



## Gujarat's Khel Mahakumbh Event-Major Opportunities for Youth & Children

JIGNESH K. BAROT

Assistant Professor,  
P G Deptt. of Economics,  
S P University, V V Nagar, Anand  
Gujarat (India)

### Abstract:

*United Nations adopted 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in line with Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2015 and included Sport for Development and Peace as one of the global action to pursue these goals. Declaration of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has aptly acknowledged the role of Sport. Gujarat has initiated in this direction with the inception of various sports related activities like establishment of Swarnim Gujarat Sports University, Khele Gujarat Mission with yearly sport event like Khel Mahakumbh to develop and encourage children and youth of Gujarat towards sports and over all development of the State. The present research article intends to identify these efforts and assessment of the same with specific focus on Khel Mahakumbh. The results are robust in a way the participation of various age groups in various sports event. The efforts of Government have also increased with the budget allocation and establishment of infrastructural facilities all over the State. Though the picture is dismal so far as National and International sports event participation and ranking of the State is concerned. A Holistic approach is needed to track on the efforts of Government for Sustainable Development of the State.*

**Keywords:** Gujarat, Sports, Sustainable Development

**JEL code:** Z20, O150, O180

### 1. Introduction

General Assembly of United Nations through the adoption of resolution 58/5 stated 'Sports as a means to promote education, health, development and peace'<sup>1</sup> in November, 2003 has provided Sport-for-development a global status. The assumed power of sport to deal with population caused problems like conflict, chronic poverty and its multifaceted manifestations has made it as the universal development strategies.<sup>2</sup>

A healthier and happier society can be built with the help of Sports. It is a corner stone in Nation building. Character, Community and Country are the three C's well blended with sports. Sports have been an easy way to promote brotherhood and community boning. It unified all teammates irrespective of the caste, creed or economic status.

The Khel Mahakumbh has been a giant pro-active step, awakening the citizens of Gujarat to the importance of sports, with the spirit of unity, happiness and social harmony cutting across all age groups and districts. Khel Mahakumbh has witnessed a record participation of lakhs of athletes in the last six years. The participation in this programme by the people across various age groups, especially

<sup>1</sup>United Nations, *Sports as a Means to Promote Education*.

<sup>2</sup>Levine, *Girls Count*,2.

youth, has helped promote physical health and health consciousness. This success has laid the foundation for development of Gujarat's talent in sports.

Under the union federation set up of Indian Constitution, sports is a part of the State list, which assumes that it is the responsibility of the state to legislate, regulate and take necessary action to develop sports. The unparalleled economic growth of Gujarat has strengthened the state in the ideal position to develop sports as an important part of its culture. The paper has been organized with this introduction following with fitness and sports for all, related issues of Khel Mahakumbh, Gujarat's position in various sports and in last with concluding remarks.

## 2. Fitness for all, Sports for all

All round physical fitness is the foundation for a healthy and happy society and a prerequisite for achieving sporting excellent at a sustainable level. Improving the physical fitness of youth is a rewarding strategy, which not only reduces mortality and morbidity, but also nurtures their sporting and athletic potential. 'Sports for all is the sequel to 'health for all'<sup>3</sup>.

The Government will come up with incentive schemes for creating fitness awareness through sports and traditional methods, and also assist in the creation of basic infrastructure at public places, parks etc. There will be an awareness drive to promote the general fitness of the masses, especially senior citizens and pilgrims. In addition, specific steps will be taken to improve walking tracks, cycling tracks and provide basic fitness apparatus at public places. Walking tracks and cycling tracks will be developed at pilgrim places, tourist centers and forest areas. Apart from the above to increase general health awareness, lecture, awareness drives, marathons, cycling rallies, cross country races etc. will be organized. Activities leading to public health and fitness will be encouraged. Sports fitness centre will be encouraged in Industrial/Commercial park.

This will enable bench marking vis-a-vis the five components of health related physical fitness such as cardio respiratory endurance, muscular strength, endurance, flexibility and body composition. A state MIS on fitness will be created, that will be accessible to all so that assessment can be carried out in school at regular intervals. The appraisal system of Government and semi Government employees will also include fitness level checks. Private corporations will also be encouraged to follow suit.

