



Critical Analysis of India performance in Paris 2024

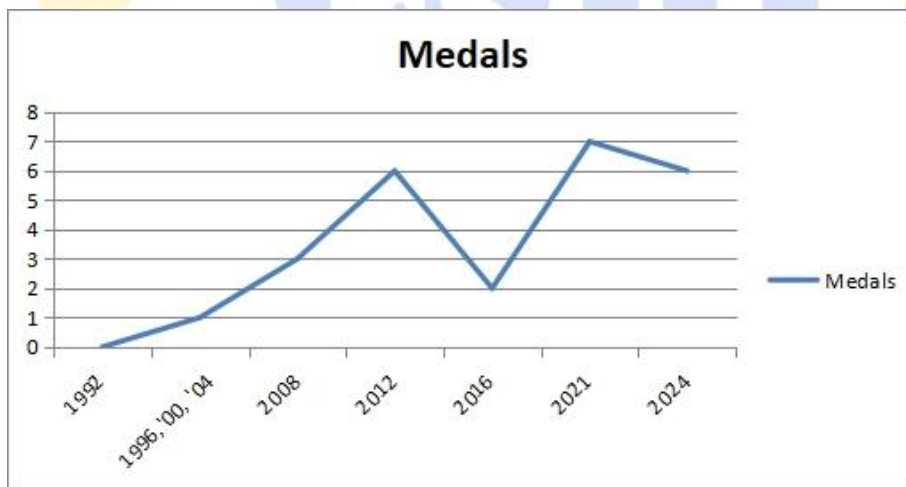
1. Despite India not achieving its best ever performance at the Olympics, CSRI believes that there are plenty of positives to be taken out of the campaign and which can be worked on by all stakeholders. This analysis is presenting some of the salient points.
2. There is definite improvement in India's performance as reflected in the Paris Olympics than what was the case 30 years ago. This is not only in terms of winning medals but also in the number of medal contenders and those who came close to winning medals.
3. The concern though is that there appears to be stagnation in the period between 2012 and 2024 when it comes to winning medals. While there was a huge jump between 1992 and 2012, that jump appears to be missing between 2012 and now.
4. Where there is a big improvement, is an increase in the number of athletes who are coming close to winning medals. In previous Olympics, not only did India win a very small number of medals, they did not even come close. That has changed by the time of the Paris Olympics.
5. What is concerning is that while athletes are coming close to winning medals, the conversion rate is disappointing. Only 6 out of 14 opportunities were converted in Paris which is 43%, the corresponding number was in excess of 60% in 2012 and 2021 Olympics.
6. India is ready to bid for the 2036 Olympics for which we need to create a blueprint for not only creating sports ecosystem to embed sports in our daily life through creating sports infrastructure, sports industry, sports experts and so on, but also to win medals as a natural process.
7. This analysis covers India's performance since the 1992 Olympics where we won zero medals and includes the 1996, 2000 and 2004 Olympics where we won 1 medal each to the 2024 Olympics where people's expectations have increased as India has progressed in terms of economy and international presence.
8. This analysis was preceded by CSRI survey done before the Olympics in which 50% of the participants had expected India to reach double digits and 63% of those surveyed believed India would improve on its 47th place ranking achieved in the 2021 Olympics.

9. This analysis is based on, one, performance of India over the period 1992-2024, second, comparative figures with other top countries, third, performance of individual athletes in different sports. Last but not least CSRI recommendation based on our previous survey and this analysis.

I. Performance of India over the period 1992-2024:

A. India’s overall medals between 1992 and 2024

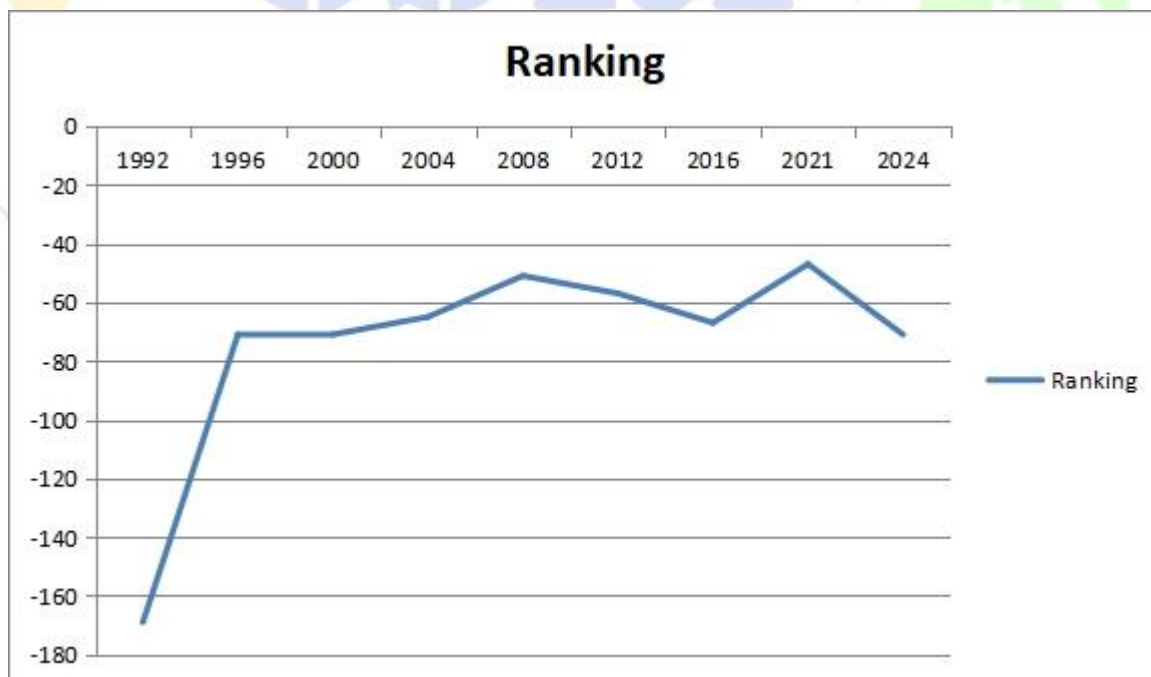
Edition	Medals
1992 Olympics	0 medals
1996, 2000, 2004 Olympics	1 medal each
2008 Olympics	3 medals
2012 Olympics	6 medals
2016 Olympics	2 medals
2021 Olympics	7 medals
2024 Olympics	6 medals



