

Human Development Index and achievement in Summer Olympics : A Critical Analysis

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Abstract

The attraction of sport for many players in general and top players in particular is that it offers numerous opportunities to stretch them physically. The higher the level of the sport the harder is the competition and the greater are the demands made on the players. Undoubtedly the ultimate goal in top class sport is to win, to gain a successful outcome in whatever contest one is engaged in(Downy , 2002). But, very less explore to know that the countries HDI also plays a significant role in improving the socio-economic status as in developing the backbone of the society for development of sports.

Objective: To determine the relationship between Medal achieved in Summer Olympics (*MSO*) by a country and its Human Development Index (*HDI*) and its components i.e Life Expectancy (*LE*), Means Years of Schooling (*MYS*), Expected Years of Schooling (*EYS*) , Gross National Income per capita (*GNI per capita* \$).

Methods: Data was taken from the website of International Olympic Committee, World Bank and United Nation and Spearman's rank correlation (ρ) was used to test the objective.

Results: Significant rank correlation was found between Medal Achievement in Summer Olympics and HDI, LE, MYS, EYS, GNI, Conclusion:, It is inferred that if a developing country frames appropriate policies with priority to Human Development Index i.e. Life Expectancy and Education, then there are chances of achieving more medals in future Olympics

KEYWORDS: *Life Expectancy, Human Development Index, Gross National Income etc*

Introduction

With all round advancement in the science of sports the new disciplines are emerging with micro-specializations. The elements, of scientific basis of selection are being inducted in the procedure of selection of athletes at various levels in some of the advanced countries. The knowledge from many scientific disciplines is being used for improving the criteria for the selection of talents. The physical educationists have designed test procedures fore evaluating the fitness of young children. The structures of performance for different games and events is being worked out. The general physical fitness of top—ranking athletes has been evaluated. Human growth and performance is also an important field in this regard. The physiological factors limiting one's performance in sports are also well known. It is the understanding of interaction of all these factors that can help us in designing the way for selecting the children for appropriate game and training(Sodhi 1980).

In the modern scientific age, in every field of human endeavour, systematic objective and scientific procedures are followed in accordance with principles based on experience, understanding and application of knowledge of science. The field of games and sports is no exception to this. In advanced countries like U.S.A., Germany, Russia, Australia, Britain and others, the rapid progress in the field of games and sports like athletics, soccer, hockey, etc. has taken place and their international achievements have been possible only due to research, experimentation and application of scientific knowledge(Kamlesh 1981).

Sports development of a country can be determined by many factors out of which on is the number of medals a country won in the past several years whereas the youths health can be determined by the Human development index or by its components. So, based on the theme of United Nation(2001), a hypothetical question arises whether there any relationship between the development of health of a country and its sports achievement in the form of Gold medal? To find out an answer the first objective was framed to determine the relationship between Gold Medal achieved in Summer Olympics (*GMSO*) by a country and its Human Development Index (*HDI*), Life Expectancy (*LE*), Means Years of Schooling (*MYS*), Expected Years of Schooling (*EYS*), Gross National Income per capita (*GNI per capita \$*).

Methodology and Procedure:

Data related to Gold Medal achieved in Summer Olympics (*GMSO*) was taken from the official website of International Olympic Committee (<http://www.olympic.org>). Gold medal won by a country from 1996 to 2008 was summed up and only those countries were selected which won at least one gold medal. Data related to Human Development Index and its components ie. *LE*, *MYS*, *EYS* and *GNI per capita* (constant 2008 PPP US \$, HDRO own calculation) was taken from United Nation Development Programme (<http://data.un.org>) for the year 2007.