### 2.1 About Khel Mahakumbh

Government of Gujarat has initiated various programmes for the welfare of people as a mark of celebration of "Swarnim Jayanti" through the various departments of Gujarat Government<sup>4</sup>. Sports sector has also been included in this celebration. The event of "Khel Mahakumbh" has been initiated with the objective of the each and every resident of Gujarat will take participation in sport. It covers 21 sports including volleyball, swimming, athletics, judo, archery, kushti, kabaddi, skating, tennis, basketball, taekwondo, hockey, badminton, table tennis, football, kho-kho, tug of war, handball, yogasan, chess and shooting ball was introduced in 2010.

Through the state sports policy, the Government proposes to create an incentivized dynamic sports eco system, based on transparency, effectiveness and irreversibility, with inclusivity and equal opportunities for all. Such a vibrant policy will drive all coherent initiatives, which will achieve the stated objectives. This policy envisages putting in place the six fundamental pillars of sport development, so that the overall Human Performance Index of the state gets a much-needed boost. These six factors are talent identification, talent nurturing, robust competition, infrastructure, incentive to stake holders and revenue.

<sup>3</sup>Government of Gujarat, 'Gujarat Sports Policy 2016', *Sports, Youth and Cultural Activities Department*(2016), Gandhinagar, Gujarat.

<sup>4</sup>Government of Gujarat, 'Annual Report 2016', *Sports Authority of Gujarat, Sports, Youth and Cultural Activities Department* (2016), Gandhinagar, Gujarat.

The three core objectives of Khel Mahakumbh are as below:

- Identification of Talent
- Making conducive environment for Sports
- Increase Health Awareness

### 2.2 Age Group and Number of Games

During the course of the time many new games were introduced in the Khel Mahakumbh. In the latest sixth event of Khel Mahakumbh now there are 30 games including archery, athletics, basketball, badminton, table tennis, taekwondo, handball, hockey, volleyball, wrestling, weight lifting, karate, khokho, shooting ball, skating, swimming, shooting, cycling, football, chess, judo, kabaddi, lawn tennis, tug of war, gymnastic and the newly added three games fencing, boxing and malkhamb.

There is a robust structure for the participation in various games in Khel Mahakumbh. All the games are played in various age groups. In Khel Mahakumbh 2016, for age group 9 years and below, 11 years and below, 14 years and below, 17 years and below, open age group, 40 years and above and 60 years and above sports persons participation has been classified. The below table-1 provides the information regarding the participation according to the various age groups for this event. In this Maha Khumbh nearly 550 events have been organized.

### 2.3 Public Participation

A well-defined road map can be seen in the below flow chart for the awareness, organize and to increase overall participation in this event. The committee constitute of various officers and responsible persons at various stake level as the president and the member of it. At primary school level Principal of the school as the president and Community Resource Centre as a member, while at village level, Sarpanch as the president and President of Swami Vivekanand Gram Yuvak mandal as a member and at Taluka level Taluka officer as the president and Taluka Development Officer as a member has been shouldered the responsibility of this event. District Collector as president and District Development officer as deputy at district level and Municipal Commissioner as president and Deputy Commissioner as a member at Municipal Corporation level have been shouldered responsibilities for this event. This organizational set up has provided robustness to successful implementation of this event at a large scale with huge participation of sports persons in the state.

**Table- 1 Age Group wise Events**

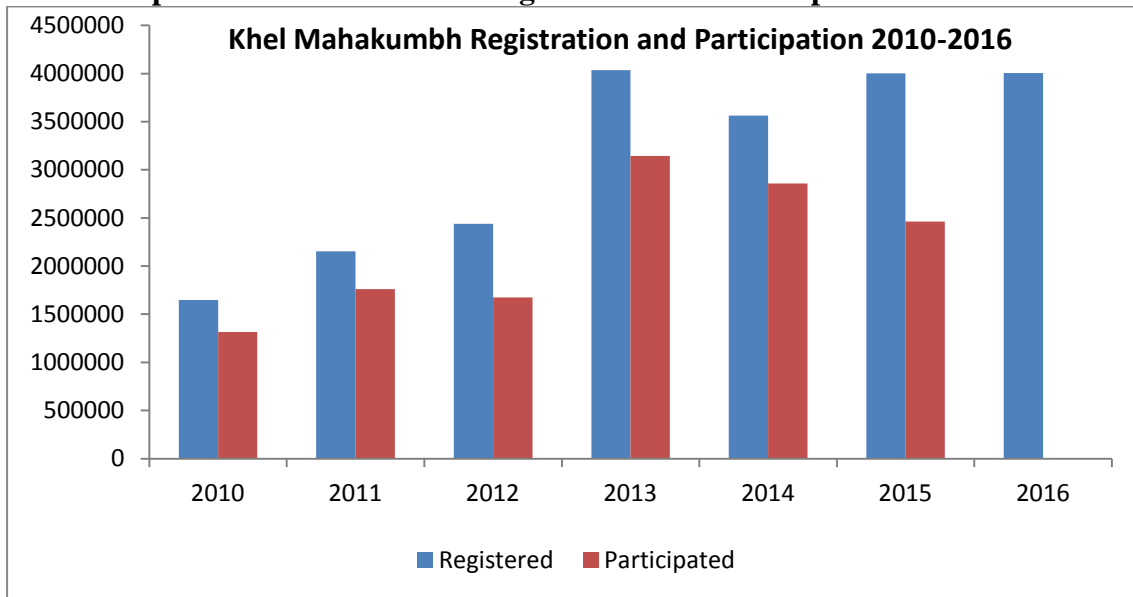
Sr.	Age Group	No. of Game	No. of Events
1	9 years and below	01	02
2	11 years and below	03	05
3	14 years and below	19	123
4	17 years and below	20	157
5	Open age group	30	170
6	40 years and above	05	24
7	60 years and above	07	24
	Total Games	30	505

