help me develop physically so I can compete with top athletes (or eventually compete with high-level athletes/towards top performance)
2. Ensures we work on the technical aspects of the sport to match up to the level of high-level athletes
3. Helps me become tactically strong to ensure I am able to compete with international athletes
4. Ensures I am mentally and physically prepared for my competitions
5. Helps me set goals (long-term and short-term) with an aim to get my performance to the level of other high-level athletes
6. Ensures I stay psychologically strong during my competitions

**B. Coach Behaviours**

My coach <b>does not</b> have the mentione d quality at all	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	My coach <b>does</b> have the mentioned quality in abundance
--	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----	---

My coach...

7. Changes his/her behaviour to suit every athlete's individual needs

8. Ensures I feel I can trust him/her with any information I feel like sharing
9. Is always open to trying new ideas which may help enhance my performance
10. Gives feedback appropriately about how I can correct the errors I am making
11. Shows appreciation when I do anything good
12. Always encourages contribution from me about important sport related decisions
13. Ensures the entire team (for individual sports – everyone training under the coach) has informal interactions outside the sport to strengthen the bond we all share
14. Disregards any opinions I have about sport related decisions
15. Uses his/her power to manipulate me
16. Creates a safe environment for me to try new tactics and techniques even if I make mistakes in the process

**C. Knowledge possessed by your coach**

My coach <b>does not</b> have the mentioned quality at all	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	My coach <b>does</b> have the mentioned quality in abundance
--	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----	--

My coach...

17. Possesses enough knowledge to help me enhance my performance
18. Has knowledge which is sufficient to help me develop as an athlete

**D. Experience my coach has**

My coach <b>does not</b> have the mentioned quality at all	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	My coach <b>does</b> have the mentioned quality in abundance
--	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----	--

My coach...

19. Has enough practical experience to help me improve my performance

20. Has the correct level of expertise to coach me at and beyond my current level of performance.

**E. Sport Science Support**

My coach <b>does not</b> have the mentioned quality at all	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	My coach <b>does</b> have the mentioned quality in abundance
--	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----	--

21. I have a good understanding of sport sciences like sport psychology, strength and conditioning etc

22. My coach...

23. Has the required knowledge about sport science support required for athlete development

24. Includes and also encourages me to use techniques like biomechanics, strength and conditioning etc. to improve performance

25. Constantly encourages me to use approaches like nutritionist, sport psychology, physiology for my performance enhancement

**F. Perceived importance of coaching**

My coach <b>does not</b> have the mentioned quality at all	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	My coach <b>does</b> have the mentioned quality in abundance
--	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----	--

26. For me, quality of coaching is one of the most important elements contributing to my progress

My coach...

27. Has the necessary skills and knowledge is vital for my progress

28. Has helped me progress to the level I am currently at

29. Constantly tries to become more skilful or knowledgeable, to make me a better performer

30. Plays a significant role in my motivation to stay in sport

**G. Current Coach Qualifications in India**

My coach <b>does not</b> have the mentioned quality at all	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	My coach <b>does</b> have the mentioned quality in abundance
--	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----	--

31. The current coach qualifications are producing good quality coaches who can guide Indian athletes to succeed at the international level

32. Every sport should have a unified coach qualification to ensure every coach in that sport teaches a similar curriculum (i.e., if athletes have to train under a national coach instead of their personal coach, there should be no confusion about what is being taught)

