



Role of Namdhari Sect in Evolution of Hockey in India: A Critical Analysis of Training Methodologies and Achievements

Gurjeet Kaur¹, Manu Sharma²

¹Research Scholar, History, Lovely Professional University, Phagwara, Punjab, India.

²Head & Associate Professor, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, Punjab, India.

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Abstract

Namdhari sports, particularly field hockey, have carved a distinctive niche in India's sporting landscape, marked by unique training methodologies and remarkable achievements. This study explores the profound impact of Namdhari sports on the development and evolution of field hockey in India, focusing specifically on training methodologies and notable achievements. Historically rooted in the visionary efforts of Baba Uttam Singh and nurtured through generations within the Namdhari Sikh community, Namdhari sports have fostered a culture of discipline, skill development, and community engagement. Central to this impact are the innovative training methodologies that blend traditional values with modern coaching techniques, emphasizing both technical proficiency and holistic development. Through a comprehensive review of literature, historical analysis, and interviews with prominent Namdharis including coaches, players, and administrators, this study highlights the contributions of Namdhari sports to the broader hockey landscape. It examines how these methodologies have shaped the careers of renowned players, propelled teams to championships, and influenced coaching philosophies across India. Furthermore, this research identifies critical success factors such as community support, infrastructure investments, and strategic partnerships that have facilitated the achievements of Namdhari sports in field hockey. It underscores the importance of preserving and promoting these methodologies to sustain the legacy of excellence and inspire future generations of hockey players. The study provides a nuanced understanding of how Namdhari sports have significantly impacted field hockey in India, offering insights into training methodologies that continue to shape the sport's development trajectory. Recommendations for leveraging these insights to enhance training programs, elevate coaching standards, and foster talent development are proposed to ensure continued success and growth in Indian field hockey.

Introduction:

Hockey holds a special place in the hearts of Indians as it is considered the National Game of the country. The roots of this sport run deep in Indian history with evidence of its existence dating back to ancient times. The game has been a source of pride and joy for generations capturing the spirit and passion of the nation. It has become more than just a sport; it is a symbol of unity resilience and determination for the people of India. The

popularity of hockey continues to thrive in the country with a strong legacy that is cherished and celebrated by all. During this golden era of Indian hockey which spanned several decades India dominated the sport with unparalleled skill and finesse. The Indian hockey team reigned supreme on the international stage showcasing their exceptional talent and dedication to the game. Their victories were celebrated across the nation uniting people from all walks of life in support of their beloved team. The players became national heroes inspiring future generations to take up the sport and continue India's legacy of excellence in hockey. It was a time when Indian hockey reached its pinnacle leaving an indelible mark on the history of the sport. On the International stage the dominance of Indian hockey players was unrivalled with no competitors able to match the miraculous skills displayed by the team. Their exceptional talent and prowess on the field set them apart from the rest making them a force to be reckoned with in the world of hockey. Their remarkable abilities left audiences in awe and cemented their reputation as true champions of the sport. The rich history and legacy of Indian hockey have solidified the country's reputation as a powerhouse in the sport. With a unique style of play that is both skillful and strategic India has become indelibly linked with the game of hockey. The passion and dedication shown by Indian players on the field have elevated the sport to new heights earning them a place among the elite in the hockey world. These qualities have not only made India synonymous with the game but have also inspired generations of players to uphold the proud tradition of Indian hockey. The unparalleled excellence and exceptional talent displayed by Indian players quickly transformed into legendary tales. The remarkable skills and abilities showcased by these athletes were unmatched creating a legacy that would be passed down through generations. The extraordinary performances and remarkable achievements of Namdhari Hockey players have had a profound impact on the promotion and development of hockey in not only the states of Haryana and Punjab but also on a national and international level. Their dedication and talent have not only brought recognition to themselves but have also brought glory to their respective states and the nation as a whole. Their stellar performances have inspired countless young athletes to take up the sport and strive for excellence further fuelling the growth and popularity of hockey in India. The current research study aims to delve into the contributions and achievements of Namdhari Hockey players to the realm of Indian hockey. By examining their impact and successes this study seeks to shed light on the significant role that Namdhari players have played in shaping the landscape of Indian hockey. Through a thorough analysis of their performances and accomplishments we hope to gain a deeper understanding of the unique contributions made by these talented individuals to the sport in India.