(Source: [www.khelnmahakumbh.org](http://www.khelnmahakumbh.org))

The below Graph-1 explains the registration and participation during various Khel Mahakumbh. Since inception of this event, there has been a continuous increasing trend can be observed in both registration to participation. In 2010, there are nearly 16.50 lakhs registered for Khel Mahakumbh and 13.10 lakhs have participated in that event. In very next year in 2011, the number of registration increased to 21.50 lakhs and participation number stood at 17.62 lakhs. There has been huge increase in both numbers during 2013 Khel Mahakumbh as there were 40.36 lakhs registered and 31.44 lakhs participated in that event. Though there has been little reduction in registration during 2014 Khel Mahakumbh with 35.62 lakhs registered and 28.55 participated. But again in 2015, nearly 40 lakhs

have registered for Khel Mahakumbh and nearly 24.64 participated. This year too, about 40 lakhs have registered for this event.

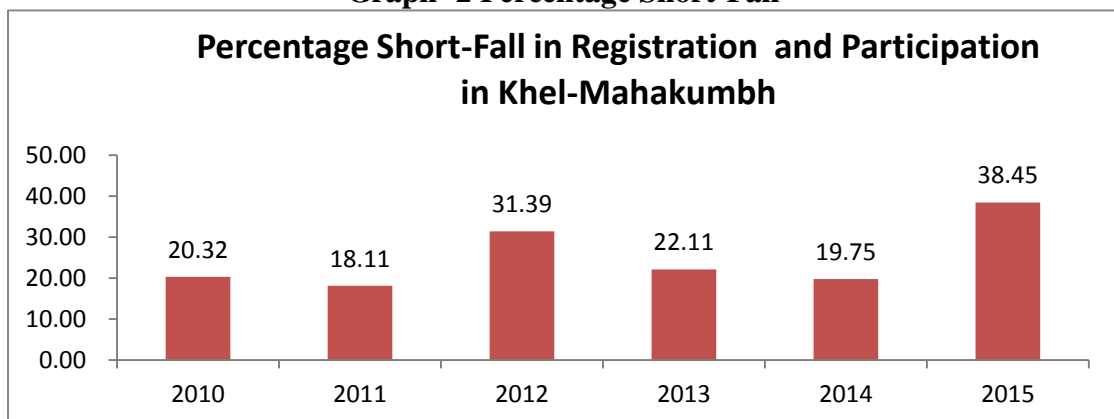
**Graph-1 Khel Mahakumbh Registration and Participation 2010-2016**



(Source: Annual Report 2015-16, Sports Authority of Gujarat)

