



THE GROWTH OF PRO KABADDI LEAGUE IN INDIA

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Abstract

Kabaddi is a contact team sport that originated in ancient India in Tamil Nadu. It is popular in South Asia and is the state game of the Indian states of Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Punjab. It is also the national sport of Bangladesh.

Two teams compete, each occupying its own half of the court. They take turns sending a "raider" into the opposing team's half and earn points if the raider manages to touch opposing team members and return to the home half, all while taking only a single breath. If however the raider is tackled and prevented from returning, the opposing team earns the point.

The word 'Pro' generally stands for professionalism. As the Pro Kabaddi League is carried out at a professional level with some renowned national and international players participating in the same; it is named as 'Pro Kabaddi League'. The word 'Pro' over here is a metaphor for expertise, proficiency and popularity of the game.

Keywords: Pro Kabaddi League, Infrastructure, Performance.

Introduction

Kabaddi is an indigenous game which is popular in India. It is a simple and inexpensive game and does not require a big playing area or any equipment. This game is popular in the villages and small towns in India. It is played throughout Asia with minor modifications. Kabaddi is quite new to the other parts of the world. It was known by various names in different parts of India. For example, Chedugudu or Gudugudu in Southern parts of India, Ha-du-du (Men), Chu-kitkit (Women) in Eastern India, Hu-tu-tu in Maharashtra in western India and Kabaddi in Northern India. It is a game of attack and defense. The two teams occupy opposite halves of a field and take turn in sending a 'Raider' into the other half. In order to win points, members of the opposite team are tagged and the raider tries to return to half, holding the breath and chanting, "Kabaddi, Kabaddi, Kabaddi".

History and development of Kabaddi

Modern kabaddi is a synthesis of the game played in various forms under different names. Kabaddi received international exposure during the 1936 Berlin Olympics, Hanuman Vyayam Prasarak Mandal, Amaravati, Maharashtra. The game was introduced in the Indian Olympic Games at Calcutta in 1938.

In 1950 the All India Kabaddi Federation came into existence and compiled standard rules. The Amateur Kabaddi Federation of India (AKFI) was founded in 1973. After formation of the Amateur Kabaddi Federation of India, the first men's nationals were held in Tamil Nadu (Madras) (renamed Chennai), while the women's were in AKFI has given new shape to the rules.



The Asian Kabaddi Federation (AKF) was founded under the chairmanship of kabaddi. In 1979, a return test between Bangladesh and India was held at different places of India including Mumbai, Hyderabad, and Punjab. The Asian Kabaddi Championship was arranged in 1980 and India emerged as champion and Bangladesh runner-up. Bangladesh became runner-up again in 1985 in the Asian Kabaddi Championship held in Jaipur, India. The other teams in the tournament were Nepal, Malaysia and Japan. The game was included for the first time in the Asian Games in Beijing in 1990. India, China, Japan, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, and Bangladesh took part. India won the gold medal and has also won gold at the following six Asian Games in Hiroshima in 1994, Bangkok in 1998, Busan in 2002, Doha in 2006 and Guangzhou in 2010.

An attempt to popularise kabaddi in Great Britain was carried out by Channel 4, who commissioned a programme dedicated to the sport. The programme, kabaddi in the early 1990s, however, failed to capture viewer attention despite fixtures such as West Bengal Police versus the Punjab. Kabaddi was axed in 1992. Alt-rock bands The Cooper Temple Clause formed a kabaddi team in 2001 and were, at one stage, ranked seventh in the British domestic standings. In the 1998 Asian games held at Bangkok (Thailand), the Indian kabaddi team clinched the gold medal. The chief coach of the team was former kabaddi player and coach Flt. Lt. S P Singh.

In a major upset, seven-time gold medalist India suffered their first-ever loss in 28 years at the 2018 Asian Games to South Korea in the men's Kabaddi group A game. In the semi-final, Iran sent the seven-time Asiad champions packing with a 27–18 win. India, who took home the bronze for reaching the semi-finals, did not play in the final since the introduction of the Games in the Asiad in 1990 at Beijing. [

Kabaddi Federation of India

The Kabaddi Federation of India (KFI) was founded in 1950, and it compiled a standard set of rules. The Amateur Kabaddi Federation of India (AKFI) was founded in 1973. The AKFI has given new shape to the rules and it has also the rights of modification in the rules. The Asian Kabaddi Federation was founded under the chairmanship of Sharad Pawar.