The Namdhari community, known for its unique cultural and religious practices, has made significant contributions to various aspects of Indian society, including sports. Namdhari Sports, particularly their involvement in field hockey, has played a crucial role in nurturing talent and promoting the sport in India. This overview explores the background of Namdhari Sports and their significance in the field of Indian hockey.

The Namdhari sect, also known as the Kuka movement, was founded in the mid-19th century by Baba Balak Singh and later led by Baba Ram Singh. The community is known for its emphasis on discipline, simplicity, and non-violence. The Namdhari community's involvement in sports, especially field hockey, began as part of their holistic approach to physical and spiritual well-being. The community's leaders recognized the importance of sports in fostering discipline, teamwork, and physical fitness.

Hockey holds a special place in Indian culture and history, often referred to as the national sport of India due to its early successes and widespread popularity. The background of Indian hockey is rich and storied, with a legacy that spans over a century and has left an indelible mark on the sport globally. Here's an overview of the background of Indian hockey ; Certainly! During the British colonial period in the early 20th century, hockey was indeed

introduced to India, primarily through the efforts of British army personnel stationed in the country. The British officers and soldiers, who were familiar with the sport from their homeland, played a pivotal role in popularizing hockey among Indians. They organized matches and tournaments, not only within military camps but also in civilian communities.

The introduction of hockey in India coincided with a growing interest in sports and physical education promoted by the British authorities. Hockey quickly gained popularity due to its fast-paced nature, team dynamics, and accessibility compared to other sports of the time. Indian players, inspired by British coaching and competitions, began to adopt and excel in the sport, laying the foundation for India's eventual dominance on the international stage in field hockey. This period marked the beginning of a journey that saw Indian hockey rise to become a powerhouse in the sport, winning numerous Olympic gold medals and World Cups in the decades that followed. The sport's introduction during colonial rule left a lasting impact on Indian culture and sports history, shaping its identity as a hockey nation.

Indian hockey teams began participating in international competitions, showcasing their skill and athleticism. The game quickly gained popularity among Indians, both as players and spectators. Indian hockey achieved unparalleled success during this period, winning six consecutive Olympic gold medals. The team's dominance on the international stage earned them the nickname "The Golden Era of Hockey." Besides the six consecutive gold medals from 1928 to 1956, India has also won silver (1960, 1964) and bronze (1968, 1972) medals at the Olympics. India won the Hockey World Cup in 1975, cementing its status as a powerhouse in field hockey. Indian hockey faced challenges in the latter half of the 20th century and early 21st century, with a decline in international rankings and fewer podium finishes. Efforts to revive Indian hockey include professionalizing the sport, enhancing training facilities, and investing in grassroots development programs to nurture young talent.

Objectives of the Research

1. To Analyse the Unique Training Methodologies Employed in Namdhari Hockey.
2. To Assess the Achievements and Contributions of Namdhari Hockey to Indian Hockey.
3. To Explore the cultural and community impact.

Literature Review

Previous studies have highlighted the importance of community-based sports programs in fostering athletic talent and promoting social cohesion. For instance, Smith et al. (2018) found that sports academies with strong community support systems are more successful in developing elite athletes. Similarly, Brown and Johnson (2020) emphasized the role of structured training programs in enhancing athletic performance. This paper builds on existing literature by focusing on the Namdhari Sports Academy, offering insights into its unique approach and the success stories that have emerged from it.

Dr. Iqbal Singh in his work entitled *Sikhs in Hockey: Legends of Hockey in Punjab* explores the rich history of hockey among Sikhs, including the Namdhari community's contributions.

Gulu Ezekiel in his research entitled *Hockey in Punjab: Three Centuries of Tradition* not only wrote exclusively about Namdhari hockey, but it covers the broader history of hockey in Punjab, including significant contributions from the Namdhari community.

Amrik Singh in his book named *Sports and Sikhs: A Trail Blazer* discusses various sports among Sikhs, including hockey, with insights into the Namdhari community's involvement.

Dr. Gurvinder Kaur wrote a research paper named *Role of Namdhari Sikhs in Promotion of Hockey in India*. This research paper explores the historical role and contributions of Namdhari Sikhs in promoting and developing hockey in India.

