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A review study on progression of India in Paralympic games

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Abstract

The Paralympic games is an emerging sports field and as well as industry in India right now. Although the journey from the first Paralympic games in 1960 to the latest edition in 2020 Tokyo games was not easy for a country like India where sports is still not getting that much important which needed. In between these years there were few years where India even cannot able to participate. But in current situation the scenario for parasports is changing which reflects in the medal tally of latest edition. The purpose of this study was to observe how Indian para-athletes progressed year by year in the Paralympics. The researcher conducted the data and various sources like official website of International Paralympic Committee and Paralympic Committee of India. The researcher also conducted an interview with the honourable president and secretary of Bengal Paralympic Association. After analysing the data, it was observed that the medal tally for India in Paralympics increased year by year and it reached its optimum in 2020 Tokyo Paralympic games. The cause of this great performance was mainly the support and funding given the Central Government of India, Various NGO and private associations and also the Paralympic Committee of India. Apart from that the support of the society and media also motivated these para-athletes to give their best at the top level.

Keywords: Paralympics, para-athletes, medal

Introduction

The Olympic Games are an international sports festival, held every four years. The ultimate goals are to cultivate human beings, through sport, and contribute to world peace. Summer Games and Winter Games are held separately.

The history of the Olympics began some 2,300 years ago. Their origin lays in the Olympian Games, which were held in the Olympia area of ancient Greece. Although there are some theories on its initial purposes, the Games have been said to have started as a festival of art and sport, to worship gods. The ancient Olympic Games, however, ended in 393 because of the outbreaks of wars in the region in which they were held. After a 1,500 year absence of the ancient Olympic Games, the event was resumed in the late nineteenth century, thanks to the efforts of Baron Pierre de Coubertin, a French educator. In 1894, his proposal to revive the Olympic Games was unanimously approved at the International Congress in Paris, and the first Olympic Games were held in Athens, Greece, two years later. He also devised the five-ring emblem that is familiar to most people as the Games' symbol, which represents the unity of the five continents.

There are mainly two types of Olympics. The International Olympic Committee (IOC) conducts an open Olympics every two years, alternating between the Summer Olympics and the Winter Olympics.

Further Olympics can be divided into three more parts *i.e.* Paralympics (started in 1960), Special Olympics (started in 1968) and Youth Olympics games (started in 2010). The major goal of the study was to focus on the Paralympic Games and its current status in India.

Sport for athletes with an impairment has existed for more than 100 years, and the first sport clubs for the deaf were already in existence in 1888 in Berlin. It was not until after World War II however, that it was widely introduced. The purpose of it at that time was to assist the large number of war veterans and civilians who had been injured during wartime. In 1944, at the request of the British Government, Dr. Ludwig Guttmann opened a spinal injuries centre at the Stoke Mandeville Hospital in Great Britain, and in time, rehabilitation sport evolved to recreational sport and then to competitive sport.

On 29 July 1948, the day of the Opening Ceremony of the London 1948 Olympic Games, Dr. Guttmann organised the first competition for wheelchair athletes which he named the Stoke Mandeville Games, a milestone in Paralympic history. They involved 16 injured servicemen and women who took part in archery. In 1952, Dutch ex-servicemen joined the Movement and the International Stoke Mandeville Games were founded.

The Stoke Mandeville Games later became the Paralympic Games which first took place in Rome, Italy, in 1960 featuring 400 athletes from 23 countries. Since then they have taken place every four years. In 1976 the first Winter Games in Paralympics history were held in Sweden, and as with the Summer Games, have taken place every four years, and include a Paralympics Opening Ceremony and Paralympics Closing Ceremony. Since the Summer Games

of Seoul, Korea in 1988 and the Winter Games in Albertville, France in 1992 the Games have also taken part in the same cities and venues as the Olympics due to an agreement between the IPC and IOC.

The Purpose of this Study was to observe how the performance of India in Paralympics has improved year by year from the very beginning to the latest edition of 2020 Paralympic games.