**Appendix D (As per Chapter 7)**  
**Results for independent *t* test**  
**Group Statistics**

	Level of performance achieved	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Coach	National	93	2.71	2.66	.27
	State	18	5.26	3.12	.73
Sport Psychologist	National	93	.51	.51	.05
	State	18	.36	.96	.22
Physiotherapist	National	92	1.37	1.32	.13
	State	17	2.29	2.28	.55
Biomechanist	National	93	.00	.00	.00
	State	18	.01	.02	.00
Strength and Conditioning Coach	National	91	1.37	1.52	.15
	State	18	1.78	2.01	.47
Physiologist	National	93	.01	.06	.00
	State	18	.01	.02	.00
Nutritionist	National	93	.64	1.41	.14
	State	18	1.39	2.17	.51
Performance analyst	National	92	.63	1.18	.12
	State	18	.00	.00	.00
Parents	National	92	3.94	6.91	.72
	State	18	14.11	6.64	1.56
Physical Development	National	93	8.54	1.55	.16
	State	18	8.61	1.72	.41
Technical aspects	National	93	8.69	1.38	.14
	State	18	8.56	1.85	.44
Tactically strong	National	93	8.62	1.48	.15
	State	18	8.67	1.68	.40
Phys and Ment prepared	National	93	8.73	1.62	.17
	State	18	8.39	2.30	.54
Goal Setting	National	93	8.69	1.54	.16
	State	18	7.72	2.59	.61
Psychologically Strong	National	93	8.52	1.53	.16
	State	18	7.56	2.64	.62
Changes behaviour to suit athlete	National	93	7.87	2.07	.21
	State	18	8.39	1.88	.44
Ensures trust	National	93	7.91	2.44	.25
	State	18	8.28	2.05	.48
	National	93	8.69	1.57	.16

Open to trying new ideas	State	18	8.22	2.88	.68
Gives App. Feedback	National	93	9.27	1.16	.12
	State	18	8.83	1.04	.27
Shows appreciation	National	93	8.97	1.61	.17
	State	18	8.83	1.51	.36
Encourages contributions about DM	National	93	7.59	2.54	.26
	State	18	8.39	1.58	.37
Works on team building	National	93	8.30	2.15	.22
	State	18	7.56	2.92	.69
Disregards my opinions	National	93	4.37	3.54	.37
	State	16	4.81	2.99	.75
Uses power to manipulate	National	92	6.26	3.49	.36
	State	16	4	3.25	.81
Creates safe environment	National	92	8.66	1.28	.13
	State	18	8.39	2.33	.55
Possesses enough knowledge	National	93	9.23	1.31	.14
	State	18	8.61	1.85	.44
Possesses enough knowledge for my development	National	93	8.91	1.36	.14
	State	18	8.28	2.27	.54
Possesses enough practical experience	National	93	9.16	1.24	.13
	State	18	8.67	2.38	.56
Possesses enough expertise to coach me beyond my level	National	93	9.03	1.24	.13
	State	18	8.22	2.69	.63
Understands sport science	National	93	8.22	2.17	.23
	State	18	6.89	2.81	.66
Understands sport science support	National	93	8.29	1.43	.15
	State	18	7.06	2.92	.69
Uses sport science support	National	93	6.99	3.04	.32
	State	18	6.89	2.76	.65
Encourages athlete to use sport science support	National	93	6.90	2.99	.31
	State	18	6.17	2.92	.69
Quality of coaching most important	National	93	9.30	1.63	.17
	State	18	9.11	1.18	.28
	National	93	8.97	1.39	.15

Coach has necessary knowledge and skills	State	18	8.61	2.12	.50
Coach helped me progress to my current level	National	93	9.09	1.48	.15
	State	18	8.61	2.50	.59
Coach constantly tries to develop skills and knowledge	National	93	8.65	1.82	.19
	State	18	8.33	1.94	.46
Plays a significant role in my motivation	National	93	8.70	2.07	.21
	State	18	8.22	1.99	.47
Current coach equals are producing good coaches	National	93	7.95	2.35	.24
	State	18	7.67	2.30	.54
Unified coach qualifications are needed	National	93	8.51	2.00	.21
	State	18	8.89	1.88	.44

### Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Coach	Equal variances assumed	.80	.37	-3.59	109	.001	-2.54	.70	-3.94	-1.13
	Equal variances not assumed			-3.22	22.04	.004	-2.54	.79	-4.17	-.90
Sport Psychologist	Equal variances assumed	6.37	.01	.95	109	.344	.15	.16	-.16	.46