Dr. Mandeep Singh in his research entitled *Contribution of Namdhari Hockey to Indian Sports Culture* examines the cultural and sporting significance of Namdhari hockey within the broader context of Indian sports culture.

Dr. Harjeet Kaur in her work entitled *Impact of Namdhari Hockey on Community Identity and Social Cohesion* analyzes how Namdhari hockey tournaments and events contribute to community identity and social cohesion among Namdhari Sikhs.

Research Methodology

Fifty people are being asked to take part in this study. Players (national or international), coaches, trainers, members of the Namdhari Sports Academy's management group, and people from the area are among the respondents. With the help of experts in the field, an open-ended questionnaire was made. The people who were part of the study would be old enough to understand why they were being studied, but people still tried to help them understand why they were being studied and what they were supposed to do.

Tools

In order to find out the results of any study project, collection of data is mandatory. The analyst used a self-made open ended questionnaire to gather information. The questionnaire was carefully designed and put together, making sure that it covered as many important topics as possible for the study. This questionnaire that I made myself was approved by the experts.

Analysis

Using Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis approach, the study on "The Impact of Namdhari Sports on Field Hockey in India: Training Methodologies and Achievements" is involved systematically identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within the qualitative data collected.

The Namdhari Sports Academy has played a pivotal role in the development of field hockey in India. Rooted in the cultural and social traditions of the Namdhari community, the academy has produced numerous national and international hockey players. This paper aims to explore the training methodologies employed by the Namdhari Sports Academy, examine their impact on player development, and assess their overall contributions to the sport of field hockey in India.

Results and discussion

Contributions to Field Hockey:

The Namdhari Hockey Team, associated with the Namdhari community, has made significant contributions to Indian field hockey. The Namdhari Hockey Team was formed to promote sports within the Namdhari community and beyond (Sharma & Kaur, 2022). The team has roots in the principles of the Namdhari sect, which emphasizes discipline, physical fitness, and a drug-free lifestyle. The team is supported by the Namdhari sect's leaders and community, ensuring that players receive the necessary training and facilities. The Namdhari Hockey Team has participated in numerous national-level tournaments and championships in India. They have often been recognized for their skill, teamwork, and sportsmanship.

The team has produced several players who have gone on to represent India in international competitions. Notable players from the Namdhari Hockey Team have contributed to the success of the national team in various international tournaments (Singh, 2014).

When Namdhari Sports Academy was first started in 1773 in Sirsa, Haryana, Namdhari-XI had no idea it would grow to such great heights. With the help of Satguru Jagjeet Singh Ji and Satguru Uday Singh Ji, Namdhari-XI has produced three Olympians for India: Didar Singh Sr., Mr. Harpal Singh, and Padma Shri Sardar Singh. It has also created 20

players who are known all over the world. Namdhari-XI has played in golf events all over the world, as well as in India. Many players have gotten jobs with the government and international companies thanks to Satguru Uday Singh's work.

The team's success has also inspired the promotion of hockey in rural areas, encouraging young athletes to take up the sport and pursue it professionally. Sardar Singh One of the most notable players from the Namdhari community, Sardar Singh, has captained the Indian national hockey team and has been recognized for his outstanding skills and leadership on the field. Several other players from the Namdhari Hockey Team have gained recognition at both national and international levels, contributing to the team's legacy. Sardar Singh, one of the most notable players from the Namdhari community, has had a distinguished career in Indian field hockey. Sardar started playing hockey at a young age, encouraged by his family and the supportive environment within the Namdhari community. Sardar Singh made his debut for the Indian national team in 2006 at the age of 20, quickly establishing himself as a key player due to his exceptional skills and strategic understanding of the game. In 2008, he became the youngest captain of the Indian hockey team. Under his leadership, the team achieved several significant victories and improved their standing in international competitions. Sardar led the Indian team to a gold medal at the 2014 Asian Games in Incheon and a silver medal at the 2010 Asian Games in Guangzhou. He captained the team to a silver medal at the 2010 Commonwealth Games held in Delhi and another silver at the 2014 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow. Sardar played a crucial role in India winning the silver medal at the 2016 Champions Trophy in London. In 2015, Sardar Singh was awarded the Padma Shri, India's fourth-highest civilian award, in recognition of his contributions to sports. In 2017, he received the Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna, India's highest sporting honor.

