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Effects of Covid -19 on Sports and Social Well Being

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Abstract: Sports is major contributor to economic and social development of a country. Sports are part of every culture past and present, but each culture has its own definition of sports. The most useful definitions are those that clarify the relationship of sports to play, games, and contests. It is voluntary and unforced. Children compelled by their parents or teachers to compete in any game are not really engaged in a sport. In the real world, as a practical matter, motives are frequently mixed and often quite impossible to determine. There are at least two types of play. No one can say when sports began. *The word "sport" comes from the Old French disport meaning "leisure"*, with the oldest definition in English from around 1300 being "anything humans find amusing or entertaining" Sportsmanship is an attitude that strives for fair play, courtesy toward teammates and opponents, ethical behavior and integrity, and grace in victory or defeat the modern Olympic creed expressed by its founder [Pierre de Coubertin](#): "The most important thing... is not winning but taking part" are typical expressions of this sentiment. Sport was an important form of worship in [Ancient Greek religion](#). The [ancient Olympic Games](#), called the Olympiad. In other words sport means, to involve several things. When a person says that they are doing sport, it tends to imply that they have done an intense physical activity. Sport is bound by certain rules and regulations and also runs under a system of comparable measures. As we close out the most challenging year in recent memory, there is much uncertainty. Whenever our society returns to "normal" — whatever that means — there will be profound changes to how to live. Covid 19 pandemic has spread to almost all countries and social distancing measures, lockdowns of business ,schools and all social events and gatherings even happy moments or sad. Nobody bothers anyone even the best close relations ignored. Children forgets their parents and vice versa. It effected sports largely in different ways i.e sports performances, sports industries, international competitions etc. To safeguard the health of athletes and others most major sporting events at international, regional and national levels had been cancelled or postponed. The Olympics and Paralympics had been postponed and rescheduled in 2021

Key Words : Sports, Culture ,Pandemic, Covid, Leisure, Performance,Lockdowns

Introduction : The word "sport" comes from the Old French *desport* meaning "leisure", with the oldest definition in English from around 1300 being "anything humans find amusing or entertaining" Sportsmanship is an attitude that strives for fair play, courtesy toward teammates and opponents, ethical behavior and integrity, and grace in victory or defeat the modern Olympic creed expressed by its founder Pierre de Coubertin: "The most important thing... is not winning but taking part" are typical expressions of this sentiment.

Sports are major contributor to economic and social development of a country Sports are part of every culture past and present, but each culture has its own definition of sports. The most useful definitions are those that clarify the relationship of sports to play, games, and contests. It is voluntary and unforced. Children compelled by their parents or teachers to compete in any game are not really engaged in a sport. In the real world, as a practical matter, motives are frequently mixed and often quite impossible to determine. There are at least two types of play. No one can say when sports began. Since it is impossible to imagine a time when children did not spontaneously run races or wrestle, it is clear that children have always included sports in their play, but one can only speculate about the emergence of sports as automatic physical contests for adults. Hunters are depicted in prehistoric art, but it cannot be known whether the hunters pursued their prey in a mood of grim necessity or with the joyful abandon of sportsmen.. Archaeological evidence also indicates that ball games were common among ancient peoples. Sport was an important form of worship in Ancient Greek religion. The ancient Olympic Games, called the Olympiad, were held in honour of the head deity, Zeus, and featured various forms of religious dedication to him and other gods. As many Greeks travelled to see the games, this combination of religion and sport also served as a way of uniting them.

In other words sport means, to involve several things. When a person says that they are doing sport, it tends to imply that they have done an intense physical activity. Sport involves some type of moving the body through the environment and burning calories doing so. Sport brings up the picture of sweat and physical exhaustion. Sport exercises the body during the physical activity, improving the body part that is used in sport. Sport also involves some type of competition. Sport deals with the struggle between individuals or teams. Sport has conflict in it that usually tends to end with winners and losers. Sport is defined by conflict and by fostering competitive nature in individuals that results in the division of winner and loser after the game is played. Game is also a central idea to sport. While not all sports can be considered to be game (and not all games can be considered to be sport), game reveals much about sport.

Sport is bound by certain rules and regulations and also runs under a system of comparable measures. Sport is about being able to correctly show the victor of the event and the loser of the event. These categories achieved at the end of a sport activity (winner or loser) are determined by comparing one person or team to another person or team. This comparison follows the rules of the sport and through these rules, the victory is decided. Sport betters a person to play future activities that are related to the activity that they do. Without improvement, sport seems to losses a lot of its credibility because improvement of the individuals to do things better, faster, and stronger is what sport fosters in the individuals.