The Governing body of Kabaddi in Asia is the Asian Kabaddi Federation (AKF) headed by Mr. Janardan Singh Gehlot. AKF is affiliated to the Olympic Council of Asia. The parent body to regulate the game at the international level is the International Kabaddi Federation (IKF). India won the world cup in December 2013 by defeating Pakistan in finals at Punjab. In 2016 India had won world cup finals by defeating Iran.

Objective

The objective of the study was to find out the Growth of Pro Kabaddi League in India.

Significance of the Study

The study will provide information to the teachers of physical education, coaches, trainees, official's sports organizations of the country, regarding some of hindrances which impede the progress of Kabaddi in India. The study will bring the light outstanding performance of the Kabaddi players and the teams to the past. So that due reorganization and honours may be given to them. The study will help in comparing the existing standards of the game with the performance of the previous years and it may, in turn, help in determine the future of the game. The information presented in the study will act as a



source of reference for teachers of physical education, coaches and professional students in the field of physical education.

Methodology

The present chapter deals with the design of the, collection of data and the statistical techniques used for the treatment to the obtained data. Methodology of this project work are discussed below

Design of the Study

As per the requirement and nature of the study, a case study was designed to explore the Pro Kabaddi, the development of Indian Kabaddi through Pro Kabaddi league. A case study was considered appropriate to explore in depth information on various aspects of the case which is the subject matter of the study, designed in which historical, analytical and interpretive methods were utilized to collect the relevant data.

Secondary Source

The data was also collected from secondary sources. Brief information of Indian Kabaddi was got by secondary source, like as – internet, newspaper, Wikipedia, magazine etc.

Pro Kabaddi League

Pro Kabaddi League (PKL) is a professional Kabaddi league of India. This tournament is played on the same format as that of Indian Premier League (IPL). The first edition of Pro Kabaddi League (PKL) started in 2014 with eight franchises. It consisted of players from all around the world. It is monitored by the Mr. Charu Sharma, Managing Director of Mashal Sports. This tournament is backed by the Amateur Kabaddi Federation of India (AKFI), Asian Kabaddi Federation (AKF) and International Kabaddi Federation (IKF).

Seasons

Season-1

The first signing and auction of players for the 8 teams were held on 20 May 2014 in Mumbai. India's national kabaddi captain Rakesh Kumar was the priciest among the players bought for ₹ 12.80 lakh by the Patna Pirates. Sports Authority of India's Deepak Niwas Hooda was bought by the Telugu Titans franchise for ₹ 12.60 lakh. Tae Deok Eom was the highest paid overseas player bought for ₹ 7 lakh by the Patna franchise.

The duration of the season was from 26 July 2014 to 31 August 2014. There were double round-robin matches along with two semifinals, third place and final games. 56 games were to be played in the first round and 4 in the playoff stage, making a total of 60 games. 8 teams took part in the first edition. The first game was played on 26 July between U Mumba and Jaipur Pink Panthers and the final was played on 31 August at Mumbai. Jaipur Pink Panthers beat U Mumba by 35–24 to win the inaugural Pro Kabaddi League.

Season -2

Star Sports Pro Kabaddi season 2 was from 18 July 2015 to 23 August 2015. There were 60 matches played with two semifinals, a third place play-off and a final. The first game was played on 18 July between U Mumba and Jaipur Pink Panthers and the final was played on 23 August at Mumbai between U Mumba and Bengaluru Bulls. U Mumba beat Bengaluru Bulls by 36–30 to win the 2015



season of the Pro Kabaddi League. U Mumba stood first, Bengaluru Bulls stood second and Telugu Titans stood in the third position in the league.

Season- 3

Star Sports Pro Kabaddi season 3 will have two editions. The CEO of Star India, Sanjay Gupta, confirmed that Star Sports Pro Kabaddi wants to make Pro Kabaddi, a 5-week event, happen 10 weeks a year by having two editions a year. The idea is to play the tournament once in January–February 2016 and once in June–July 2016. It also had 8 teams. Patna Pirates beat U Mumba by 3 points in the final in Delhi to take home the trophy. Puneri Paltan came third this season.

Season- 4

The fourth season took place from 25 June to 31 July 2016, with the existing eight teams participating. Patna Pirates beat Jaipur Pink Panthers in the final. Season 4 also saw the launch of the first professional women's kabaddi league, Women's Kabaddi Challenge (WKC). The first season saw 3 teams namely Ice Divas, Fire Birds and Storm Queens battle out to be the first ever WKC champions. In the finale, scheduled along with the men's final in Hyderabad, the Storm Queens defeated the Fire Sourav Tomar play hard with u Mumba and got a new young player (NYP) Trophy.

