

## A Study on the Factors Parents Consider While Enrolling their Children into Sporting Academies in Mumbai

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### **ABSTRACT**

*According to the 2011 census, nearly 41% of India's population was below the age of 20 years. This would mean that in 2018, children aged 13 or below would constitute around more than 25% of the population. This amounts to more than 33 crore children below the age of 13.*

*India is a vast country home to various cultures and mindsets. One such mindset of people who are parents is to see their children play a sport or be involved in a physical activity. The most common avenue for this is to enroll children into sporting academies.*

*As mentioned above, there are more than 33 crore children below the age of 13 in India. Where do these kids go and play? Concrete jungles have taken over what once used to be vast open playing fields. Therefore, sports academies nowadays have become the only viable option where kids can play. Over the past decade or two, there has been a proliferation in the number of sporting academies being established. Parents, these days, are spoilt for choice when it comes to selecting the perfect academy for one's ward.*

*This study aims to find out the most important factors that are considered by parents while enrolling children into such academies. A parent thinks long and hard while choosing an academy for one's child as they have their best interests in mind. This paper focuses on the responses of parents whose children (under the age of 13) are a part of a handful of sports academies in Mumbai. Analysis of responses has been done based on academy as well as child related factors. The results reveal that aspects like location of a sports facility, cost incurred by parents, basic fitness of children and character-building top the list of factors among others.*

*Results deal with the parents' psyche and the same could be useful to those who are in the sports academy business. Academy related factors have been dealt with using the Garrett Ranking method, whereas as many of the children related factors were selected by parents which applied to them.*

**Keywords:** Sports, Academies, Parents, Children, Factors, Facilities, Mumbai

## INTRODUCTION

Sport is important for the development of the child. Some of the parents actively involve their children in sporting activities, while some want their children to be more academically proficient and just concentrate on what's there in the school curriculum. The primary reasons for this are:

### A. Mindset Problems

1. Sports is considered as a diversion from academics:  
Many parents consider the involvement of children in sports as a waste of time. The child is expected to do better things in life if he concentrates more on his academics.
2. Sport is viewed as a health supplement, rather than a skill to excel at:  
Parents, though aware of the benefits a sport can give to their child, consider it only as a supplement to keep the child healthy. Sport is never seen as a skill which can be acquired by the child, or some skill out of which the child can make a career. It is just considered a hobby or a recreational activity.

### B. Government Problems

1. Lack of fund allocation:  
The amount of funds allocated by the government to the sports sector, particularly infrastructure and grass root development is also very less due to which it becomes difficult for the country to produce ace sports personalities.
2. Lack of resources:  
There is apprehension from the government to provide resources necessary for implementing sporting activities.

### C. Sport for the Rich

The rich and the privileged put in their own resources to pursue sports. This leaves behind the talented poor sports enthusiasts because of their financial circumstances. Thus, a student from a poor family suffers due to lack of finance to undergo his coaching.

For a nation to develop physically as well as mentally, it is very important to invest in the Sports sector. Thus, the problem can be resolved by the government through allocating sufficient amount of funds in

- *Providing training facilities for the underprivileged, so that they can excel in the sport they like, despite their financial condition.*
- *Creating awareness for importance and benefits of sports among the parents, so that they are willing to enroll their children to academies.*

Children need to participate in outdoor activities. Sports will help them recognize their skill set and help to improve their capabilities through various situations like pressure management, competitiveness, physical ability and mental strength. The parents need to understand the following benefits of involving their children in a sport:

1. **Better performance at school:** Sports normally aid kids to achieve good academic and social performances as well.

2. **Health benefits:** Moreover, kids who play sports are normally much healthier than their peers who avoid being involved in sports and similar activities.
3. **Personality development:** Participation in sports presents children with a chance to lead others and also teaches them how to develop skills necessary for dealing with successes and failures.
4. **Social skills:** Playing a sport helps children develop social skills which would benefit them even when they grow older. Teamwork and cooperation are major social skills a sportsman needs to learn.
5. **No "I" in Sports:** Teamwork is the most important part of any sport. By working together as a team, the children learn each others strengths and weaknesses and are better able to decide and strategize the best plan for the team.
6. **Psychological benefits:** Apart from physical benefits, participating in team sports is also conducive to the mental well-being of the children. Parents should be conscious of the psychological benefits arising from enrolling their child into a team sport.
7. **Improvement in Self-esteem:** Taking part in sports helps to boost self-esteem and confidence. The child needs to believe that he is good enough to stay there and needs to trust his abilities.
8. **Accepting defeat:** In every game, there will be a winner and a loser. This will help children to inculcate the Sportsman's spirit. They can learn how to accept and cope with losses.

