

## Role of Sports Journalism in the Upliftment of Indian Sports

(Acceptance 28-01-2014)

**Mrs. Bharti Sharma** Assistant Professor,  
(Deptt. of Physical Education).  
G.D.C Nanauta Saharanpur U.P. India.

### Introduction

*“Champions aren't made in the gyms. Champions are made from something they have deep inside them -- a desire, a dream, a vision”* Muhammad Ali. The idea of writing this quote is that the athletes are champions because of themselves but no doubt that the crowd/countrymen/audiences makes masters.

The sports journalism is a combination of two terms sports and journalism. The sport is a very organized terminology which encompasses the rules of the game and more structured application to achieve the win.

**Journalism** is a method of inquiry and literary style that aims to provide a service to the public by the dissemination and analysis of news and other information. Journalistic integrity is based on the principles of truth, disclosure, and editorial independence. Journalistic mediums can vary diversely, from print publishing to electronic broadcasting and from newspaper to television channels, as well as to the web, and to digital technology.

In modern society, the news media is the chief purveyor of information and opinion about public affairs. Journalism, however, is not always confined to the news media or to news itself, as journalistic communication may find its way into broader forms of expression, including literature and cinema. In some nations, the news media is still controlled by government intervention, and is not fully an independent body.

In the 1920s, as modern journalism was just taking form, writer Walter Lippmann and American philosopher John Dewey debated over the role of journalism in a democracy. Their differing philosophies still characterize a debate about the role of journalism in society and the nation-state. While various existing codes have some differences, most share common elements including the principles of — truthfulness, accuracy, objectivity, impartiality, fairness and public accountability — as these apply to the acquisition of newsworthy information and its subsequent dissemination to the public.

**Sports journalism** is a form of writing that reports on sporting topics and games. While the sports department within some newspapers has been mockingly called the *toy department*, because sports journalists do not concern themselves with the 'serious' topics covered by the news desk, sports coverage has grown in importance as sport has grown in wealth, power and influence.

Sports journalism is an essential element of any news media organization. Sports journalism includes organizations devoted entirely to sports reporting — newspapers such as *L'Equipe* in France, *La Gazzetta dello Sport* in Italy, *Marca* in Spain, and the defunct *Sporting Life* in Britain, American magazines such as *Sports Illustrated* and the *Sporting News*, all-sports talk radiostations, and television networks such as Eurosport, Fox Sports 1, ESPN and The Sports Network (TSN).

However, none of these sporting events excited much interest in the media for the first two or three decades. It was only after the end of the First World War in 1918 that newspapers began regularly reporting sports in any detail.

In India too newspapers rarely devoted much space to sports. The first breakthrough came with the inaugural Asian Games which were held in Delhi in 1951. It was from then onwards that newspapers began having separate sports departments and sports pages. The second breakthrough came with the advent of colour TV, showcasing first the 1982 Asian Games and

then India's triumph in the 1983 Prudential World Cup. Now finally, sports news began to find itself on the front pages as well.

The story goes that in the early years of Indian sports journalism anyone found not worthy of being on the news desk would get shunted to sports. Happily that is not the case today where we are in an age of specialization with reporters having their own beats.

Among the leading pioneering sports journalists in India were P.N. Sunderasan, KN Prabhu, Bobby Talyarkhan and N. Ramaswami. The quality stuff they wrote decades back is still worth reading.

Back in the 40s it was not unusual for the pre-eminent cricket writer of his day, Neville Cardus to write meandering, even poetical reports crossing 2,000 words on a local county match.

The biggest change since then has been that reports have become snappier and more to the point. Quote journalism has also made its presence felt and no report is complete these days without such quotes from the star of the day.

### **Growth of Indian Sports Journalism**

However, Indian sports journalism is of recent growth. In the main it developed in a very perceptible manner in the early years of independence. Prior to that there were practically no regular sports pages in many newspapers.

The first remarkable event in the history of sports journalism in India was the introduction of a sports page by a leading English daily of Bombay in the late thirties. This bold and 'revolutionary' step was resented by some readers who had no interest in sports but the majority of the readers liked it. Its sports page became so popular that other newspapers followed suit. Today there are sports columns in all daily newspapers. Yet a distressing feature of Indian sports journalism is that there are not enough good magazines on sports especially in Indian languages. A couple of English magazines are catering to the needs of sports lovers but there is woeful lack of informative and educative journals in Indian languages.

### **A Specialization**

Sports journalism is a form of specialization with its own special rules and conditions. Whether one is a sports writer, reporter or sub-editor, he lives in a different world. But in that

world the basic principles of the craft remain the same. Within Journalism relating to sports, there are subsidiary specializations concerned with cricket, hockey, football, tennis, badminton and athletics etc. Here there is choice enough for anybody.

It is pleasant for the sports writer to view a sports event from the best seats and without paying any admission fee but he is never able to assume the carefree attitude of a casual fan. For him watching sports event is an absorbing as well as a taxing affair. This does not mean that sports writers do not enjoy their work. It does mean that they cannot allow their enthusiasm to approach that which the average sports lover displays.