Methodology

The researcher has collected all the data online from the official website of International Paralympic Committee and Paralympic Committee of India. The researcher also conducted an interview with the honourable president and secretary of Bengal Paralympic Association.

Results and Discussion

Table 1: Categories of Impairment in Paralympic Games

Type of Event	Impairment Level	Type of Impairments
T/F	20	intellectual impairment
T/F	31-34	wheelchair events for athletes with a movement disorder, including cerebral palsy
T/F	35-38	ambulant events for athletes with a movement disorder, including cerebral palsy
T/F	40-41	short stature, including dwarfism
T/F	F42-44	leg impairment, lower limb affected by limb deficiency, leg length difference, impaired muscle power or impaired range of movement
T/F	45-47	arm impairment, upper limbs affected by limb deficiency, impaired muscle power or impaired range of movement
T/F	51-57	wheelchair events for athletes with a lower body impairment, including paraplegia
T/F	61-64	Lower limb/s competing with prosthesis affected by limb deficiency and leg length difference

















T/F= Track/Field

Table-1 describes which athletes with disabilities may compete against each other in para-athletics events. Classification is intended to group together athletes with similar levels of physical ability to allow fair competition. Classification was created and is managed by the International Paralympic Committee (IPC), which is regularly published via its IPC Athletics Classification Handbook. People with physical, vision and intellectual

disabilities are eligible to compete in this sport at the Summer Paralympics. The classification for this sport was created during the 1940s and for much of its early history was a medical condition-based classification system.

Each class has a code consisting of a letter and two digits, with the letter being either "T" or "F" (indicating track or field events) and the number representing the level of physical ability.

Table-2: Medal Tally of India in Paralympic games

Games	Athletes Participated	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total	Rank
 1960 Rome	Did Not Participate					
 1964 Tokyo	Did Not Participate					
 1968 Tel Aviv	10	0	0	0	0	-
 1972 Heidelberg	10	1	0	0	1	25
 1976 Toronto	Did Not Participate					
 1980 Arnhem	Did Not Participate					
 1984 Stoke Mandeville/New York	5	0	2	2	4	37
 1988 Seoul	2	0	0	0	0	-
 1992 Barcelona	9	0	0	0	0	-
 1996 Atlanta	9	0	0	0	0	-
 2000 Sydney	4	0	0	0	0	-
 2004 Athens	12	1	0	1	2	53
 2008 Beijing	5	0	0	0	0	-
 2012 London	10	0	1	0	1	67
 2016 Rio de Janeiro	19	2	1	1	4	43
 2020 Tokyo	54	5	8	6	19	24
Total		9	12	10	31	55

From table-2, we can observe that India's first medal, and also the first individual gold medal, was won in 1972

Games, when Murlikant Patkar swam the 50 meters freestyle in a world record time of 37.331 seconds. India

finished at 25th rank in those games. In 1984, Joginder Singh Bedi won silver at the Men's Shot Put and followed it up with a pair of bronze winning performances in the Discus and Javelin throws. Thus, Joginder became the first multi-medallist Paralympian from India. Bhimrao Kesarkar also won a silver medal in Javelin in 1984 Games. India finished 37th out of the 54 participating nations.

India continued to participate in each Paralympic Games thereafter, but failed to make an impact until the 2004 Games when Devendra Jhaharia won gold in javelin throw and Rajinder Singh Rahelu won bronze for powerlifting in the 56-kg category.

In 2016 Games, Deepa Malik won a silver medal in Shot Put to become the first Indian woman to win a Paralympics medal.

The 2020 Games saw India's best-ever medal haul with a total of 19 medals (5 Gold, 8 Silver and 6 Bronze). This result was better than the medal haul of 12 medals of all previous Paralympics appearances combined. The games

also had India's best ever participation yet with 54 athletes (40 men, 14 women) across nine sports. It was India's best performance by an overall ranking of 24 (among 162 nations; including Refugee Paralympic Team and Russian Paralympic Committee).