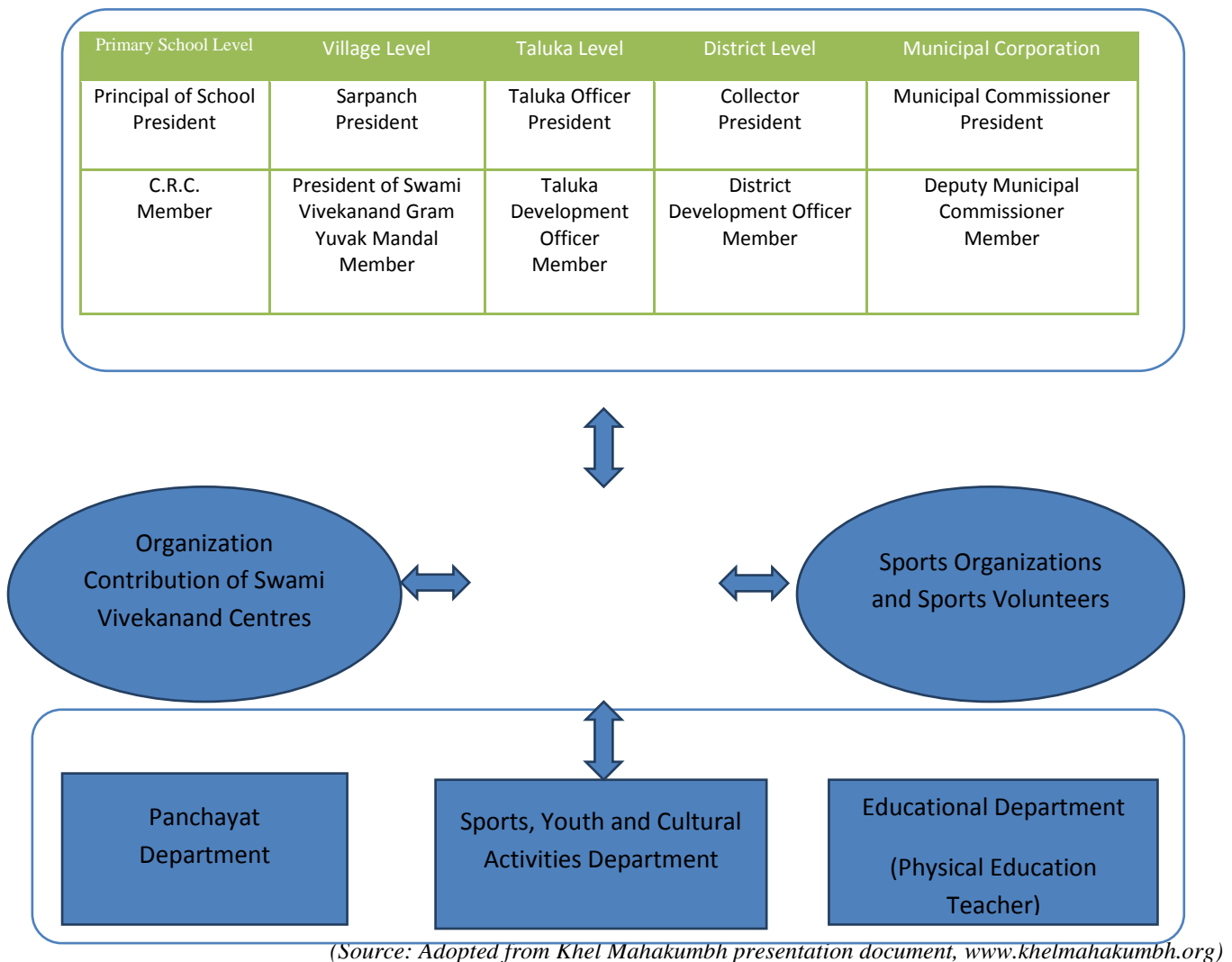
Though there has been continuous increasing trend in registration for the Khel Mahakumbh, the actual participation has shown a short fall during all these Khel Mahakumbh since inception. The following Graph-2 deals with the percentage short fall between registered and participated sports persons during each of the Khel Mahakumbh event since 2010. In this year the short fall was 20.32 % which has slightly declined to 18.11 % in 2011, increased to 31.39 % in 2012. Again it has declined to 22.11 % and 19.75 % during 2013 and 2014. While for 2015 it has shown highest short fall with 38.45 %. There is a need to reduce this short fall to nearly 5-10% range to reduce the over estimation and management related issues. If effective management can be put in to practice, the short fall problem between registered and actual participation can be reduced in a meaningful way.

**Graph- 2 Percentage Short-Fall**



(Source: Author's Own calculation)

### Flow Chart-1 Public Participation in Khel Mahakumbh



The above flow chart provides enough indication of the public participation in Khel Mahakumbh event. And due to this sort of organizational and managerial structure; the participation and awareness has been increased in the state.

#### 2.4 Identification of Talent

The event of Khel Mahakumbh has provided stage to talented sports persons. It has paved way to identify the talented youth of the state in sports through it's over all mechanism. The identification and nurturing of the talented sport persons has been done in a robust way. Every stage of Maha Khumbh talented sport persons are given enough training for the further upliftment to the next level competition. There are summer camps, district level psychological and physical tests, youth talent scheme, proven sport talent for specific game and district level residential sports school meant for the nurturing for talented sports persons of the state.