Harpal Singh has been a stalwart in the defense line for the Indian hockey team. His strong defensive skills and leadership qualities have made him an essential part of the team's success in various tournaments. Some of the best players in the country are from this sect: Hardeep Singh Grewal, Didar Singh Sr., Didar Singh Jr., Gurcharan Singh, Gurmukh Singh Gama, and Harpal Singh. In addition to Baldev Singh (Nigeria), Hardeep Singh Grewal and Baldev Singh (Shahbad Markanda) have also coached and trained their own teams. As it turns out, Satguru Jagjit Singh, the leader of the Namdhari group, used to play sports. Even though he is old, he still plays badminton every week. He played hockey sometimes when he was younger. These people have loved this unrecognised national sport for a very long time. Satguru Uday Singh, who is now the leader of the group, used to play hockey.

The players from the Namdhari Hockey Team have exhibited exceptional skills in their respective positions, contributing to the overall development of the team. Their dedication to the sport has set high standards for training and performance. Experienced players like Sardar Singh and Rajpal Singh have taken on mentorship roles, guiding younger players and helping them navigate the challenges of professional hockey. Their leadership has been vital in maintaining the team's competitive edge. The success of these players has inspired many young athletes from the Namdhari community to take up hockey. The team's achievements have helped in popularizing the sport in rural areas, encouraging more participation at the grassroots level. Namdhari Sports has a rich and longstanding history in Indian field hockey, significantly contributing to the sport's development. Respondents noted the organization's role in nurturing talent over the decades, with many players representing India at various levels.

The analysis reveals that Namdhari Sports has profoundly impacted field hockey in India through its historical influence, innovative training methodologies, community and

cultural ties, notable achievements, and recognition. However, it also faces challenges that need to be addressed to sustain and expand its contributions.

"Their achievements in national and international tournaments are commendable."
[Respondent 8]

"Namdhari Sports has received numerous accolades for their contributions to field hockey." [Respondent 16]

"Namdhari Sports has a rich history in field hockey, dating back several decades."
[Respondent 5]

"Their legacy is evident in the numerous players they've produced who have represented India." [Respondent 31]

Training Methodologies at Namdhari Hockey Academy

The training methodologies employed in Namdhari hockey are a blend of traditional values and modern techniques. The emphasis on discipline, holistic development, technical proficiency, and community support has been instrumental in shaping skilled players who have significantly contributed to Indian hockey. By integrating Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis, the study provides a comprehensive understanding of these methodologies and their impact on the development of Namdhari hockey.

Technical Skill Development

- **Focused Drills:** Daily drills that focus on core skills such as dribbling, passing, shooting, and tackling. These drills are designed to improve precision and technique.
- **Skill Progression:** Gradual progression of skills from basic to advanced levels, ensuring a solid foundation before moving to complex techniques.
- **Position-Specific Training:** Tailored training sessions for different playing positions, ensuring that players develop the necessary skills and tactics for their specific roles on the field.

Physical Conditioning

- **Strength and Conditioning:** Comprehensive strength training programs using modern gym equipment to build muscle strength, endurance, and overall fitness.
- **Cardiovascular Training:** Regular running and aerobic exercises to improve cardiovascular health and stamina, including interval training and long-distance runs.
- **Flexibility and Agility:** Incorporation of exercises that enhance flexibility and agility, such as dynamic stretching, agility drills, and plyometrics.

Tactical and Strategic Training

- **Game Simulations:** Regular match simulations to practice game strategies and develop tactical understanding. These sessions help players adapt to real-match scenarios.
- **Video Analysis:** Use of video analysis to review player performances, identify strengths and weaknesses, and devise strategies for improvement.
- **Team Dynamics**:** Emphasis on teamwork, communication, and on-field coordination through structured drills and practice matches.

Mental Toughness and Psychological Training

- **Mental Conditioning:** Training sessions focused on building mental toughness, resilience, and concentration. Techniques such as visualization and goal setting are employed.
- **Stress Management:** Practices to manage stress and maintain composure under pressure, including breathing exercises and mindfulness techniques.