Season -5

The 2017 season was the fifth edition of the Pro Kabaddi League, and it featured 12 teams, including new teams from Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Tamil Nadu, and Gujarat. The team from Haryana is known as Haryana Steelers owned by JSW Sports. Sachin Tendulkar co-owns the Tamil Nadu team named Tamil Thalaivas. The Uttar Pradesh team is named as UP Yoddha owned by GMR group and the Gujarat team is named as Gujarat Fortune Giants owned by Gautam Adani.

Auctions for the new season were held in May, before which the existing teams were allowed to retain one player each. The auction saw over 400 players go under the hammer and ₹ 46.99 crores spent by the 12 teams. The Pro Kabaddi League season 5 started on 28 July 2017.

The most expensive pick of the auction was raider Nitin Tomar, who was bought by the Uttar Pradesh team for a sum of ₹ 93 lakh. Following in second place was Rohit Kumar after the Bengaluru Bulls picked him for a ₹ 81 lakhs price. The most expensive foreign player was South Korea's Lee Jang-kun after he was retained by the Bengal Warriors for ₹ 80.3 lakhs.

The new season was slated to be the biggest league tournament of its kind in the history of Indian sports in terms of geographical coverage and duration. It featured 138 matches spread across a time period of 13 weeks across 11 states. A children's Kabaddi tournament, known as KBD Juniors, was also organised between schools of the cities in which the matches were held.

Patna Pirates beat Gujarat Fortune Giants by 55–38 in the final with the Man of the Tournament Pardeep Narwal stealing the show with 19 raid points against the Fortune Giants defence for the first time in the tournament..The award ceremony of the finale was hosted by Pooja Bhamrah. Pardeep Narwal was adjudged the man of the finale.



Season- 6

The 2018 season is the sixth edition of the Pro Kabaddi League, and it features 12 teams. Auctions for the new season were held in which Haryana Steelers paid 1.51 crores for Monu Goyat who became the highest paid player in the history of Pro Kabaddi league.

The most expensive foreign player this season is Fazel Atrachali from Iran. He was bought by U Mumba for 1 crore.

Zone B toppers, Bengaluru Bulls beat the Zone A toppers, Gujarat Fortune Giants by 38–33 in the final with the Man of the Tournament Pawan Kumar Sehrawat stealing the show with a record 22 raid points against the young Fortune Giants defence. For a consecutive second time, Gujarat Fortune Giants have lost in the finals. The coach of Bengaluru Bulls, Randhir Singh was happy as his team finally won the tournament after underwhelming finishes in the previous couple of seasons. On the other hand, Manpreet Singh, the coach of the Gujarat Fortune Giants rued the opportunity to win the tournament after losing two successive finals.


Season -7

The 2019 season is the seventh edition of the Pro Kabaddi League, and it features 12 teams. Auctions for the new season were held in Mumbai on 8 and 9 April. The franchises splashed out over 50 crores to acquire 200 players. Siddharth Sirish Desai became the most expensive buy of the season after Telugu Titans got the winning bid of him at ₹ 1.45 crore. The most expensive foreign player of this season was Iranian Mohammad Esmaeil Nabibakhsh who was bought by Bengal Warriors for ₹ 77.75 lakh. As termed by the organisers 'Most Toughest Season', the zonal system present in the previous season is removed, and each team will play against all the other teams twice. Top 6 teams will qualify for the playoffs. The top two teams will automatically make the semi-finals while the remaining four will battle it out in eliminators. Dabang Delhi and Bengal Warriors emerged as the winners in the semi finals and qualified to the final for the first time. In the final, Bengal Warriors outplayed Dabang Delhi by a margin of 39–34 and clinched their maiden Pro Kabaddi League title. The season witnessed several records. Pardeep Narwal became the first ever player to reach 1000 points in the Pro Kabaddi League Naveen Kumar scored 21 consecutive Super 10s and overall 22. While Pawan Sehrawat registered most individual points in a match (39) against Haryana Steelers. In this season, for the first time three raiders crossed the 300-raid points mark. Among the defenders, Neeraj Kumar of Patna Pirates scored most tackle points (11) in a match and equalled the record of Mohit Chillar (11).

Season-8





No season was held in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The 2021 season will run from July 20 to October 19.