After the parents are made aware of the benefits of physical activity, they might raise questions as to how the academies might be able to develop such potentials of their wards.

Sport is used as an enabling tool to promote subjects across the curriculum and to create new ways of learning.

Some of the aims of different sporting academies are:

- Educate for life
- Provide quality of opportunity for all their students
- Provide programs of learning which suit the learning styles of individual students
- Allow flexibility to meet the needs of each student
- Develop global awareness.

For fulfilling the above mentioned objectives, the academies take the following paths:

**1. *Remind children that losing is inevitable:***

Academies use the child's favorite sports team (or player) as an example while explaining this. The child is made to understand that losing is part and parcel of a sport and that it is important to show sportsmanship throughout. Even the greatest teams/players in the world have faced stumbles on their road to glory.

2. ***Highlight the most important aspects of sport:***

Sport helps build the character of a human being. Academies develop this character at a young age. This, when reinforced regularly, children begin to recognize this important element of sport.

3. ***Remind the child we play sport because it's fun:***

They encourage a child to focus on fun which helps to develop a positive attitude to sport. They build a 'we play to enjoy' or 'we play to express's attitude compared to a 'we play to win' attitude.

4. ***Encourage team work:***

They remind the children that we win and lose as a team, not as individuals. There is no 'I' in team.

5. ***Introduce games based on luck:***

Games like snakes and ladders can help children to become better 'losers' as the outcome of these is determined largely by chance.

Sporting academies enforce a solid academic structure within each and every separate sport. This structure is the primary reason for the scope of continuous development of an individual from the grass root level to all the way up to the elite leagues.

Since our study is limited to academies only in a particular part of Mumbai, it is important to know the background of sports played in the city. Cricket being the traditional sport played in India, is famous in the city of Mumbai. This city has been able to produce the biggest names in the history of Indian cricket: Sachin Tendulkar being the biggest, others are Sunil Gavaskar, Ravi Shastri, Rohit Sharma, Ajinkya Rahane. Hence, the sport has a huge influence on the youngsters. Cricket is the most loved sport and most of the kids in Mumbai dream to succeed and turn into a professional cricketer following their idols. This makes cricket the most popular sport in the city. At the school level, various inter school tournaments are held. Also, the tournaments held by the Mumbai School Sports Association have over 120 teams participating with enthusiasm. There are also numerous other private tournaments held where the private clubs participate. Oval Maidan is the hub for most of the tournaments held in the Mumbai.

Mumbai Cricket Association (MCA), formed in 1930, under the presidency of Sharad Pawar, is the governing body for cricket played in Mumbai. Mumbai Indians franchise is the side representing Mumbai in the Indian Premier League (IPL).

The largest sport played in Mumbai, after cricket is Football. It is picking up pace and becoming more and more popular in the current generation. Kids are taking up this sport and focusing to build a career in it. The scope has increased to great extent after Indian Super League (ISL) - with its team Mumbai City FC gaining fame. Mumbai is not the city known for its football but it is making a mark gradually.

Mumbai School Sports Association is responsible for holding the Football tournaments in Mumbai for various age groups. Many schools participate in these tournaments. District State Office (DSO) competition is also the tournament where various top teams participate and try to claim the title as the best team. Football is going to be the next big sport if it continues to grow at the current speed.

Kabaddi is the next major sport that has evolved since 2014 after the Pro Kabaddi League (PKL) had been started. U Mumba is the team that represents Mumbai in the Pro Kabaddi League. There are many players from Mumbai playing in this league becoming the idols for the kids to follow their footsteps. Various other

sports played in Mumbai which include Athletics, Hockey, Swimming, Tennis, Badminton, wrestling etc. These sports are mostly played in the private gymkhanas and clubs in Mumbai. Mumbai also the one and the only Rugby club in India but as the sport is not at all played in India it has very less importance and is played at rare occasions.