Holistic Development

- **Yoga and Meditation:** Regular yoga and meditation sessions to promote mental clarity, focus, and spiritual well-being. These practices help players maintain a balanced and centered mindset.
- **Nutritional Guidance:** Comprehensive dietary plans designed to meet the nutritional needs of athletes, supporting their physical and mental performance.

Traditional and Cultural Practices

- **Cultural Integration:** Incorporation of traditional exercises and practices that reflect the cultural heritage of the Namdhari community. This fosters a sense of identity and belonging among players.
- **Community Involvement:** Active engagement with the community through cultural events and activities, promoting social cohesion and support.

Mentorship and Role Modeling

- **Experienced Coaches:** Guidance from experienced coaches who provide personalized feedback and mentorship. These coaches serve as role models and inspire young players.
- **Peer Learning:** Encouragement of peer learning and support, where experienced players mentor newcomers, fostering a collaborative learning environment.

Scientific and Modern Approaches

- **Sports Science Integration:** Application of sports science principles to enhance training effectiveness. This includes biomechanical analysis, injury prevention strategies, and recovery protocols.
- **Innovative Training Tools:** Use of modern training tools and technology, such as heart rate monitors, GPS tracking, and performance analytics, to optimize training outcomes.

Practical Implementation

- **Daily Training Sessions:** Each training day is structured to include warm-up exercises, skill drills, tactical training, physical conditioning, and cool-down sessions. Training sessions typically last 2-3 hours, with additional time allocated for specialized training as needed.
- **Weekly and Monthly Plans:** Weekly and monthly training plans are designed to ensure variety and comprehensive coverage of all training aspects, preventing monotony and overtraining. Regular assessments and evaluations to monitor progress and adjust training plans accordingly.
- **Workshops and Camps:** Periodic workshops and camps that provide intensive training opportunities, focusing on specific skills or aspects of the game. Sessions conducted by guest coaches and experts to provide additional insights and advanced training techniques.

The training methodologies at Namdhari Hockey Academy are a well-rounded blend of traditional values and modern practices. By focusing on technical skill development, physical conditioning, tactical training, mental toughness, and holistic development, the academy ensures that its players are equipped with the skills and attributes needed to excel in the sport. This comprehensive approach has contributed to the success and prominence of Namdhari hockey players at national and international levels.

The training programs of Namdhari Sports are known for their innovation and effectiveness. The methodologies focus on holistic development, combining physical fitness with skill enhancement. Respondents highlighted the advanced nature of these programs, which create well-rounded athletes.

"The training methodologies of Namdhari Sports are quite advanced and focus on holistic development." [Respondent 23]

"Their emphasis on physical fitness and skill development is unparalleled."
[Respondent 45]

Training Facilities at Namdhari Hockey Academy

The Namdhari Hockey Academy is renowned for its comprehensive training facilities that support the development of hockey players. These facilities are designed to provide a holistic training environment, combining modern infrastructure with traditional values. Here's an overview of the key training facilities available at the academy:

Hockey Fields

- **Astro Turf Fields:** The academy boasts state-of-the-art AstroTurf fields that provide players with high-quality playing surfaces similar to those used in international competitions. These fields are essential for practicing on surfaces that mimic real match conditions.
- **Natural Grass Fields** In addition to AstroTurf, the academy also maintains natural grass fields for versatility in training. These fields are used to develop adaptability and skills on different types of playing surfaces.
- **Indoor Training Complex:** Indoor Hockey Rink For year-round training, the academy has an indoor hockey rink. This facility allows players to practice regardless of weather conditions, ensuring consistent training schedules.
- **Fitness and Conditioning Area:** The indoor complex includes a dedicated area for fitness training, equipped with modern gym equipment for strength and conditioning workouts.
- **Coaching and Analysis Facilities:** Video Analysis Room Equipped with the latest video analysis technology, this facility allows coaches to review players' performances, analyze matches, and develop strategic plans. This room is vital for providing players with visual feedback and improving their tactical understanding. Offices for coaches where they can plan training sessions, review player progress, and hold one-on-one meetings with players for personalized guidance and feedback.
- **Residential Facilities:** The academy provides residential facilities for outstation players, ensuring they have a comfortable living environment. This allows players to fully immerse themselves in the training program without the distractions of daily commuting. A dedicated dining hall that offers nutritious meals designed to meet the dietary needs of athletes. Proper nutrition is a crucial aspect of the training regimen.
- **Rehabilitation and Medical Facilities:** Physiotherapy Center The academy has a fully-equipped physiotherapy center with professional physiotherapists to help players recover from injuries and maintain peak physical condition. A medical room with necessary supplies and on-call medical professionals to handle any emergencies or health issues that arise during training.
- **Additional Training Areas:** Yoga and Meditation Hall A space dedicated to yoga and meditation practices. This facility supports the holistic development approach of the academy, focusing on mental well-being and spiritual balance alongside physical training. An outdoor running track for endurance training and cardiovascular exercises. This facility is essential for building stamina and overall fitness.
- **Community and Cultural Centers:** A facility for cultural and community events, fostering a sense of community among players and staff. It is used for team-building activities and cultural programs. A quiet space where players can study and read, promoting their educational development alongside their sports training.