	Equal variances not assumed			.64	18.94	.531	.15	.23	-.34	.64
Physiotherapist	Equal variances assumed	9.76	.002	-2.33	107	.022	-.93	.40	-1.72	-.14
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.6	18.04	.122	-.93	.57	-2.13	.27
Biomechanist	Equal variances assumed	24.26	.00	-2.3	109	.022	-.01	.00	-.010	-.00
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.00	17.00	.33	-.01	.01	-.02	.01
Strength and Conditioning Coach	Equal variances assumed	1.88	.18	-.98	107	.33	-.41	.42	-1.23	.42
	Equal variances not assumed			-.82	21.01	.42	-.41	.50	-1.45	.63
Physiologist	Equal variances assumed	.024	.88	.06	109	.95	.00	.01	-.029	.03
	Equal variances not assumed			.11	70.18	.92	.00	.01	-.02	.018
Nutritionist	Equal variances assumed	8.11	.01	-1.87	109	.06	-.75	.40	-1.54	.05
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.41	19.88	.18	-.75	.53	-1.86	.36
Performance analyst	Equal variances assumed	21.40	.000	2.26	108	.03	.63	.28	.08	1.18
	Equal variances not assumed			5.12	91.00	.00	.63	.12	.39	.88
Parents	Equal variances assumed	.07	.80	-5.74	108	.00	-10.17	1.77	-13.68	-6.66

	Equal variances not assumed			-5.90	24.76	.00	-10.17	1.72	-13.72	-6.62
Physical Development	Equal variances assumed	.69	.41	-.18	109	.86	-.07	.41	-.88	.73
	Equal variances not assumed			-.17	22.67	.87	-.07	.44	-.98	.83
Technical aspects	Equal variances assumed	3.08	.082	.35	109	.73	.13	.38	-.61	.88
	Equal variances not assumed			.29	20.77	.78	.13	.46	-.82	1.09
Tactically strong	Equal variances assumed	.20	.66	-.11	109	.91	-.04	.39	-.82	.73
	Equal variances not assumed			-.10	22.40	.92	-.04	.43	-.92	.84
Phys and Ment prepared	Equal variances assumed	2.11	.15	.76	109	.45	.34	.45	-.55	1.23
	Equal variances not assumed			.60	20.39	.55	.34	.57	-.84	1.53
Goal Setting	Equal variances assumed	6.49	.012	2.15	109	.034	.97	.45	.08	1.86
	Equal variances not assumed			1.53	19.396	.14	.97	.63	-.35	2.28
Psychologically Strong	Equal variances assumed	9.18	.003	2.13	109	.04	.96	.45	.07	1.85
	Equal variances not assumed			1.50	19.27	.15	.96	.64	-.38	2.30
Changes behavior to	Equal variances assumed	.58	.45	-.99	109	.33	-.52	.53	-1.56	.52

suit athlete	Equal variances not assumed			-1.05	25.58	.30	-.52	.49	-1.53	.50
Ensures trust	Equal variances assumed	.37	.54	-.59	109	.55	-.36	.61	-1.58	.85
	Equal variances not assumed			-.67	27.19	.51	-.36	.55	-1.48	.76
Open to trying new ideas	Equal variances assumed	8.04	.01	.98	109	.33	.47	.47	-.47	1.41
	Equal variances not assumed			.67	19.009	.51	.47	.61	-.91	1.93
Gives App. Feedback	Equal variances assumed	.36	.55	1.48	109	.14	.44	.21	-.15	1.02
	Equal variances not assumed			1.59	25.87	.124	.44	.27	-.13	1.00
Shows appreciation	Equal variances assumed	.02	.90	.33	109	.74	.13	.41	-.68	.95
	Equal variances not assumed			.34	25.15	.74	.13	.39	-.67	.94
Encourages contributions about DM	Equal variances assumed	1.70	.20	-1.3	109	.20	-.80	.62	-2.03	.44
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.75	36.68	.09	-.80	.46	-1.72	.13
Works on team building	Equal variances assumed	2.82	.10	1.27	109	.21	.75	.59	-.42	1.91
	Equal variances not assumed			1.03	20.71	.31	.75	.72	-.76	2.25
Disregards my opinions	Equal variances assumed	4.76	.031	-.48	107	.64	-.45	.94	-2.31	1.41