Mumbai boasts of a plethora of sports academies situated all across the city. These academies are of various kinds- some are dedicated to one particular sport, whereas others are multi-sport facilities. While cricket and football dominate the coaching scene in Mumbai, other sports are not far behind. Non-traditional sports have also started making some inroads in the domain of sports academies. A common aspect of most coaching academies in Mumbai is the participation of children. In majority of cases, children are enrolled into academies when they are between 5 to 10 years of age. Parents see coaching facilities as an avenue for their wards to learn a particular sport as well as an activity that is more fruitful than staring at a television or a smartphone screen.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The constant rise in the number of sports academies in India and Mumbai in particular was one of the major factors behind this study. The study focuses on the variety of factors that are considered by parents before enrolling their wards into sporting academies. The research took into consideration responses from parents whose children are enrolled in some of the most reputed sports academies in Mumbai- PJ Hindu Gymkhana, Podar Sports Academy, Bombay Gymkhana, Parsi Gymkhana, Vivekanand Sports Academy, Khar Gymkhana, Premier India Football Academy and FCBescola would be to name a few.

Children who are/were at the age of 13 or less were considered for this study. It is usually at this age when children start picking up sports either to play professionally or just for enjoyment. Most sports academies in Mumbai have athletes who are generally more than 17-18 years of age and the reasons for their enrollment in the same initially often gets lost over time. Therefore, the research targets the under – 13 market as there is a potential to grow. At this age, children are at the beginning of their sports career and it would give them enough time to aspire to be a part of senior teams at the club or other higher levels.

A similar study as this was done in Bangladesh titled “Parental Attitude toward Child’s Sports Involvement in Bangladesh: An Empirical Review on the Influencing Factors” by Sahadat Hossain and Md. NazmusSakib. This research analyses how a parent influences a child’s sports career. The study looks at the factors from a customer involvement angle. The study claims that little attention is given to the effect of physical surroundings of the product or service setting. The Child’s Sports Involvement (CSI) serves as a quality and satisfaction measurement tool.<sup>1</sup>

The previous research claims that a child’s sports involvement is what drives their enrollment in sports academies. This however, is not always true. Parental influence at times, serves as the biggest driving force behind a child’s enrollment in an academy. The age bracket in this study being under – 13 signifies that children at this age do not make life decisions for themselves. Most of their daily routine and activities are pre planned by parents. The plans fixed by parents for their wards are something that does not happen all of a sudden. There are a host of factors that influence these plans which forms the crux of this research.

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<sup>1</sup>Sahadat Hossain and Md. NazmusSakib, “Parental Attitude toward Child’s Sports Involvement in Bangladesh: An Empirical Review on the Influencing Factors”, Asian Journal of Research in Marketing, Vol, 5, No. 2, April 2016, pp. 30-43

During the literature review for this paper, it was found that there hardly exists any study solely based on the parents' psyche with respect to sports academies. Most research deals with ways to improve academies' infrastructure and marketing techniques. Another gap that this research hopes to plug is using an academic paper to improve the condition of sports academies. Factors parents consider before enrolling children into academies are genuine and should be of prime importance for academies if they want to sustain themselves in future. In today's day and age, competition is fierce in almost every aspect of life, let alone business. Taking into account what a parent thinks before choosing a particular academy could help such academies differentiate themselves from the rest simply based on the parents' needs and expectations.

A 2008 research submitted by Jenny Wald titled "Parents' Motivations for Enrolling Children in a Private Gymnastic Program", explains that fitness, skill development and fun were the main factors considered by parents. Facets like competition and playing at a professional level found place much lower down the pecking order. The research also proved to show that these results could be of use for those involved in youth sports. The study also claimed that coaches could use such data to attract as well as retain participants.<sup>2</sup> The study explores a variety of factors parents take into account however; it is still restricted to only Gymnastics.

A similar study on sports participation was done by Claire C. Maturo and Solveig A. Cunningham. Their work titled "Influence of Friends on Children's Physical Activity: A Review" explored how a child is influenced by his/her peers. The parental angle is not considered in this study.<sup>3</sup>

Another previous study titled "Understanding participation in sport and physical activity among children and adults: a review of qualitative studies" by Steven Allender, Gill Cowburn and Charlie Foster deals with reasons why people participate or do not participate in sports as well as their experience in the same. While this study does take into account children and teenagers, it does not explore the parental role behind such activity.<sup>4</sup>

Sports being a relatively new domain in India, there is a dearth of academic papers based on the Indian experience. A majority of the research work on sports is authored by foreign academicians hailing from developed countries that have a strong sporting culture. This is the major gap in the field of research on sports in India. A well-documented research on the Indian sports industry would be beneficial to many as it would analyze things from the national point of view. Consumers of the same research would be able to relate to the work more as compared to papers based on foreign practices and cultures.