While covering important sports events a sports reporter has to collect previous records to relate the news to the past, prepare explanatory material and background facts and do speculative and interpretative reporting. He must get adequate identification of the players. He has to go beyond the mere objective of reporting of the event. He has to be a trained expert qualified not only to report but also to explain and interpret the run of play. He has to expand the horizon of the news. He has to explain amplify and clarify.

A sports reporter should be eagle-eyed and with sharp ears. He must not only be sensitive to his environment but must have the capacity to translate the excitement on the field into readable words. So it is a hard road indeed. But in any case journalism as a whole is an exacting master and offers no bed of roses. Working sports journalists are facing another problem peculiar to their sphere of specialization. Many renowned sportsmen and national sports heroes of the recent past have made 'intrusions' into the 'field'. Newspapers are vying with one another to have the advantage of a by-line of a great sports celebrity. A luminous band of sports stars of former times have turned to journalism i.e. sports journalism and they are writing frequently in the national Press. When important matches are staged they 'cover' them. For example, half a dozen former test cricketers cover test matches for different newspapers. Their names are well known, their exploits are fresh in the public mind. Naturally their by-line attracts readers. Sometimes when

two news stories of a single match appear in a paper, the news story of the working journalist (although he may be an eminent journalist) is given secondary treatment. Anyway, seasoned and thoroughly competent men in the profession and those who want to be in right earnest and are painstaking need have no worries. They can do very well. While presenting all the facts that are needed for a story they can add a distinctive touch of their own as a mark of individuality and originality (Dialogue : A quarterly journal of Astha Bharti).

The career opportunities in sports journalism are match reporter, freelance reporting, newspaper reporting, radio, television, magazines and online journalism. It is one of the rewarding careers and needs lot of hard work and dedication towards the profession. However, the rewards and incentives are very lucrative but a journalist needs to be able to meet the deadlines and be able to endure the turns and toils on the ground with the athletes.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of the present study are:

- To know the favorable effect of the good sports journalism on the athletes and the society.
- To know the effect of the biased sports journalism on the athletes and the society.

### **Reviews of the Literature**

You don't have to look far into the horizon of the mass media or the blogosphere to understand the size and darkness of the cloud hanging over next month's Commonwealth Games in Delhi. Over here, a Reuter's reporter asks how Delhi's poor will benefit from the Games and finds no good answers; there, an IBN Live staffer suggests that the big winner will be corruption. Indeed, my colleague Vivek Dehejia has roundly denounced the CWG and gone as far as to say that he hopes that they fail. In the midst of all this bad press, there *must* be something good to say, somewhere, about something. Right?

However, attempting to find a positive point of view to get behind is a potential minefield, with hundreds of gatekeepers of Correctness on the Internet ready to pounce if you dare to suggest one. Perhaps this is why the opinion pieces that search for pros rather than cons tend to find them only in a negative, post-Games way. For

example: the legacy of the disaster will inevitably force a number of positive changes in Delhi, and residents are for once united... in their outrage against the great con about to descend upon their city, according to the audacity of Pride.

The match made for the perfect sporting drama, but sadly it wasn't televised in India. Instead, at least two channels (ESPN and Star Cricket) were broadcasting the same cricket match – England vs. India – while naturally another opted for that traditional Sunday afternoon fare, wrestling – American WWF/pantomime style. So much for hockey being India's national sport. India's neglected sports more like.

Cricket gets wall-to-wall, 24-hour coverage in India, but hockey is sidelined. Despite the country's huge, young and diverse population, it seems there's only room for one sport.

Though India won silver medal in last year's Commonwealth Games – beating both Pakistan and England en route to a 0-8 loss to Australia in the final – hockey has struggled to match the heights of bygone eras. India won six-straight Olympic gold's from the late 1920s to the 1950s, but didn't even qualify for the last Olympics in Beijing in 2008.

National sport or not, hockey simply cannot compete with the financial muscle or appeal of cricket in India. Still, a victory over Pakistan in a major regional final should help boost its popularity, and that's no bad thing.

The success of Nehwal and her peers is intrinsically linked with India's liberalization in the 90s, when sports other than cricket started gaining prominence and the rise of a newly robust media ensured the successes were well documented and publicized for all to see. Liberalization also exposed the Indian middle classes to the world and spurred their kids' ambitions. But even so, progress was slow. Even in 1997, when Razia Shabnam, now a 31-year-old boxing coach and international referee, first took up boxing, her decision scandalized her neighbours. Parents forbid their girls to talk to her and Shabnam had to hide behind a veil to walk to the boxing club where she would change into boxing gear. Slowly, as other women like boxer Mary Kom also began to win, things began to change for the athletes. Shabnam opted to coach rather than play competitively. She is

also one of India's three women international boxing referees. "Today," Shabnam says, "parents come enquiring about opportunities." Many credit that shift directly to Sania Mirza, an Indian tennis star never far from the frontpages. In 2005, Mirza was the first Indian woman to win a Women's Tennis Association (WTA) title, the AP Tourism Hyderabad Open. She followed it up with two mixed doubles grand slam wins in the 2009 Australian Open and the 2012 French Open. "Sania was young, attractive, playing hard, winning matches against big players and reached the Top 30 in the world," say Shamyra Dasgupta, a sports journalist and author of *Bhiwani Junction*, a book on Indian boxing. "To a nation shorn of sporting heroes, she was the real deal, for a while."