#### 3. National Participation of Gujarat's Sports-Persons

Locally Sports Authority of Gujarat helps children and sports-persons of Gujarat's school in five major National Forums. Sports Games Federation of India (S.G.F.I.), Rajiv Ghandhi Khel Mission sponsored rural and national women sports festival, Subroto Mukharjee Sports Education Society sponsored and Javaharlal Neharu Hockey Tournament Society sponsored games. Among these games S.G.F.I, Subroto and Neharu Cup Tournament are for school children (under the age of 19 years).

**Table-2 Medal Summary**

Medal Summary 2015-16				
Game	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
School Level	38	49	105	192
Rural (N.R.S.O.)	3	4	2	9
Women	1	1	2	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>205</b>

(Source: Annual Report 2015-16, Sports Authority of Gujarat, Gandhinagar, Gujarat)

While Rural and Women games are for all and rural games for less than 18 years and women game festival the age restriction is less than 25 years. The above table provides the performance of Gujarat sports persons in these events during 2015-16. The school level games, the performance is eye catching with 38 Gold, 49 Silver and 105 bronze medals. But the performance is not up to mark in National Rural Sports Olympic and Women’s Game Festival where our sports persons grab a meager share in these National events.

**3.1 Ranking in Sports Games Federation of India (S.G.F.I.)**

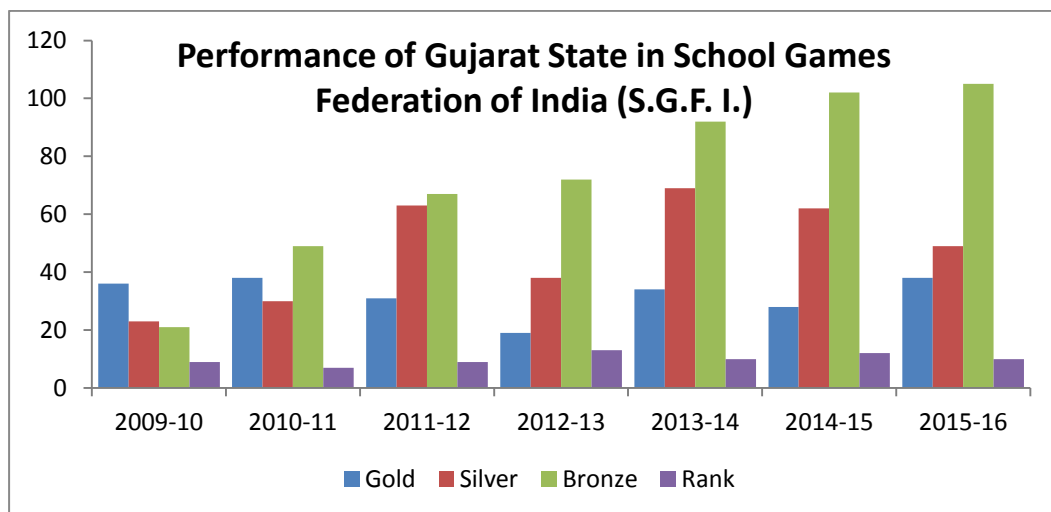
The following table-3 and Graph-3 provide Gujarat State’s performance in National School Games annually organized by Sports Games Federation of India. It covers the medal tally as well as overall ranking of the state in this national event from 2009-10 to 2015-16. The performance remained consistent in securing Gold medals while securing both Silver and Bronze medals have been increased during these years. The ranking though has been decreased in terms of number but the medals have been increased during this period.

**Table-3 Ranking in S.G.F.I.**

Year	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Rank
2009-10	36	23	21	9
2010-11	38	30	49	7
2011-12	31	63	67	9
2012-13	19	38	72	13
2013-14	34	69	92	10
2014-15	28	62	102	12
2015-16	38	49	105	10

(Source:www.sgfibharat.com)

**Graph- 3 Performance of Gujarat in S.G.F.I.**





#### 4. Major Sports Achievements of Gujarat

After having implemented the strategy of special sports event like, Khel Mahakumbh, it is obvious to look at the achievement of Gujarat state with respect to National and International sports anecdotes. There have been improvements in ranking of Gujarat state in National School Games (N.S.G.). The numbers of winning Gold medals have been continuously increased and in last N.S.G., total 38 Gold Medals were won by the state. FICCI recently awarded Gujarat state for its efforts to making sports an integral part of developmental strategy.

