



## Sports Diplomacy & Sportsmen as Ambassadors of Peace -Negotiating towards sporting harmony

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### **Abstract**

*Sports are linked with politics & both are mutually linked with each other. Some countries use sports as a part of foreign policy. The venue of sporting events attaches lot more political diplomacy. Countries vie with one another to host a sporting event sometimes sports becomes a part of economic diplomacy as well. This paper examines the interlinking aspects of sports & politics & considers prospective measures in making sports persons as ambassadors of peace. Sports leaves way to harmonic living if implemented with broader objectives & this paper spotlights the issues linked with easing out political diplomacy through sporting events. Sports players can become ambassador of peace & harmony. Sports can play an important role in making political diplomacy smooth & consistent.*

**Key Words:** *sports, diplomacy, policy making, ambassadors of peace, way to harmonic living.*

*Sport has the power to change the world. It has the power to inspire. It has the power to unite people in a way that little else does. Sport can awaken hope where there was previously only despair. Sport speaks to people in a language they can understand.”- Nelson Mandela*

### **Introduction**

Introduction- Sports and politics do have mutually inclusive spheres of operation, and sport has often been used as a medium to achieve foreign policy objectives. Political ideologies shape a nation’s policy initiatives and decisively influence a nation’s sporting landscape. This line of reasoning finds resonance in India’s boycott of the Davis Cup (Tennis) final against South Africa due to its opposition to apartheid policy. Indian boycott of cricket in Sri Lanka during LTTE struggle.

Sports diplomacy is promoting diplomatic relations through sports. Sports becoming an agenda in diplomatic tie ups & agreements.

Sports diplomacy also means including sporting events as a part of political conversations . India is having friendly relations with several countries across the globe. Cricket as a game has popularity all over the world & several countries are earmarked for cricketing sponsorships. India & Pakistan have bilateral contracts over cricket matches & cricket becomes an



important point in bilateral talks between these countries & it is mooted to be a part of diplomacy between these two countries. India is having border disputes with china Pakistan , the problem of from Bangladesh disputes with Srilanka etc . These political tensions can be silenced through the proper adoption of sports policy.

### **Shortcomings & Critiques against Sports Diplomacy**

Sports diplomacy is being accused of several grave implications across the world. It is debated that sports should not become a tool in the hands of political leaders who always mirror political opportunism.. Sports can bridge the countries towards peace & cohesive living but sports diplomacy can disturb this ethos. As is evident from several examples with the arranging of common sporting events countries can lessen their political gaps but at the same time they vie with one another to host an event in a friendlier destination rather than choosing a conflicting destination. Sports fans always follow crazy attitudes when their team either loses / under performs. This affects the sporting spirit . Sport scan become medium in coming to a common diplomatic understanding between warring countries only if the nations anticipate the consequences of such an understanding if interpreted wrongly. Ill-judged bans on sporting events devalues a tournament by robbing the spectators of participation by skillful

players. It has also been contended that this expulsion will make the affected players question their national leadership, thereby building pressure on their states to mend ties with the central government. Sports loving people are alienated in these cases on bans on sports Political parties in an eagerness to woo their supporters ban several sporting events in warring countries. But they forget that those banned sporting activities could become a great weapon in creating an environment of understanding & brotherhood. Sports become a prey in political frame work sometimes intentionally & sometimes non-deliberately. Opponent countries are also hit by their moves as it complicates diplomatic moves which have been initiated.( Grant Jarvy-Sports Culture &Society 2013)

### **Prospective Measures**

1. As a mark of respect, numerous football clubs and other sporting bodies often observe a minute of silence, or play with a black armband to honor those who have served the sport and at times even those who have served the nation.
2. Sometime players play with black ribbons in protest against any anti national decision.
3. Sometimes teams line up to maintain a moment of silence before the inaugural match as a mark of symbolic respect. ( Grant Jarvy- Sports Culture &Society 2013)



4. Additionally the tournaments could have set aside a portion of their revenue to extend monetary relief to those who have experienced anguish in communal violence in Jammu & Kashmir , natural calamities in Uttar Pradesh , ethnic violence in Sri Lanka , earth quake victims of maharashtra , flood victims of uttarakhand, etc
5. Indian government believes that this kind of sympathy from sports persons / organizations reflect a greater political maturity on part of the government.
6. This also helps in constructive utilization of a sporting flat form towards humanitarian empathy. This also helps governmental moves towards reconstruction of the area hit by such aggressive violence.
7. Sporting ties must not bear the brunt of collateral damage each time the bilateral relations deteriorate as it reflects extremely poorly on the health of the government's foreign policy, especially when there are other methods that are capable of constructively addressing such deadlocks.( Grant Jarvy- Sports Culture & Society 2013)
8. Just like international cultural missions, sports missions should be sent as ambassadors of peace & harmony
9. Exhibition games tournaments should be held.
10. Sports diplomacy is simply using the common bond of sports to bridge ever-present gaps between nations and cultures. It introduces young athletes to each other without the economic, political, and military issues that burden traditional diplomacy.( amaya chakravorthy- cricket diplomacy in India 2012 ).
11. Each country which is hit by terrorism, violence, aggressive attitudes of leftist organizations can adopt a sport diplomacy policy towards calming down these separatist tendencies. This helps in nation building (amaya chakravorthy- cricket diplomacy in India 2012).
12. It can become an initiative towards bridging the gaps in diplomacy
13. . Sports diplomacy is a powerful force for reaching individuals in every corner of the globe. Sports transcend borders, increase dialogue, and expose foreign participants to American culture. Outside of official channels, sports diplomacy connects people on a personal level through our common interests, values, and passions. We can start conversations and build lasting connections that inspire and inform our government-to-government relationships.
14. Players can travel distances through riding cycling walking etc & extend the missions of peace.
15. Sports is understood by people across the globe without any barriers it is the language of all people hence it has no barrier & no hurdles. Hence politics should



not be mixed with sports.( Grant Jarvy- Sports Culture & Society 2013)

Sports diplomacy is thus employing the common bond of sports to bridge ever-present gaps between nations and cultures. It introduces young players to each other without the economic, political, and military issues that burden traditional diplomacy. The department of youth affairs & sports in India has been taking meticulous care in promoting sports. The multi-dimensional approach towards promoting youth health & community development is being strategized in organizing sporting events. Sports diplomacy is being evolved as an essential part of traditional learning system making it a supportive diplomacy relation is also considered. The hopeful proceeds of sports diplomacy to children, youth, adolescents, across the globe helps in promoting sustainability of political relations. The imperative role of Physical education in promoting community development is thus gaining importance.

**Conclusion** Sports stars can become Ambassadors of Peace only if

the government wishes to play stable diplomatic policy. Sports lovers across the globe are eager to see their players play instead of governments playing dirty political games at the cost of sports. Governments across the world should realize that if executed clearly sports can become a great helping tool in easing out confrontations & distances.

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