

Topic of the week for discussion: 7th to 13th Aug. 2014

Topic: India & Commonwealth games: Analysis

Topic
Introduction

The **2014 Commonwealth Games**, officially the **XX Commonwealth Games**, were held in Glasgow, Scotland, from 23 July to 3 August 2014. A total of 71 teams participated in the 261 events in 18 sports, with England winning the top position with highest tally of 174 medals.

India's performance has been decent in this CWG with it finishing at 5th position with a total of 64 medals including 15 gold, 30 silver and 19 bronze. Squash, racing, archery, boxing, wrestling, rifle shooting, badminton, table tennis – name the sport and India has done well in it at the CWG.

- **Vikas Gowda** won a gold in the Men's Discus throw event, thus winning the first gold medal for India in men's athletics in 56 years.
- **Joshana Chinappa** and **Dipika Pallikal** scripted history by winning the first gold for India in Squash at Commonwealth Games.
- **Kashyap Parupalli** won a gold in Badminton Men's Singles, becoming the first Indian male shuttler in 32 years to win a gold medal in the singles event at the Commonwealth Games

But it is definitely not the best, so far.

It is proposed that the **2018 Commonwealth Games** will be held in Gold Coast City, Queensland, Australia between 4 to 15 April 2018.

History of CWG:

It is an international, multi-sport event involving athletes from the Commonwealth of Nations, which is an intergovernmental organization of 53 member states that were mostly territories of the former British Empire. It was formally constituted by the London Declaration in 1949, which established the member states as "free and equal". The symbol of this free association is Queen Elizabeth II who is the Head of the Commonwealth.

The Commonwealth Games was first held in 1930 and with the exception of 1942 and 1946, which were cancelled due to World War II, has taken place every four years since then. The games are overseen by the Commonwealth Games Federation (CGF), with its headquarters at London. It controls the sporting programme and selects the host cities.

India and CWG: a critical analysis

The 2010 CWG was hosted in India amidst scams, scandals and criticism of slow pace of work, as well as issues related to security and hygiene. Even though the performance of India in hosting the games was not upto mark still its performance in medal tally was remarkable. India ranked second with a total medal score of 101.

This, coupled with its performance in CWG 2014 presses us to contemplate the fact the why such performances are not replicated in Olympics, specially the 2012 Olympics. To mention, India poor performance can be vouched from the fact that its score in Olympics 2012 was 0 gold, 2 silver and 4 bronze.

30+ gold medals in CWG and 0 in Olympics is a hard pill to swallow. But the scores are only symptomatic? But the real problem question is: ***Why is it that the Indian athletes cannot replicate their CWG performances during the Olympics?***

The probable answers are:

1. Olympics and CWG are different stage for athletes. Olympics boast the presence of two nations which rule global sport – USA and China – hence the competition in Olympics become intense. The players who succeed in Commonwealth games are facing less competition and pressure than what they are facing in Olympics. Hence, CWG is no way a preparatory ground for the Olympics considering vast level of differences in levels. Hence it can be concluded that CWG performance should not act as judgment for Olympics as the hygiene factors are not comparable.
2. The sports infrastructure for athletes in India is inadequate and substandard, which hampers the interest of general populace in athletic sports in India. Though India has one of the finest Cricket and Hockey teams in the world but winning Olympics medals seems such a daunting task for our nation. Only the very poor or the very well off in India feel motivated enough (for entirely different reasons) to focus on competitive sports apart from cricket and studies. This is the prime reason India does not win very many medals at the Olympics, and other world level competitions. No more than a very small percentage of the population is willing to devote its life to athletics, shooting, judo, table tennis, gymnastics, fencing and the like due to lack of encouragement and focus from Government bodies and sports faculties.

Hence, the probable causes should be dealt in a serious manner to be seriously proud of the entire gamut of sports caliber of our India.

Read further:

<http://blogs.wsj.com/indiarealtime/2014/08/04/indias-gold-medals-haul-at-the-commonwealth-games-not-as-impressive-as-it-looks/>

<http://www.firstpost.com/blogs/the-sad-but-true-story-of-indias-olympic-failings-395024.html>

<http://www.topendsports.com/events/sport-events.htm>