	Equal variances not assumed			-.54	22.84	.60	-.45	.83	-2.17	1.28
Uses power to manipulate	Equal variances assumed	.16	.69	2.42	106	.017	2.26	.94	.41	4.12
	Equal variances not assumed			2.54	21.50	.019	2.26	.89	.41	4.11
Creates safe environment	Equal variances assumed	6.94	.01	.71	108	.478	.27	.39	-.49	1.04
	Equal variances not assumed			.49	19.05	.633	.27	.57	-.91	1.46
Possesses enough knowledge	Equal variances assumed	3.76	.055	1.69	109	.09	.62	.36	-.11	1.33
	Equal variances not assumed			1.35	20.43	.19	.62	.46	-.34	1.57
Possesses enough knowledge for my development	Equal variances assumed	7.36	.01	1.61	109	.11	.64	.40	-.15	1.42
	Equal variances not assumed			1.15	19.41	.26	.64	.55	-.52	1.79
Possesses enough practical experience	Equal variances assumed	10.10	.00	1.30	109	.20	.50	.38	-.26	1.25
	Equal variances not assumed			.86	18.82	.40	.50	.58	-.71	1.61
Possesses enough expertise to coach me beyond my level	Equal variances assumed	10.11	.002	2.02	109	.05	.81	.40	.02	1.60
	Equal variances not assumed			1.25	18.42	.23	.81	.65	-.55	2.17

Understands sport science (participant)	Equal variances assumed	2.77	.10	2.26	109	.026	1.33	.59	.16	2.49
	Equal variances not assumed			1.90	21.12	.071	1.33	.70	-.13	2.78
Understands sport science support (coach)	Equal variances assumed	23.48	.00	2.75	109	.007	1.24	.45	.34	2.13
	Equal variances not assumed			1.75	18.599	.096	1.24	.70	-.24	2.71
Uses sport science support	Equal variances assumed	.59	.44	.130	109	.897	.10	.77	-1.43	1.63
	Equal variances not assumed			.14	25.63	.891	.10	.72	-1.39	1.59
Encourages athlete to use sport science support	Equal variances assumed	.00	.97	.96	109	.34	.74	.77	-.78	2.26
	Equal variances not assumed			.98	24.44	.34	.74	.75	-.82	2.29
Quality of coaching most important	Equal variances assumed	.02	.90	.47	109	.64	.19	.41	-.61	.99
	Equal variances not assumed			.58	31.09	.57	.19	.33	-.48	.86
Coach has necessary knowledge and skills	Equal variances assumed	6.92	.01	.91	109	.37	.36	.39	-.42	1.14
	Equal variances not assumed			.69	19.95	.50	.36	.52	-.73	1.44
Coach helped me	Equal variances assumed	5.01	.027	1.10	109	.28	.48	.43	-.38	1.33

progress to my current level	Equal variances not assumed			.78	19.37	.45	.48	.61	-.80	1.75
Coach constantly tries to develop skills and knowledge	Equal variances assumed	.55	.46	.66	109	.51	.31	.47	-.63	1.25
	Equal variances not assumed			.63	23.13	.54	.31	.50	-.71	1.34
Plays a significant role in my motivation	Equal variances assumed	1.10	.30	.90	109	.37	.48	.53	-.58	1.53
	Equal variances not assumed			.93	24.68	.36	.48	.52	-.59	1.54
Current coach qualifications are producing good coaches	Equal variances assumed	.01	.94	.47	109	.64	.28	.60	-.92	1.48
	Equal variances not assumed			.47	24.38	.64	.28	.60	-.95	1.51
Unified coach qualifications are needed	Equal variances assumed	.17	.68	-.75	109	.45	-.38	.51	-1.40	.63
	Equal variances not assumed			-.79	25.11	.44	-.38	.49	-1.39	.62