Shooter Avani Lekhara won two medals - gold in 10m Air Rifle SH1 and bronze in 50m Rifle 3 Positions SH1. Thus, she became the first Indian woman to win an individual gold medal and first woman multi-medallist. Shooter Singhraj Adhana also won two medals - silver in 50m Pistol SH1 and bronze in 10m Air Pistol SH1 categories. Para-badminton player Suhas Lalinakere Yathiraj became the first civil servant to win a Paralympic medal, a silver in SL4 category.

In 2020 Games, Vinod Kumar initially clinched a bronze medal in the men's discus throw F52 category event. However, other competitors raised questions about his disability and was subsequently designated as "Classification not Completed". His performance was disqualified, resulting in the loss of his medal.

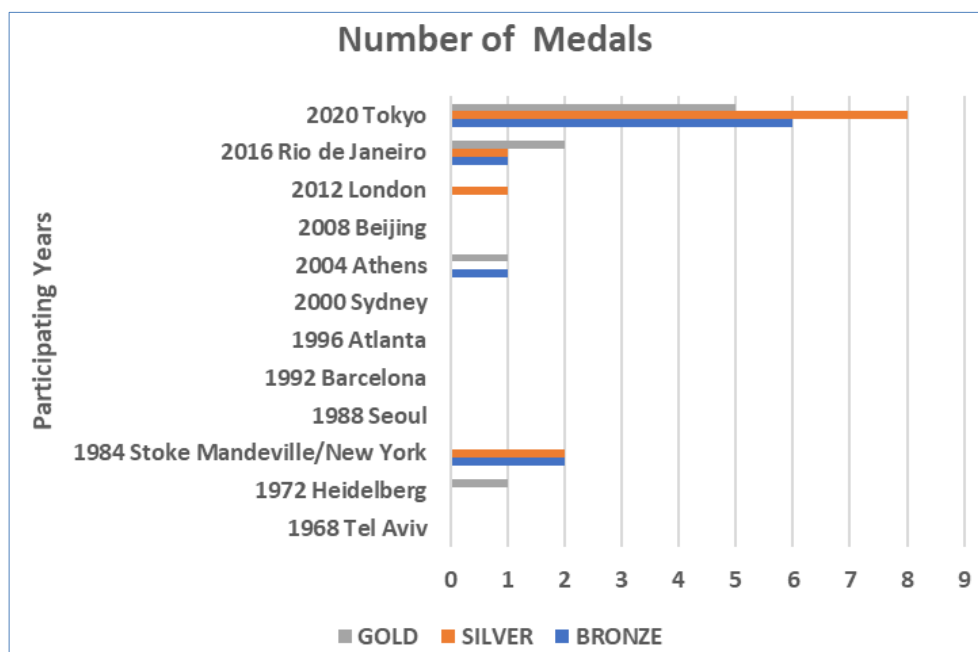


Fig 1: Represents the Medal tally of Indian in Paralympics Year by Year

Conclusion

From the above findings we can observe that performance of the Indian para-athletes in Paralympic games has increased year by year and it reached the optimum level in the last edition of Paralympic games 2020. Some of the most relevant causes of this great performance are as follows-

1. The support of the current central government and sports ministry motivating them to give a better performance.
2. The continuous funding by the government for the coaching, info structure development and nurturing the para-athletes from very childhood.
3. By establishing the special sports complex in Gujarat only for para-athletes.
4. Support from various NGO and Private Organisations for the development and coaching of para-athletes; *i.e.* Ozoki, GO Sports and various other private banks and organisations.

5. The current society and media also giving a lot of spotlights to the para-athletes which is motivating to perform better in bigger stages.
6. The National state and Organisations also conducting state and national meets to identify best athletes and conducting residential camps with world class info structure and coaches to get their best performance at the highest level.

Although India has achieved its biggest success in the Paralympic games last edition till now, still our position is 24th in the overall medal tally. If the government and the association can arrange talent identification programme for special population of India, we can be able to find better para-athletes and achieve bigger success. Apart from that better media spotlight, more funding, better nutrition and of course reorganisation and help from the various parts of the society can improve our chances of winning medals and find India at the top of the medal tally.

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