And this silent social shift is becoming visible in the least likely places. Haryana, a northern Indian state is home to the nation's worst male-to-female ratio and infamous for its legacy of female feticide and honor killings. But it now produces many of the nation's most well-known female athletes. These include Krishna Poonia, a champion discus thrower and gold medalist at the 2010 Commonwealth Games and Geeta Phogat, the first Indian woman wrestler at the Olympics. Haryana's state government has introduced various incentive schemes and promises of employment to medal-winning athletes. It also recently made it compulsory for school children to play at least one sport. These measures, analysts say, have affected the state of women in Haryana as a whole. Last year, Haryana reported a rise in the sex ratio to 877 females per 1000 males – its best in the last 110 years. "Haryana's attitude to women is changing and that is reflected in the rise of its women athletes," says Ritu Jagnal, a Haryana-based social activist. "It will still take time — social shifts cannot happen overnight – but it is happening."

#### **Analysis of the Study**

Sports journalism is a profession of responsibility on the part of the athletes and also on the part of the society for which we are working especially the country. After lot of discussion and reviews we found certain services of the sports journalists which satisfy the hunger of the athlete and the society. It is a cautious task for making a balanced performance for all the

sports and the sports lovers. The ability to rationalise the performance of the athlete and the team the journalists need to pen down the truth in black and white. Athlete is not just an athlete who plays and performs on the ground he is also a member of the family, society, a friend, father, lover, husband and lot many roles to play. The journalism identifies each and every aspect of his/her life to make his performance better and not a burden. The responsibility towards the nation is to provide the good journalism in the field of sports to maintain its ethics and survive the integration of the country inside n outside. According my research the sports journalism works and serves to the nation and its men.

The sports journalism serves:

- Motivational Force
- Education And Guidance : Athlete And Viewers
- Identification And Recognition
- Rewarding And Honour
- Society Perception
- Sports As Profession

#### **Conclusion and Suggestions**

- Journalism have vice versa role for the athletes and by the athletes. This notion believes in the theory of participation of the masses with the representatives. The journalism is done for the best performances of the athletes to be adjudges and acknowledged by the country and also by the athletes themselves to give views of their participation and experience.
- Journalism initiates marketing avenues as an integral part of globalization. The globalization has brought world as small as a smart phone but this not at all finishes the task. On the contrary it initiates the responsibility of the sports journalists to make more news so far and fast to make the business smart.
- Initiate business for the sports men and the federation at national and international level. The economy of the developed country is largely dependent on the sports federations and the sportsmen of the country. For example the BCCI is the richest cricket control board of the world playing cricket. The marketing and holding any national and

- international sporting event largely affects the economy of the state/country.
- Make India a bigger platform accepting sports participation as a right for everyone to participate and choose as a profession of lifetime
  - Initiate technology advancement. The technological advancements will improve the athlete's performance, the design of the equipment and the journalism faster and stronger for the desired results.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. "(Society of Professional Journalists) - Code of Ethics". SPJ. Retrieved 2013-03-01.
2. "10 Most Censored Countries," Committee to Protect Journalists, 2 May 2012, page retrieved 23 May 2013.
3. "APME (Associated Press Managing Editors) - Statement of Ethical Principles". Web.archive.org. 2008-06-22. Retrieved 2013-03-01.
4. "ASNE (American Society of Newspapers Editors) - Statement of Principles". Web.archive.org. Retrieved 2013-03-01.
5. Dialogue (A quarterly journal of Astha Bharati). October - December 2005 , Volume 7 No. 2
6. Harcup 2009, p. 3.
7. <http://www.guluezekiel.com/lecture.htm>
8. <http://www.wikipedia.com>
9. IFJ (International Federation of Journalists) - Declaration of Principles on the Conduct of Journalists (DOC version)
10. India Wins Asian Hockey Championship @ *WillMHDavies*.
11. India's Society: How Sports and the Olympics Can Uplift Women | TIME.com <http://olympics.time.com/2012/08/21/indias-golden-girls-how-sports-and-the-olympics-can-uplift-women/#ixzz2vSfUPxA1>
12. India's Society: How Sports and the Olympics Can Uplift Women | TIME.com <http://olympics.time.com/2012/08/21/indias-golden-girls-how-sports-and-the-olympics-can-uplift-women/#ixzz2vShc2h3e>
13. India's Society: How Sports and the Olympics Can Uplift Women | TIME.com <http://olympics.time.com/2012/08/21/indias-golden-girls-how-sports-and-the-olympics-can-uplift-women/#ixzz2vShmIN6r>
14. The Audacity Of Pride: Your Common wealth Games
15. The Audacity Of Pride: Your Common wealth Games. *September 21, 2010*