Traditional Asian sports

Like the highly evolved civilizations of which they are a part, traditional Asian sports are ancient and various. Competitions were never as simple as they seemed to be. From the Islamic Middle East across the Indian subcontinent to China and Japan, wrestlers—mostly but not exclusively male—embodied and enacted the values of their cultures. The wrestler's strength was always more than a merely personal statement. More often than not, the men who strained and struggled understood themselves to be involved in a religious endeavor. When Indian wrestlers join an *akhara* (gymnasium), they commit themselves to the quest for a holy life. As devout Hindus, they recite mantras as they do their knee bends and push-ups. In their struggle against "pollution," they strictly control their diet, sexual habits, breathing, and even their urination and defecation. As can be seen in Mughal art of the 16th and

17th centuries, aristocratic Indians—like their counterparts throughout Asia—used their bows and arrows for hunting as well as for archery contests. The Asian aristocrat's passion for horses, which can be traced as far back as Hittite times, if not earlier, led not only to horse races (universal throughout Asia) but also to the development of [polo](#) and a host of similar equestrian contests. These equestrian games may in fact be the most distinctive Asian contribution to the repertoire of modern sports.

Sport is generally recognized as system of activities based in physical [athleticism](#) with major competitions such as the [Olympic Games](#). Sport is also a major source of entertainment for non-participants, with [spectator sport](#) drawing large crowds to [sport venues](#), and reaching wider audiences through broadcasting. Key principles of sport include that the result should not be predetermined, and that both sides should have equal opportunity to win. Rules are in place to ensure fair play, but participants can break these rules in order to gain advantage. Participants may cheat in order to unfairly increase their chance of winning, or in order to achieve other advantages such as financial gains. The competitive nature of sport encourages some participants to attempt to enhance their performance through the use of medicines, or through other means such as [increasing the volume of blood in their bodies through artificial means](#). Female participation in sports continues to rise alongside the opportunity for involvement and the value of sports for [child development](#) and [physical fitness](#). Despite increases in female participation during the last three decades, a gap persists in the enrolment figures between male and female players in sports-related teams.

Disabled sports also **adaptive sports** or **parasports**, are sports played by persons with a [disability](#), including [physical](#) and [intellectual disabilities](#). The competition element of sport, along with the aesthetic appeal of some sports, result in the popularity of people attending to watch sport being played. Both amateur and professional sports attract spectators. Technology plays an important part in modern sport. With it being a necessary part of some sports (such as motorsport), it is used in others to improve performance. Some sports also use it to allow off-field decision making. The increase in technology has also allowed many decisions in sports matches to be taken, or reviewed, off-field, with another official using instant replays to make decisions. In some sports, players can now challenge decisions made by officials

What is epidemic/pandemic/endemic? AN Epidemic is a disease that affects a large number of people within a community, population, or region. An epidemic is derived from Greek *epi* meaning *upon or above* and *demos* meaning *people* and is the term used to describe a situation where a disease spreads rapidly to a large number of people in a given population over a short time period. The term epidemic is not just used with infectious diseases. It is also used with any scenario that leads to a detrimental rise of health risks within a society A **Pandemic** is an epidemic that's spread over multiple countries or continents. A pandemic is derived from Greek *pan* meaning *all* and *demos* meaning *people* and is the term used to describe the rapid spread of a transmissible [infectious/communicable disease](#) over several continents or worldwide. Once an epidemic becomes global and affects a large percent of the population it becomes known as a pandemic. The terms pandemic and epidemic are used to describe the rate and distance of the spread of the disease and not the severity of the disease. Features of a pandemic are listed below:

- Affects a wider geographical area, often global
- Infects a very large number of people
- Often caused by a new virus or a new strain of a virus that has been dormant for many years.
- Spreads quickly in humans as there is little to no existing immunity
- Can cause a high number of deaths
- Because of the need to control the spread of the disease, there is often social disruption, unrest and economic

Endemic is something that belongs to a particular people or country. Endemic is derived from Greek *en* meaning *in* and *demos* meaning *people*. It is used to describe a disease that is present at an approximately constant level within a society or country.

An epidemic is often localized to a region, but the number of those infected in that region is significantly higher than normal. For example, when [COVID-19](#) was limited to Wuhan, China, it was an epidemic. The geographical spread turned it into a pandemic.