This study focuses on the parental side of things to the fullest extent. Considerations insofar as academy related as well as child related have been dealt with separately. While academy related factors are to be ranked according to preference, the child related considerations could be based on all the given choices.

## OBJECTIVES

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<sup>2</sup> Jenny Wald, "Parents' Motivations for Enrolling Children in a Private Gymnastic Program", *The Sport Journal*, Vol. 19, February 2008

<sup>3</sup> Claire Maturo and Solveig A. Cunningham, "Influence of Friends on Children's Physical Activity: A Review", *Am J Public Health* 2013 Jul; 103(7): e23–e38. Published online 2013 Jul. doi: 10.2105/AJPH.2013.301366

<sup>4</sup> Steven Allender, Gill Cowburn and Charlie Foster, "Understanding participation in sport and physical activity among children and adults: a review of qualitative studies", *Health Education Research*, Volume 21, Issue 6, 1 December 2006, pp. 826–835

Sports nowadays have become an important part of the curriculum of a child, and the parents have slowly started to realize this vitality. Parents send their children to academies for a variety of reasons, and the research aims at analyzing the most important ones. Since enrollment to academies is a high involvement service, the minds of the customers and consumers will be affected by the emotional states experienced at the time of the service delivery process.

In order to have a good cognitive, affective and behavioral response to the service provided by sports academies, it becomes important to study the parents' attitude towards such academies, especially what is it that they seek in each of these facilities. Parents are also concerned with their child's growth and development and thus seek ways to maximize it. Therefore it becomes important for academies to develop organizational accountability and add values to their target customers so that parents become committed to them. The offerings of the sporting academies revolve around the parent's expectations. The academies need to be market oriented, to develop benefits for children, i.e. their target audience. This will pass on a positive word of mouth, as parents will see their children happy and content, increasing sale of service.

An initial decision to enroll children into academies is taken by the parents themselves which also adds to the reasons to conduct such kind of a research. Parents thus act as "customers" of the service, who actually shell out money. The "consumers" are the children, who need to be kept delighted with the service for vocal communication of the service to various other consumers or customers.

The objective of this study is to aid academies to identify what is important for their customers (parents) in Mumbai, so that they can take care of the needs and develop suitable promotion campaigns that might alter the attitude of those customers that have not yet been tapped. It seeks to provide a deeper understanding of the parents' mind and hence develop suitable techniques to satisfy their customers.

Another objective is to increase involvement of the parents in shaping the structure, facilities, staff, and amenities of the sporting academy. Parents' involvement helps academies to know what customers want and the importance academies place on the needs and, satisfaction parents have with services offered. Further, this research aims to channelize the marketing expenditure of the academies, to target the right target market, and the write communication message. This will save the cost of marketing for the academies, by avoiding wasteful expenditure.

In the long run, what matters the most is how efficiently the academy interacts with the parents and are able to nurture their child in a way desirable to the parents. Hence, the goal is to study what are the general desirable attributes of parents in Mumbai.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

- A. **Type of Research:** This is a descriptive type of research that determines the factors parents think about while enrolling their children in Sporting Academies. It is descriptive because it answers the question "what" are the factors, or which is the most important factor. It does not touch upon questions like "why", "how" or "when".

- B. **Population:** Here, the population is individuals, who are the parents of children aging less than 13 years who have enrolled their children in sporting academies and who reside in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region. The population was chosen taking into mind the till 13 is the prime age of growth of the child, post which there are more academic pressures in his/her life. Also, parents prefer to experiment with their child's skills during early phases of his life.
- C. **Sampling Technique:** The sampling technique used is convenience sampling wherein the academies were selected due to easy accessibility, close proximity. Care was taken to diversify the sample so that responses are received from parents of children enrolled into different academies across Mumbai.
- D. **Data Collection:** The research required both primary data and secondary review. Secondary review was based on different peer reviewed articles and journals related to the study. This review of secondary sources has helped to identify the factors. The determined factors further have been considered as a base for collection of primary data. To collect the primary data, a questionnaire was designed. The survey was conducted on the parents of children from the Under 13 age group from academies in Mumbai Metropolitan region. We found that many academies were reluctant to share the database of the parents. The questionnaire had to be printed out and filled by some parents who were outside the academies waiting for the children to finish their training or who were there to pick their children up. Those who did not fill the questionnaire were asked verbally the questions on academy and child related factors. Parents were asked basic information like Name, Gender, Number of Children and their ages. Factors were segregated into two types: Academy Related Factors and Child Related Factors.
- E. **Data Analysis:** Data collected through the questionnaire was tabulated. Many parents were approached, but the responses of 105 respondents could be managed. Gender responses were analyzed using Percentages and pie charts. For the question based on Academy Related Factors, Garrett's Ranking technique was used due to the fact that respondents were asked to rank factors from 1(most influential) to 7(least influential). Garrett values for each rank was obtained and multiplied with the frequencies of each rank corresponding to the factors.