In South Asian African Games, Gujarat's sports persons won 13 Gold, 8 Silver and 2 Bronze medals. There are surely some of the sports persons are bringing pride to the state. Among them, Mana Patel, a swimmer has consistently performing well in National and International level, Lajja Goswami, a shooter got 2 Gold, 1 Silver and 1 Bronze medals in South Asian African Games. Many tribal athletes have shown remarkable performance in National and International sport events.

Moreover, the special Maha Khumbh event specifically organized for physically challenged sports persons. It is also gaining popularity as the number of participants in this event has also been increasing.

#### 5. Conclusion

The state of Gujarat has been increasingly making efforts to be recognized in the arena of sports by arranging various sports related events and competition to encourage people of Gujarat for overall development of the state. The event like Khel Mahakumbh has surely paved the way in this direction. Khel Mahakumbh has provided a healthy competitive environment for not only sports persons who are making their career in sports but also by providing opportunity to play in open age group to common people to participate and fulfill their unsatisfied needs.

There is still needs to increase infrastructural facilities for sports in the interior parts of Gujarat. The state doesn't have world class level play grounds for all most all the sports. Even though, sports activities are increasing, but there is a serious problem of qualified physical trainers. Recreational sports activities are booming but the infrastructural facilities are limited to elite class.

Regarding recognition at International level, Gujarat is lacking with single Olympic medal. A very large number of private schools and colleges are running without playground kind of infrastructural facilities for the talented students.

There is an urgent need to revamp and organization of Governments efforts to make sports as source of overall development for the people of Gujarat. The newly framed sports policy of Gujarat state surely will make it clear indication to fill these gaps. Though it is too early to assess the success of the policy but will surely pave the way for the healthier and wealthier state of Gujarat.

#### References

1. Andreff, W., 'The correlation between economic under-development and sport', *European Sport Management Quarterly* 1, (2001): 251-279.
2. Ashton, J. K. B. Gerrard & R. Hudson, 'Economic impact of national sporting success: evidence from the London stock exchange', *Applied Economic Letters* 10, no. 12 (2003): 783-785.
3. Baade, R. A., 'Professional Sports as catalysts for Metropolitan Economic Development', *Journal of Urban Affairs* 18, no.1 (1996): 1-17.
4. Coalter, F. *Sports and Community Development: A Manual*, Edinburgh: sports Scotland, 2002.
5. Coalter, F. *Sports-in-Development: A Monitoring and Evaluation Manual*. London: UK Sport, 2006.

6. Cora Burnett, 'Engaging sport-for-development for social impact in the South African Context', *Sport in Society* 9, no.12 (2009):1192-1205.
7. Government of Gujarat, 'Annual Report 2016', Sports Authority of Gujarat, Sports, Youth and Cultural Activities Department (2016), Gandhinagar, Gujarat.
8. Government of Gujarat, 'Gujarat Sports Policy 2016', Sports, Youth and Cultural Activities Department (2016), Gandhinagar, Gujarat.
9. Kidd, B., 'A New Social Movement: Sport for Development and Peace', *Sport in Society* 11, no.4 (2008): 370-80.
10. Levine, R., C. Lloyd, M. Greene, and C. Grown. *Girls Count. A Global Investment and Action Agenda*. Washington, DC: Center for Global Development, 2008.
11. Luitz, J. and Riyas Fadal, 'An Econometric Analysis of Sports Performance in Africa', Witz Business School Working Paper no. 162, (2010).
12. Phillip, H., 'Assessing the Contribution of Sport to the Economy', School of Accounting Economics and Finance, Deakin University.
13. Robert, B. and Vactor A. Matheson, 'Estimating economic impact using ex post econometric analysis: Cautionary tales', North American Association of Sports Economists working Paper Series no.11-12, (2011).
14. Tess Kay, 'Developing through sport: evidencing sport impacts on young people, *Sport in Society*', *Sport in Society* 9, no. 12, (2009): 1177-1191.
15. United Nations. *Sports as Means to Promote Education, Health, Development and Peace*. General Assembly Resolution 58/5. New York: United Nations, 2003.
16. [www.khelnmahakumbh.org](http://www.khelnmahakumbh.org) accessed on 12/09/2016.
17. [www.sgfibharat.com](http://www.sgfibharat.com) accessed on 15/09/2016.