Management of pandemic: Once a pandemic is identified it is vital to take the appropriate action to contain, manage and reduce the spread of the virus once a significant level of infection is present within a population then reducing this rate of spread becomes vital. Actions targeted at reducing the transmission rate are termed **Mitigation** and can involve:

- [Social distancing](#) (cancel events, closing institutions, work from home etc.)
- Education of the public - to promote actions such as [hand washing](#) and avoiding groups etc.
- Economic measures - to provide relief to individuals and businesses and to increase compliance with social distancing related policies

All these measures aim to limit the population exposed to infection and to reduce the transmission rate between them.

COVID 19:- Corona virus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered corona virus. Most people infected with the COVID-19 virus will experience mild to moderate respiratory illness and recover without requiring special treatment. Older people and those with underlying medical problems like cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease, and cancer are more likely to develop serious illness. The best way to prevent and slow down transmission is to be well informed about the COVID-19 virus, it causes and how it spreads. Protect yourself and others from infection by washing your hands or using an alcohol based rub frequently and not touching your face. The COVID-19 virus spreads primarily through droplets of saliva or discharge from the nose when an infected person coughs or sneezes, so it's important that you also practice respiratory etiquette (for example, by coughing into a flexed elbow).

Effect of Covid on sports: Covid 19 pandemic has spread to almost all countries and social distancing measures, lockdowns of business, schools and all social events and gatherings even happy moments or sad. Nobody bothers anyone even the best close relations ignored. Children forgets their parents and vice versa. That was the most challenging year in recent memory, there is much uncertainty. Whenever our society returns to "normal" — whatever that means — there will be profound changes to how we live. Sports are not immune to this. It effected sports largely in different ways i.e sports performances, sports industries, international competitions etc. To safeguard the health of athletes and others most major sporting events at international, regional and national levels had been cancelled or postponed. The Olympics and Paralympics had been postponed and rescheduled in 2021

At the beginning of the year, athletes around the world were training for their selection trials and those already selected were preparing for the grand event which was scheduled to commence in July in Japan. While the organizers were meticulously planning and relentlessly working towards hosting one of the biggest sporting events in the world, on the other hand, at the same time, parts of the world was already facing a grave health crisis. The corona virus, a case of which was first reported in November 2019 in Wuhan province in China, had spread to various countries by January 2020.¹ On March 11, 2020; the World Health Organization (WHO) declared that the Novel Corona virus Disease (COVID-19) is a pandemic. Between January 2020 and March 2020, COVID-19 spread to most countries of the world, with countries imposing international travel bans and region wise lockdowns, to control the spread of the virus. The imposition of such strict measures had an impact on various businesses across the world, including the business of sports.

In India, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) imposed the first phase of lockdown on 25th March, 2020, which was thereafter extended on multiple occasions and was in force till 31st May 2020. The MHA permitted the opening of sporting complexes and stadiums, without spectators, from May 18, 2020. However, sports gatherings were not permitted. The aim of the relaxations was to allow athletes in the training centers to resume training.⁵ The Sports Authority of India (SAI) issued a standard operating procedure for its training centers and athletes were gradually allowed to resume training in accordance with the protocol.

The MHA announced the opening of areas (which were not marked as containment zones) in a phased manner as part of the 'Unlock 1' guidelines. The notification issued on May 31, 2020 stated that subject to the circumstances, sports gatherings would be permitted under the third phase of the unlock. Under subsequent unlock 2 and 3 guidelines, sports gatherings were not permitted across the country, including outside containment zones. The MHA issued 'Unlock 4' guidelines on 29th August, which permitted resumption of sports activities with a gathering of maximum 100 people from September 21, with mandatory wearing of face masks, social distancing, provision of thermal scanning, and hand wash or sanitizer.

The guidelines issued on September 30, 2020, ('Unlock 5') further eased the relaxations on organizing sports events, allowing state/union territory governments to permit gatherings of more than 100 persons at sports gatherings from October 15, 2020, subject to the following conditions: (i) in closed spaces, a maximum of 50% of the total capacity, with a ceiling of 200 persons, shall be permitted; or (ii) in open spaces, respective state governments must take into consideration the size of the ground/space to determine gathering limits, to ensure that social distancing norms are maintained; and (iii) wearing of masks, social distancing, sanitizing/ hand washing and thermal scanning, shall be mandatory in all cases.