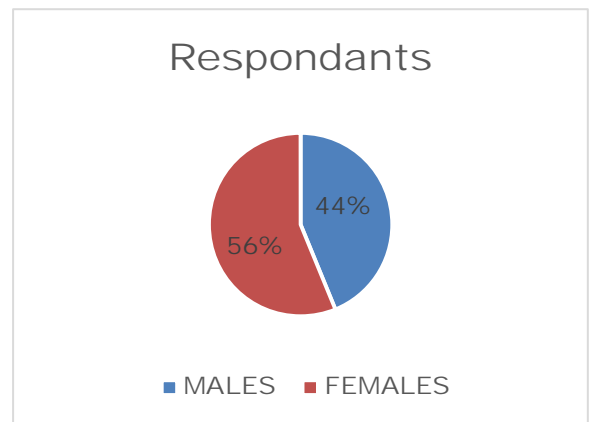
For child related factors, the analysis was done in a different way. This is a multi-response variable. Unfortunately it violates a critical assumption in statistical analysis, the independence of responses. The degrees of freedom are unknown (i.e., with 105 cases one can get many more than 105 responses). Hence, the responses were recorded in a frequency distribution manner and the most frequently occurring response, i.e. Mode, was chosen as a suitable Statistical tool to analyze the responses. The ranks were given according to the frequency of occurring and absolute percentage of each factor in the following manner: Rank 1 for most frequently occurring, Rank 7 for least frequently occurring. A table and bar graph has been presented for the same in the "Findings and Analysis" chapter.

## FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

The research question was to determine the most crucial factors that influence the parents to enroll their children (Under 13) into sporting academies, for which the data was collected via questionnaires and interviews. A total of 105 respondents filled the questionnaire or gave answers to the questions we asked, from various academies in Mumbai. The respondents were asked their name, gender, number of children and age of each child.



Upon receipt of gender responses, it was observed that 59 out of 105 (56%) respondents are females or mothers, and 46 out of 105 (44%) were males or fathers. The participation of more females was due to their relatively greater decision making scope for their children regarding extra-curricular activities and easy access of the surveyors to them than their husbands (male). Number of children and age of each child were asked just to confirm if their children meet the Under 13 criteria, which is the area of the research. The responses with over age children were not considered for the purpose of this research.



The questionnaire had two other main questions: the academy related factors and the child related factors. The meaning of each factor was communicated to the respondent, either verbally, or as a short description under the factor in the questionnaire, ensuring each of the respondents understood the factor in the same manner, for non-biased responses.

For the academy related factors, the parents were asked to rank 7 factors (Location, Cost, Facilities, Coaches, Reputation, Future Prospects, and Curriculum) from 1 to 7. 1 was the most preferred, and 7 being the least preferred. The rankings that were received were analyzed using Garrett Ranking Method and following are findings:

Table 1: Garrett Scores for each of the factors

FACTOR	Garrett Score	Rank
Location	6477	1
Cost	5656	4
Facilities	6209	2
Coaches	5990	3
Reputation	4129	6
Future Prospects	3836	7
Curriculum	4442	5

These ranks were given based on the following frequencies:

Table 2: Frequency Distribution of ranks of various factors

Rank	Location	Cost	Facilities	Coaches	Reputation	Future Prospects	Curriculum
1	34	13	21	23	2	2	9
2	23	20	33	14	9	4	3
3	24	18	18	20	6	6	12
4	6	26	13	23	13	10	15
5	5	15	9	15	25	17	20

6	9	5	6	8	20	35	21
7	4	8	5	2	30	31	25

The factors were ranked in the following order from most important to least important:

**1. LOCATION (This means the area/locality of the academy, the kind of facilities in the vicinity, and the nearness to the place of residence)**