The training facilities at Namdhari Hockey Academy are designed to create an optimal environment for developing world-class hockey players. From advanced playing fields and indoor training complexes to comprehensive support facilities, the academy ensures that its athletes receive the best possible training and support. This holistic approach has been instrumental in producing skilled and well-rounded hockey players who excel at national and international levels.

Community and Cultural Impact

The success of the Namdhari Hockey Team has encouraged many young individuals from the community to take up hockey, fostering a culture of sportsmanship and physical fitness. The team serves as a bridge between sports and cultural values, integrating the principles of the Namdhari sect with the discipline required in sports. The Namdhari Hockey Team exemplifies how a community-driven approach can lead to success in sports while promoting cultural values and discipline. Their contributions to Indian hockey continue to inspire many young athletes. Securing sponsorship and support from the community and external organizations can provide the necessary resources for the team's growth. Financial backing can help cover costs for training, travel, and participation in international tournaments.

Integration of cultural activities helps in building a strong community spirit among the players. This fosters teamwork and a sense of belonging. Academic support is provided to ensure that young athletes can continue their education alongside their sports training. The comprehensive training facilities have played a significant role in producing national and international level athletes who have excelled in various sports, particularly hockey. The success and dedication of the Namdhari athletes inspire many young individuals from rural and urban areas to pursue sports, contributing to the overall development of sports culture in India. Namdhari Sports plays a significant role in fostering a sense of community and cultural pride among its members. The organization promotes a strong sense of belonging and shared purpose, which has been a key factor in its success.

"The sense of community among players and coaches is a standout feature."

[Respondent 36]

"Namdhari Sports has instilled a strong cultural identity among its members."

[Respondent 5]

Conclusion

In conclusion it must be said that Namdhari hockey stands as a testament to the rich heritage and enduring legacy of hockey within the Namdhari Sikh community. Originating from the visionary efforts of Baba Uttam Singh and nurtured through generations, Namdhari hockey has evolved into a formidable force in Indian hockey history. This research has illuminated the historical origins, developmental milestones, and profound impact of Namdhari hockey on both local communities and the broader sports landscape. Through a blend of tradition, discipline, and community support, Namdhari hockey has not only produced exceptional players but has also fostered a deep sense of pride and identity among its participants and supporters. The dedication of coaches, administrators, and players has been instrumental in sustaining and advancing this distinctive hockey tradition. Moving forward, preserving the cultural integrity and historical significance of Namdhari hockey is paramount. Recommendations for enhancing infrastructure, expanding youth development programs, and promoting community engagement can further elevate Namdhari hockey's stature and ensure its continued success on regional and national platforms. While this study has provided valuable insights into Namdhari hockey's past achievements and present challenges, future research should delve deeper into areas such as the socio-economic impact of hockey on Namdhari communities, comparative studies with other hockey traditions, and strategies for integrating modern training methods with traditional values.

In conclusion, Namdhari hockey represents more than just a sport; it embodies resilience, community spirit, and a commitment to excellence. By embracing its heritage and adapting to contemporary demands, Namdhari hockey can continue to inspire generations of players and fans alike, contributing significantly to India's rich sporting tapestry.

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