The 'Unlock 5' guidelines, were a welcome relief for swimmers, as they finally permitted the opening of swimming pools for sportspersons starting October 15, 2020. The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports (MYAS) issued a Standard Operating Procedure on 9th October, 2020 for the same. The SOP permits only competitive swimmers above the age of 12, engaged in training for the purposes of participation in swimming competitions, inside the swimming pool, and excludes contact sport such as water polo, those learning to swim or swimming for general fitness. The SOP makes use of the Aarogya Setu app mandatory for swimmers and the staff at the swimming facility and lays down the number of swimmers that would be allowed inside the pool at a time, subject to size of the pool (maximum 10 swimmers are permitted at a time in a 50 meters 10 lane pool, while only 16 swimmers are permitted in a 25 or 50 meters 8 lane pool. Further, the SOP bars any form of contact amongst persons inside the training area, and makes it mandatory to follow adequate social distancing and sanitization protocols. While the swimmers have resumed training, the unexplained delay in allowing opening of swimming pools, despite the WHO stating that 'swimming in well-maintained, properly chlorinated pool is safe'¹¹, has perplexed those associated with the sport.

Impact of COVID-19 on the business of sports

Before discussing the impact of COVID-19 on sports' businesses, it is important that we understand what constitutes the business of sports. There are three primary revenue sources for a live sports event: (i) broadcasting revenue; (ii) advertising and sponsorship revenue; and (iii) match day revenue i.e. ticket sales. These three revenue sources for the sports industry dried out since no live events took place due to the imposed lockdown and restrictions. Further, the sports business entails not just the live events which are televised and broadcast, but also all the businesses associated or dependent on the occurrence of such live events. The associated businesses include the production of live events, stadium rentals, hospitality, fantasy sports and betting, merchandise and sporting goods, etc., all of which have suffered huge losses. Several companies rely on sponsoring the events to come into public eye and boost their sales. Individuals, who work largely on per event/ match basis, such as umpires and other support staff, athletes with no sponsors/ regular source of income, have also been severely impacted

At the beginning of 2020, no athlete/ fan/ organizer would have imagined that a match, let alone tournaments in their entirety, will be held behind closed doors, however, the pandemic brought the sporting world to a standstill. While live sports have gradually resumed over the past few months, it is only under strict health guidelines and without fans. The gravity of the circumstances can be ascertained from the fact that the International Football Association Board (IFAB) mandated that in the event a player is found to be faking or deliberately coughing, he / she could be penalized with a red card, subject to the discretion of the referee. The International Cricket Council (ICC) also amended its playing conditions regulations to ban use of saliva by players to shine the cricket ball; however, the players can use sweat to shine the ball. Thereafter, a group was projected onto one of the giant video screens set up inside AGF's stadium Ceres Park for a brief period before being replaced by another group. AGF had also set up a smaller screen dedicated for fans of visiting team, Randers. The sounds from the spectators' microphones were also played through the stadium's loudspeakers. This user experience was also introduced in the Premier League. The ability to watch a match from the safety of your homes, alongside fellow fans on giant screens installed in stadiums, did manage to create a unique stadium experience for the fans, the viewers and more so the players. E Sports and video games saw tremendous growth during the initial months of COVID-19 era. E sports streaming platforms reported a surge in growth during the months of March and April, with a 20% increase in usage hours and 75% increase in gaming traffic during peak hours.

One of the major consequences of the spread of the corona virus has been the cancellation or postponement of major sports events which were scheduled to be held in 2020, including the Olympics 2020 (Japan), the men's T20 Cricket World Cup 2020 (Australia), the Euro 2020, etc. (which have been postponed) while other events such as the 2020 Wimbledon tennis championships, the Boston Marathon were cancelled. The first effects of the pandemic were felt in the sporting world with various leagues such as the NBA, the Premier League, etc. being suspended indefinitely. In India, as well, the finals of the Indian Super League (ISL) (the top division football league) were played behind closed doors on March 14, 2020.

In March 2020, the South African cricket team had travelled to India for a bilateral series. While the first ODI in Dharamshala was washed out due to rain, the other two ODIs were cancelled on account of COVID-19, with both the cricket associations agreeing to work on a revised schedule. The South African cricket team returned home thereafter. Further, the 2020 season of the Indian Premier League (IPL), the Board of Control for Cricket in India's (BCCI) flagship event, was scheduled to start on March 29, 2020, however, due to a nationwide lockdown, it was initially postponed till April 15, 2020, and thereafter postponed indefinitely as the Indian government imposed strict measures to contain the spread of the virus. Once the T20 Cricket World Cup, which was earlier scheduled to be held from October 18 to November 15 2020, was cancelled by the International Cricket Council (ICC), a window for organizing the IPL was created in place of the same. The event, which started on September 19, 2020, is currently ongoing in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), inside a bio-secure bubble with strict health and safety protocols. Apart from the IPL, the BCCI has issued a tentative calendar for the 2020-21 domestic season scheduled to start in November, which does not include major annual limited over tournaments such as the Vijay Hazare trophy and the Duleep Trophy.