- Location was considered the most important due to the following reasons
- Dropping and picking up children from the academies is a tedious task. With increasing number of dual working parents, it is preferable to drop the child to an academy which is near the place of residence.
- Safety, which is the utmost priority of the parents, is assured if the child is in a safe area and near his/her house.
- Transportation is also difficult in the city of Mumbai, which further demotivates parents to send children to faraway academies, even if they have excellent facilities, coaches, etc.
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**2. FACILITIES (This majorly includes infrastructure, injury management, physiotherapist, dieticians, and kind of equipment available)**

It was given the second most important rank due to the following reasons:

- After zeroing in on an academy based on its location, parents generally are concerned about its facilities.
- Enrollment in an academy does not come cheap, so the parents are wary of the kind of facilities the academy has to offer and whether they are value for money.
- Whether an academy concentrates on a single sport or multiple sports also plays a role in increasing facilities' importance according to parents.
- Superior facilities at academies help young athletes up their game and enhance their scope for growth.

**3. COACHES (This includes experience, past students, reputation, attitude, technical skills, teaching ability of the trainer/instructors in the academy)**

It is third due to the following reasons:

- A coach defines the face of the academy, and helps retain students in the academies. Sometimes, as a coach migrates from one academy to the other, parents also shift their child to the academy to receive the same guidance from the same coach, irrespective of the cost they will incur.
- Facilities are more preferable to parents as a coach cannot operate without good facilities.

**4. COST (This includes the fees charged by the academy (according to the number of days of training), along with the cost of equipment and transport)**

It is fourth due to the following reasons:

- Some parents care less about the cost of training and give more importance to complete development of the child in the academy. If the facilities, location and coaches are up to the mark, or even exceeding their expectations, they would not mind paying a higher amount.
- It is ranked middle because it still is an important factor as compared to reputation, prospects or curriculum. This is because a customer thinks twice before spending. They operate on the Law of Demand, whereas the price (in this case cost to them for enrolling their child) increases, their demand for enrollment of children into academies will fall.

**5. CURRICULUM** (*This includes the structure/module of training, individual or group training, number of days of training in a week, hours of training, timing of training, activities supporting teaching methodologies, whether the academy is single sport or multisport, student to coach ratio*)

It is at the fifth rank due to the following reasons:

- Parents feel cost and curriculum to go hand in hand. In Mumbai, the curriculum design varies across different academies. While some academies have a rigidly defined curriculum, others are not that organized. There is a disparity among the curriculum and this makes parents not consider this option to be of prime importance
- Other factors like cost, facilities and coaches are the things that come to parents' minds initially.
- Similar to facilities, the number of disciplines covered by an academy also becomes a consideration in the minds of parents.

**6. REPUTATION** (*It means reputation of the founder, alumni, coaches and the general goodwill of the institute*)

It is the penultimate factor due to the following reasons:

- It is observed that the reputation of academies is not seen by parents as the most important factor.
- Increased usage of technology has helped parents judge and select academies based on its reviews on Google, Yelp, Sulekha etc.
- Moreover, the reputation does not count for much if an academy is referred by a parent's peer. People often give more importance to personal reviews and recommendations.
- Often the reputation of an academy is built on the coaches it has. Therefore, parents might be attracted to the academy because of the trainers and not the academy's goodwill.

**7. FUTURE PROSPECTS** (*This includes the association of the academy with various clubs, selection process for higher level competitions, and exposure to tournaments*)  
*least important factor*

It is due to the following reasons:

- Parents generally do not consider the future prospects of the academies as they are more concerned with their children's individual growth.
- The duration for which a parent enrolls one's child is also important. If the motive of the parent is just to make his/her child play sport for the sake of enjoyment and as a physical activity, then the future plans of the academy will matter less to the parent.

- On the other hand, if a parent's dream is to see his/her child play sports professionally in the future, then the future prospects of the academy will play a big role.
- Whether or not the academy has a setup for higher level competition or plans of expansion will affect the parent's psyche based on the sporting goals he/she has for his/her child.