India women's national kabaddi team represents India in international women's kabaddi events. In World Cup

Year	Indian's Position	Last Match Played by India
2014	Winner	 India vs. New Zealand (Final match) 36 – 27







In Asian Games

2018	Runner	    Iran vs. India (Final match) 27-24
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Indian performance in kabaddi after Prokabaddi League in world Cup (Standard Style)

Men's team

In world Cup

Year	Indian's Position	Last Match Played by India
2016	Winner	    India Vs. Iran (Final match) India won By 38-29

In Asian Games

Year	Host	Final	Score	Runner-up
		Winner		
2014	Incheon	  India	31-21	Iran
2018	Jakarta–Palembang	  Iran	27-24	South Korea

Impact of PKL on Mass Media

Pro Kabaddi League (PKL) has emerged as the most watched non-cricket sports league in India in no time. The tournament, which was flagged off in 2014 with eight teams, now boasts of having reached 12 teams in just six years.

Unlike the last season that witnessed a 31 percent dip in viewership data to 1.1 billion impressions from the 1.6 billion impressions of season five, PKL 7 has registered a growth of 9 per cent in viewership numbers and has garnered 1.2 billion impressions, as per BARC India.

As per industry sources, Star India is likely to earn Rs 200 to 230 crore from Season 7. In Season 6, the broadcaster was estimated to earn around Rs 150 crore from ad revenues and sponsorship in and in season five, sources said, it is said to have touched Rs 120 crore.

The league has also been a favourite in terms of sponsorship. Apart from Vivo, which signed its association with PKL as title sponsor for Rs 262 crore for five years, the tournament has been ‘powered by’ Thums Up. The other brands, signed up as associate sponsors, include Bajaj Electricals, Tata Motors, Gillette, Dream11, Honda and R R Kabel. UltraTech Cement, Britannia, McDowell's No. 1 and



HDFC are the official partners. In 2019, the broadcasters managed to get on board other brands with Flamingo and Reforce being first time sponsors for the league.

According to GroupM's ESP Properties' Sporting Nation report, all these brands have contributed to around Rs 90 crore to the central sponsorship in PKL. This is considering the fact that Pro Kabaddi, which was usually a July phenomenon, was moved to October in 2018 courtesy the Asian Games.

"In 2018, PKL saw a drop in ratings but in season 7 it regained momentum," said Vinit Karnik, Business Head, ESP-Properties. There were certain changes in the format this year – for instance from two seasons they went back to one and this has worked for PKL.

"The average ratings on PKL has been all over one and this is very encouraging. If you see any of the TV shows, not too many of them have consistently achieved one rating over a period of three months," he added.

PKL is a new sporting event and such properties need at least 10 years to show some kind of results. But Karnik says: "PKL has definitely started showing signs of an established property from the standpoint of viewers."

This year was packed with back-to-back mega events like the IPL, World Cup and General Elections, but that has not stopped the league from getting due attention from both brands and viewers. "The property has seen a significant growth over the past few years and it is getting stronger since PKL has developed a steady fan base. The viewership number has also been steady," said Jehil Thakkar, Head, Media and Entertainment Partner, Deloitte.

On the markets driving growth for PKL, Thakkar shared, "The sporting event is fairly well distributed. While it does have a stronger pickup in tier II and tier III markets, there is also significant involvement from the Metros itself. It's not intuitively a small town phenomenon."

Apart from PKL's distribution, Star India has also promoted the league well. "There have been a lot of promotions for the property. In terms of awareness, the tournament is catching up fast, very similar to the way IPL has been progressing every year," said media expert Anita Nayyar.

Conclusion

- The format of the competition and the evening schedule has managed to raise the profile of the game to a whole new level. The sky is the limit from here with an increasing interest in schools and colleges across both urban and rural area.
- One of the unintended benefits of the PKL is also the increasing possibility of showcasing the sport for an Olympic entry in the years to come. An inclusion in the demonstrative schedule for Tokyo in 2021 could be a good short-term goal for the administrators of the sport.
- The backing of the Indian and Continental federations running Kabaddi augurs well both for the league and the sport overall. But a lot remains to be done in terms of widening and deepening the sport across the country.
- Despite the immense success of the league, the sport remains a shallow pursuit limited to small sections of the country. PKL presents a transformational opportunity for the sport in terms of arousing interest and drawing more children to the sport.



- The key to capitalize this wave of interest is in building an eco system of facilities and personnel to identify and nurture talent across states. Considering the minimalist nature of the sport, it aligns well with the socio-economic background of the Indian population.
- Eventually, Star and Mashal could also work towards building a larger multi-tiered league that could achieve great success on the lines of the Premier League in England and the NFL in the USA.

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