The economic impact has also been felt by major clubs across the world. On account of lack of revenues, several clubs negotiated the remuneration stipulated in contracts, with players of Barcelona agreeing to a 70% pay cut, whereas clubs in the English Football League (EFL) and other leagues across the world agreed on deferment of salaries with players and staff. Premiership Rugby clubs unanimously agreed to reduce the salary cap to £ 5 million for the 2021-22 seasons from £ 7 million. The clubs also agreed that the cap would be reverted to its current level if revenues increase to appropriate levels in future seasons. Player/ athlete unions such as the Professional Footballers' Association (PFA), association of Premier League players and Major League Baseball Players Association (MLBPA) played a significant role in the discussions that led to salary cuts and deferrals. PFA rejected the 30% pay cut proposed by the Premier League and their clubs on grounds that it would mean lesser taxes paid to the government which would be detrimental to the fight against COVID-19.

Sponsorships:

The various measures imposed to control the spread of the corona virus had a direct bearing on the manufacturing and sales of various companies. Consequently, companies have had to significantly reduce their sponsorship budgets in order to increase their cash flow, which is evident from the sponsorship deals agreed for the 2020 season of sports event. This also goes to show that there has been a significant reduction in the sponsorship budgets of companies.

Apart from franchise teams owned by giant corporate, various National Sports Federations (NSFs) are dependent on the financial aid received from the government as well as sponsorship money received from corporate. However, the current circumstances have led to companies not being as upfront in sponsoring athletes and teams, resulting in NSFs requiring additional support from the government..

Sports Broadcasters

Sports broadcasters primarily rely on live events to sustain their business, attract viewership and earn revenues, however the COVID-19 reduced their sources of revenue and the restrictions forced them to think of innovative ways to engage audience.

Due to the lockdown measures imposed, viewership of sports channels in India dipped significantly. During the first half of 2020, viewership on sports channels dropped by 67% and overall advertisement bookings reduced by 13% compared to the first half of 2019. The drop in viewership on sports channels can be attributed to the lack of live events; however the viewership of other genres increased during this period. Various sports broadcasters resorted to broadcasting archival footage to retain viewership and advertisers on their platform, with Star Sports broadcasting footage from ICC tournaments; IPL seasons and the Pro Kabaddi League (PKL). However, unlike live events which has appointment viewing, reruns of previous matches barely drive viewership. In the United States of America, the National Football League (NFL) and the National Basketball Association (NBA) removed the paywalls for their own subscription services to allow viewers to watch older matches. Esports also saw substantial growth during COVID-19 with streaming platforms such as Twitch breaking viewership records in the first 2 quarters of 2020. The developments in eSports are discussed at length in the section 'Esports and Video Games' of this article.

Associated businesses:-

Fantasy Sports: The business of fantasy sports has grown drastically over the past decade in India. Fantasy sports are a game format where participants create virtual teams using real-world players from more than one team, which are scheduled to play in a league or a match. The participants are awarded points based on the performance of the players in the real-world match or tournament. The organization of live sports events is the prerequisite for a fantasy sport platform. With the live sports being halted, the business of fantasy sports platforms dwindled since there were no live events that the participants could play.

Equipment: The impact of COVID-19 was also felt by the sports goods manufacturing industry. It was reported that the sports goods industry in Jalandhar, which manufactures around 70% of all sporting goods in India, was facing a business loss (as of Apr. 2020) of Rs. 2 to 3 crores per day. However, equipment for indoor games such as carrom, chess, etc. saw a surge.

Exports: The domestic sporting goods industry export nearly accounts for 60 per cent of the total output. The government records indicate that the total toys, games, and sports requisites export stood at US\$ 417.43 million in FY19 and reached USD 356.05 million in FY20 till January 2020. However, sealed national and international border in the wake of pandemic and consequent stall on exports, with stakeholders either cancelling or indefinitely postponing their orders, has had a grave bearing on the sporting goods industry.⁷⁰

Imports: Further, since India does not have capability to manufacture the raw material used for sports goods alone and the industry relies on imports from China for materials such as PVC and PU material for the manufacturing of footballs, leg guards, gloves, cotton polyester linings, stitching thread, tetron cloth, feather for shuttle cocks, etc., it has become extremely difficult for the industry to procure the same due to international lockdowns and the cost of raw materials has also increased due to shortage of supplies.