The second main question in the questionnaire was about child related factors, wherein the parents were asked to select as many factors as they like which motivate them to send their children to sporting academies. The factors were Fitness, Extra Curricular Activities, Break from Routine, Professional Play, Character Building, Interest of the Child and Hyperactivity. Responses received from the parents were classified into a frequency distribution, and the following table was obtained:

Table 3: Frequency distribution and absolute percentage of each factor selected by the respondents along with their corresponding ranks

FACTORS	NO. OF SELECTIONS	PERCANTAGE	RANKS
FITNESS	87	82.85%	1
EXTRA CURRICULAR	76	72.38%	3
BREAK FROM ROUTINE	54	51.42%	5
PROFESSIONAL PLAY	39	37.14%	7
CHARACTER BUILDING	79	75.23%	2
INTEREST OF CHILD	73	69.52%	4
HYPERACTIVITY	49	46.66%	6

Chart 2: Bar chart showing frequencies of each factor selected by the respondents in totality

After looking at the above tables and charts, it is observed that the factors can be ranked in the following order, ranging from most influential to least influential:

1. **FITNESS** (To inculcate fitness in a child, to improve his/her stamina along with physical conditioning)

In today's day and age, children are spending more time staring at a screen than being out in the open. Playing a kind of sport will help build and maintain fitness of children. Being indoors and lazing around is what parents are worried about when it comes to their children. Sending one's ward to an academy will not only make them physically fit but also it would act as a good pastime. Hence it is the most preferred choice by parents as 82.85% of parents have selected Fitness as their utmost priority for sending their children into sporting academies.

2. **CHARACTER BUILDING** (To develop additional skills like discipline, hard work, teamwork, coordination, punctuality in a child, along with mental conditioning)

Sport has the ability to be the best teacher. It teaches a variety of skills that are usually not learnt in the classroom. Playing sport helps to build the character of a child by imparting values such as discipline, honesty, hard work etc. Development of soft skills also comes into the picture. Parents want their children to stand out among others and this is where playing sports helps them. Hence Character

Building has been labeled as the second most important factor since 75.23% parents have selected this for sending their children into sporting academies.

3. **EXTRA CURRICULAR** (To add a skill to the child's skill set in his journey to become an all-rounder)

Sport has always taken a backseat to academics in India. The general mindset of Indian parents has always been that the child's future must be secure. This is why more importance has always been given to academics. However, parents encourage their children to play a particular sport as a part of their extra-curricular activity. As the old adage goes- All work and no play make Jack a dull boy- similarly parents push their children towards physical activities in order to bring about their all-round development.

4. **INTEREST OF CHILD** (To fulfil the interest that the child developed in the sport by means of his peers, television or any other ways)

This factor is solely the child's credit. Children, often at a very young age start watching various kinds of sports on television. This is where their interest in sport is born as they start getting introduced to sporting heroes. This often motivates them to pick up a cricket bat or a football themselves and try to emulate those heroes. Once the interest level of children towards a particular sport is established, parents try their best to channelize these interests onto the playing field.

**BREAK FROM ROUTINE** (To enable the child to break the daily monotony of his routine of studies and try something different.)

Children these days often complain of a monotonous lifestyle. What they need is a break from the usual routine. Playing sports helps in rejuvenating one's day or life. Parents whose children are always into serious academic activity consider sports to be the best stress buster for their kids. Any physical activity will help in increasing concentration and build patience. For these virtues, parents would send their kids out to play.

5. **HYPERACTIVITY** (To channelize the excess energy or hyperactivity in the child to its best use – SPORTS)

There are numerous cases when a parent is troubled as his/her child is hyperactive or always has an abundance of energy. Due to professional commitments, it is not always possible for parents to constantly be involved with the child. Hyperactive children constantly need to be involved in some activity or the other. This is where sports help. It is something that can totally absorb the child's attention and he/she can channelize all the excess energy towards the sport. This factor has not been selected as an important one by parents as only 46.66% of parents have chosen Hyperactivity as their preferred factor for sending their children into sporting academies.

6. **PROFESSIONAL PLAY** (To train the child to make him capable of playing at a higher professional level in the future)

Despite not yet being a sporting country, India has seen an increased affinity towards sports in the recent past. There has also been a change in the mindset of parents when it comes to professional

sports. Playing sports professionally and making a career out of it is not the most insane idea according to parents now as compared to a few years ago. Parents now know of the wide range of opportunities in sports. This has motivated a fraction of the population who dream big and want their children to go on to play sports professionally. Although this factor was chosen by the least number of parents, it can be said that there is a certainty that this figure is sure to grow in the near future. This is the least preferred factor for parents to send their children into sporting academies with a percentage of only 37.14