In the present study from ASIA (15 countries: China , Korea (Republic of), Japan, Kazakhstan, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Thailand, Indonesia, Korea (Democratic People's Rep. of), Uzbekistan, Mongolia, Chinese Taipei, Hong Kong, China (SAR), India, Syrian Arab Republic and United Arab Emirates), AFRICA (12 countries: Ethiopia , Kenya, South Africa, Algeria, Cameroon, Morocco, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Egypt, Mozambique, Tunisia and Burundi), EUROPE (35 countries: Russian Federation, Germany, France, Italy, Great Britain, Ukraine, Netherland, Romania, Hungary, Poland, Spain, Greece, Norway, Bulgaria, Turkey, Belarus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Sweden, Switzerland, Slovakia, Georgia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium , Finland, Croatia, Ireland, Lithuania, Slovenia, Estonia, Latvia, Portugal, Armenia and Israel), AMERICA (14 countries: USA, Cuba, Canada, Brazil, Jamaica, Argentina, Bahamas, Mexico, Chile, Dominican Republic, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador and Panama), and OCEANIA (2 countries: Australia and New Zealand) respectively were only taken.

Spearman’s rank correlation (ρ) and Kruskal-Wallis H Test was calculated to find out the rank correlation & to compare *GMSO*, *HDI*, *LE*, *MYS*, *EYS* and *GNI per capita* using SPSS version 16.

Result:

Table 1: Spearman’s rank correlation

Variables	Independent	HDI	LE	MYS	EYS	GNI
Dependent	Year	2007	2007	2007	2007	2007

GMSO (1996-2008)	ρ	.439**	.286*	.439**	.491**	.392*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.012	.000	.000	.000
	N	75	77	76	76	75

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table No. 1 reveals that significant rank correlation was found between Gold Medal Achieved in Summer Olympics (1996 to 2008) and Human Development Index ($r=0.439$, Life expectancy ($r=0.286$), Mean Years of Schooling ($r= 0.439$), Expected Years of Schooling ($r= 0.491$) , Gross National Income per capita($r= 0.392$).

Discussion:

Health standard of a country reflect the social, economical, political and moral well being of its ordinary citizen. Economic growth and social growth of a society and country is directly dependent on the health of its constituents. Healthy livings conditions and access to good quality health care for all citizen are not only basic human rights, but also essential prerequisites for social and economic development.

Sports have gained tremendous popularity all over the globe during the last few decades. The popularity of sports is still increasing at a fast pace and this happy trend is likely to continue in the future also. Looking at the history of the modern Olympic Games, one notices that the number of sports for which competitions are held at Olympic Games has increased steadily. The total number of participating countries and sportsmen has also increased steadily. In addition to Olympic Sports, indigenous sports have also become popular in each country. Several new sports like sky diving, skating, motor racing have also come into existence and become popular(Singh, 1991).

In the present study significant positive rank correlation was found between the achievement in sports and HDI . It can be inferred that most of the countries which ranked higher in achieving Olympic Gold Medal also ranked higher in HDI, LE, MYS, EYS, GNI per capita in \$.For example number of gold medal for Japan was 33 with population of 66% & HDI 0.88, Korea (Republic of) 37 medals with population of 72% & HDI 0.87, China 127 medals with population of 70% & HDI 0.64, Russian Federation 108 gold medals with population of 72% & HDI 0.74, France 46 medals with population 65% & HDI 0.72, USA 153 medals with HDI 0.90 and Australia 56 medals with HDI 0.93 for the year 2007.

Demographic dividend also known as demographic gift occurs when a falling birth rate changes the age distribution of a population. This raises the rate of economic growth due to a rising share of working age people in a population. According to (Datt & Mahajan 2011) the actual realization of the demographic dividend depend on improving health care levels as well as increasing human resource development, especially education. Thus, a demographic advantage does not mean more people; it means more prosperous and productive people.

A long term suitable strategies, policies & programmes are required to enhance the level of income for a developing or underdeveloped country but if social factor like life expectancy and schooling are taken proper care in national budget then in a relatively short term more medals can be expected.

Conclusion: Based on the above information, it may be inferred that if a developing country frames appropriate policies with priority in Human Development Index i.e.

Life Expectancy and Education, then there are chances of achieving more medals in future Olympics.

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