Digital classes and home gear: Due to change in consumer behaviour and people becoming more health conscious, the online demand for athleisure, activewear and fitness gear products like dumbbells, push up bars, belts, cycles and yoga mats surged during the lockdown and is expected to continue to grow post-COVID. For instance, Decathlon, a multi-sport equipment store recorded a 2000% increase in sales of resistance bands, 200% increase in the sales of cross-trainers and elliptical machines, 35% increase in sales of yoga mats and a 30% increase in demand for dumbbells. Further, products for cycling, fitness cardio, yoga and running were among the top ten most purchased products. However, since small and traditional sports equipment manufacturers are primarily not engaged in sale of at leisure products, their problems continue to grow with the larger population continuing to stay at home.

Technology and COVID-19:

The onset of COVID-19 created the need for technological advancements. Video conferencing platforms such as Zoom, Google Meets, etc. met the requirements for meetings, classes, webinars, sessions, etc. which could not be conducted physically. In the world of sports, the technological advancements ranged from holding online training sessions via video conferencing to hosting virtual sports events. Various online training courses and provision of facilities also emerged during the lockdown,

The technological innovations have benefitted the sports industry by not only having an opportunity to introduce various online models during the COVID-19 era but also for the resumption of on ground sports. The digital innovations and use of immersive technologies such as fake crowd noises either in stadiums or overlaid on match footage before broadcast and remote production of live events were made good use of when physical (on ground) sports resumed behind closed doors.

Additional equipment, to ensure adherence of social distancing measures, were made use of ie. as part of the IPL Standard Operating Procedure, players/ member are required to wear Bluetooth bands which alert them if they came within 2 meters of another player/ member wearing the band.

Companies that had a technological head start made huge profits during this time. While COVID-19 served as a boon for them, technological development also provided the people at large with a much-need source for entertainment, with traditional sports resorting to archival footage broadcast in the initial days of world-wide lockdowns being imposed and failing to provide new content to viewers.

E SPORTS AND VIDEO GAMES

Further, the restrictions also served as a boon for stakeholders in the Esports and video gaming industry, which recorded increased participation and sales during the COVID-19 period, as it became a primary source of entertainment for the youth

In India during lockdown period maximum youngster start playing PUBG . Which left its bad effects on youngster then the Indian government banned PUBG, among other Chinese mobile applications and games, in the interest of sovereignty, integrity, defense and security of the country. While India is PUBG's biggest market in terms of users (23.8% of total downloads). The ban on PUBG and other games has provided an opportunity for Indian gaming companies to develop their own mobile games. On September 8,

2020, PUBG Corporation, the owner of the game PUBG, announced that it would drop Ten cent as the publisher of its PUBG Mobile game in India⁹⁴ and is looking for an Indian partner for the same.

While there has been an economic slow-down in India, the gaming and E sports businesses showcase a promising potential for growth, both commercially and in terms of user base, especially with the government (Union Education Ministry) having recently announced that it will organize a national level hackathon on 'online games' to showcase the talent of Indian students and generate employments opportunities for gamers. E sports and online gaming have significantly increased in the recent years and it is the one of the few industries for whom the lockdown served as a blessing in disguise. E sports, which made its debut as a demonstration event at the Asian Games 2018, is proposed to be held as pre-event to the Olympics in 2021 (earlier scheduled for 2020) which will further assist in increasing the popularity.

CONCLUSION

COVID-19 has brought in a wave of challenges and opportunities for the sports sector. While several events have been cancelled or postponed, the technological advancements have helped generate viewership and engagement through Esports.

On occasions traditional sports and E sports have worked together to organize events with real-world players participating in online competitions representing their teams, which were streamed live and well-received. This speaks for the tremendous growth potential should the sports and gaming industries work in tandem. This is also indicative of the immense potential of sports which has found ways to continue to entertain even during such difficult times.

While COVID-19 has given E sports the boost it needed, however, only time will tell whether it can walk alongside traditional sports. On the other hand, the media innovations that have taken place during this time are certainly going to transform the manner in which traditional sports are consumed which have made it a more interactive experience for both, the athletes and the fans. Since the economics of sport hinges upon a fan base, till such time as the fans can maintain that connect with sport (their favorite teams) in one way or another, eventually, as soon as they perceive the environment to be safe, people will return to the stadiums and sport is bound to thrive.

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