## CONCLUSION

While academies in Mumbai operate on different ways, it can be concluded that parents in general give utmost priority to the Location – in academy factors and Fitness – in child factors. As far as Location is concerned, to make the academies more accessible for parents all over the city, the academies should plan to open up branches of their academies at places which are safe and conveniently accessible to their target market. For Fitness, academies need to set up a Fitness tracking program, wherein they measure the fitness and stamina levels of the child on a daily basis, to reassure the parents that there is an overall improvement in the fitness of the child. The other focusses of these sporting academies should be on enhancing facilities, bring top coaches and reducing cost of their operations so that they can charge a lower fees to the parents. Future prospects, reputation would be easily taken care of if the previously mentioned factors are in place. Further, academy should also focus on overall development of the child, i.e. building his character, which concerns parents, who want to see their child as a team worker, a leader, and an all-rounder. Parents in Mumbai are least considered about training the child so that he can be a professional to represent clubs, or the country at large. They believe, that may happen if the child is good enough, but that is not their primary reason to send children into sporting academies. This further means that the academies should not mainly focus on sporting celebrities endorsing the academy, as the professionalism might not impact the parents that much.

Hence, it is essential for academies to understand the needs of their customers- parents of the children enrolled to satisfy them, so that they can pass on a positive word of mouth, which will help in spreading their business and improving reputation of the academy.

## LIMITATIONS

This study is limited only to Mumbai Metropolitan Region. Applicability outside this region is not certain. The academies include only the Sporting ones, where the child is trained to develop and master his skills related to a particular activity, classified as a sport. Other extra-curricular activities like Dance, Music classes are beyond the scope of the study. Further, the age limit of children is 13, i.e., the parents taken as respondents have children aged less than 13 years of age. This is the prime age for growth of the child post which he/she has academic pressures. The study is primarily related to enrollment into academies, i.e. what triggers the initial decision of the parent to enroll their children into sporting academies. It does not take into consideration the actual experience of the child after he has already taken the training course. Further, the

factors considered to evaluate parent's decision are very limited. More factors can be incorporated in both academy and child related, which means there is scope for further research in this area.

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## APPENDIX

### Questionnaire

To determine the most important factors that influence parents to enroll their children into sporting academies in Mumbai.

1. Name : \_\_\_\_\_
2. Gender : Male / Female
3. Number of children : \_\_\_\_\_
4. Age of each child : \_\_\_\_\_

### Academy Related Factors

Kindly **RANK** the following factors that influenced your decision to enroll your child in the academy. (1 - Most Important, 7 – Least Important)

- LOCATION**  
This means the area/locality of the academy, the kind of facilities in the vicinity, and the nearness to your place of residence.
- COST**  
This includes the fees charged by the academy (according to the number of days of training), along with the cost of equipment and transport.
- FACILITIES**  
This majorly includes infrastructure, injury management, physiotherapist, dieticians, and kind of equipment available.
- COACHES**  
This includes experience, past students, reputation, attitude, technical skills, teaching ability of the trainer/instructors in the academy.
- REPUTATION**  
It means reputation of the founder, alumni, coaches and the general goodwill of the institute.
- FUTURE PROSPECTS**  
This includes the association of the academy with various clubs, selection process for higher level competitions, and exposure to tournaments.
- CURRICULUM**  
This includes the structure/module of training, individual or group training, number of days of training in a week, hours of training, timing of training, activities supporting teaching methodologies, whether the academy is single sport or multisport, student to coach ratio.

### Child Related Factors



**TICK** on the appropriate answer, as to the purpose for which you sent your children to sports training. (You can select as many as you want)

- FITNESS**  
To inculcate fitness in a child, to improve his/her stamina along with physical conditioning
- EXTRA CURRICULAR**  
To add a skill to the child's skill set in his journey to become an all-rounder
- BREAK FROM ROUTINE**  
To enable the child to break the daily monotony of his routine of studies and try something different (All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy)
- PROFESSIONAL PLAY**  
To train the child to make him capable of playing at a higher professional level in the future
- CHARACTER BUILDING**  
To develop additional skills like discipline, hard work, teamwork, coordination, punctuality in a child, along with mental conditioning
- INTEREST OF CHILD**  
To fulfil the interest that the child developed in the sport by means of his peers, television or any other ways
- HYPERACTIVITY**  
To channelize the excess energy or hyperactivity in the child to its best use – SPORTS