## Appendix E - Interview Schedule (As per Chapter 9)

### Interview Schedule: Exploring the perceptions of key stakeholders about sport strategy in general and the Indian coach development system in particular

<b>Sections + estimated time</b>	<b>Question</b> <i>What 'open' question do you need to ask to achieve this purpose?</i>	<b>Probes</b> <i>What 'open' question can I ask to get info on the things I want to know if they don't seem to understand the main question?</i>	<b>Stimuli</b> <i>If they still don't give me the information that I'm most interested in then what can I ask them to directly comment on?</i>	<b>Purpose</b> <i>What do you want to know or find out?</i>
Descriptive information (5 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For the record, could you briefly introduce yourself, specifically your involvement in sport and coach development systems in India?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For how long have you been involved in the sports field?</li> <li>What has your journey been within the sports field and specifically your involvement with coach development system in India?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Within your organisation, what is your involvement with strategy and the coach development system?</li> <li>About you and your involvement in the coach development system</li> </ul>	Demographic + background info
Current coach development situation in your sport (10 mins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To begin with, what is the current coach development situation in your sport?</li> <li>So, what is the current system that is in place?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What does the coaching field currently look like in your sport?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What would you say about the current coach development scenario in your sport? What system is currently being used?</li> </ul>	Get a sense of the general strategy used for coach development in their sport
Their perceptions about challenges within the coach development system (10 mins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For now, keeping aside what we had sent you, what are the challenges in the current coach development system in India?</li> <li>According to you, what are the main issues with the current coach development in India?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What are your thoughts on the current coach development system in India?</li> <li>How would you describe the current coach development in India?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Being involved with coach development system, what are the main challenges that you currently encounter?</li> </ul>	Get a sense of their perceptions about challenges in the current coach development system in India

<p>What are their views about the solutions we are proposing in our model? (10 mins)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do you think about the solutions we have proposed in the model for the Indian coach development system?</li> <li>• Do you think the solutions we have proposed are feasible in India?</li> <li>• Do you think they will be effective?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you agree with the solutions we have proposed?</li> <li>• What are your thoughts about solutions we have proposed in the model?</li> </ul> <p>Define the nature of 'effective'!</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Looking at the model, what do you think about the solutions we have proposed?</li> </ul>	<p>Get a sense of their thoughts about the solutions we have proposed in the model for the Indian coach development system?</p>
<p>Their views about whether we have accurately captured the challenges (potential pitfalls) of the Indian coach development system in the proposed model? (10 mins)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you think we have managed to capture the challenges of the Indian coach development system accurately?</li> <li>• Are all the challenges of the Indian coach development system covered in the proposed model?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Looking at the proposed model, do you think all the challenges of the current Indian coach development system have been covered?</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there any challenges that we have missed out on?</li> <li>• Any potential that could be affecting the Indian coach development system which have not been covered in the proposed model?</li> </ul>	<p>Get a sense of whether we have captured the challenges (potential pitfalls) of the Indian coach development system accurately</p>
<p>Anything else? (5 mins)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there any other comments you would like to make in regard to the India coach development system or the proposed model?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any more comments you would like to make regarding the challenges (according to you or the ones proposed by us) and solutions proposed?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Would you like to add anything more to whatever we have discussed so far?</li> </ul>	<p>Capturing any comments that could have been missed</p>

Total of 50 minutes. Allow for 60