B. Performance in terms of ranking

India ranking between 1992 and 2024

Edition	Ranking
1992	T169 (tied for last)
1996	T71
2000	T71
2004	T65
2008	51
2012	57
2016	67
2021	47
2024	71



C. Near-misses in the Olympics (1992-2024)

Near misses at the Olympics (a combination of 4th places and losses in Boxing Quarterfinals where reaching the semifinals assures a medal)

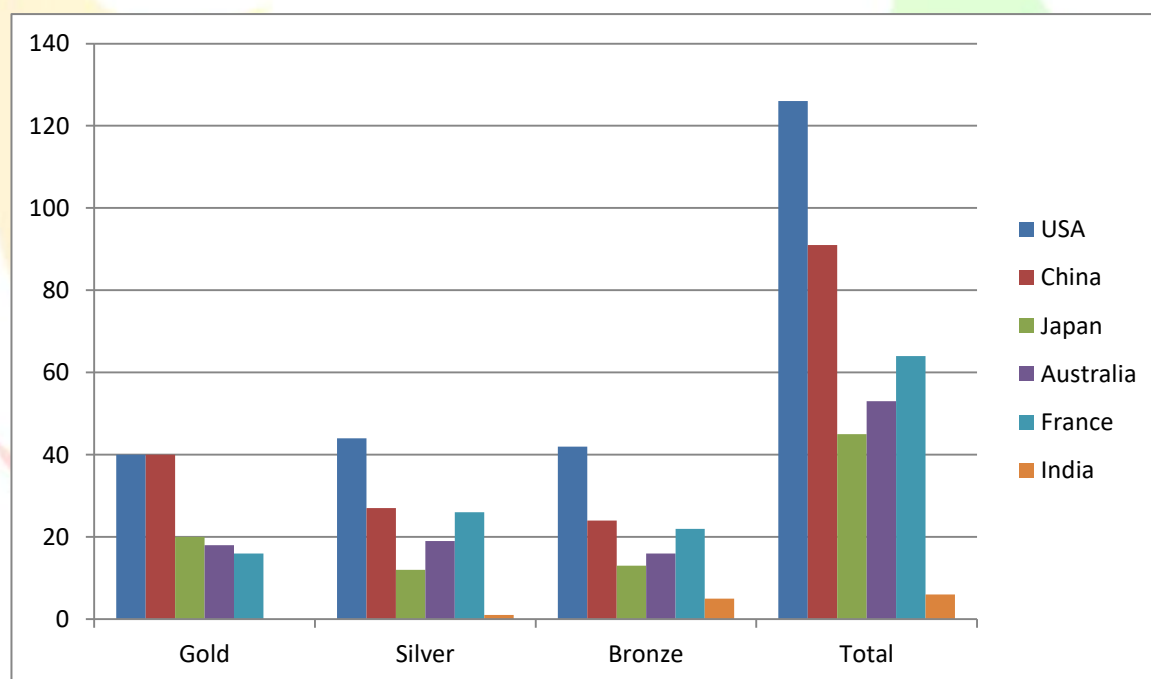
Olympics	Near-misses as described above
1992, 1996	0
2000	1
2004	2
2008	2
2012	3
2016	4
2021	4
2024	8



II. Comparative figures with other top countries:

A. Where does India stand in Paris Olympics

Rank	Country	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
1	USA	40	44	42	126
2	China	40	27	24	91
3	Japan	20	12	13	45
4	Australia	18	19	16	53
5	France	16	26	22	64
71	India	0	1	5	6



III. Performance of individual Sports / athletes in different sports:

Sport-wise performance of India

I. Shooting

India sent **21 competitors in 15 Shooting events** across Rifle, Pistol and Shotgun events. Indian shooters in a best-case scenario were eligible to win a **maximum of 27 medals**.

- Medals: 3

Manu Bhaker (Women's 10m Air Pistol), Manu Bhaker-Sarabjot Singh (Mixed Team 10m Air Pistol), Swapnil Kusale (Men's 50m Rifle 3 Position)

- 4th Place finishes: 3

Arjun Babuta (Men's 10m Air Rifle), Manu Bhaker (Women's 25m Pistol), Maheshwari Chauhan and Anantjeet Naruka (Mixed Team Skeet)

Analysis:

Given that India did not win a medal from Shooting in the last two Olympics, winning 3 medals is a commendable achievement. Moreover each of the three 4th placed finishes were very solid achievements. Arjun Babuta and Manu Bhaker were for long periods during their respective finals in the Top 3 and only dropped out at the latter stages. Maheshwari Chauhan and Anantjeet Naruka were beaten by a margin of just 1 point by China in the bronze medal match.

Takeaway:

The performance in Paris clearly shows that if positive lessons can be taken forward, India can put up an even better performance in 2028 with the high number of medals available.

II. Athletics

India sent 27 competitors in 16 events.

- Medals: 1

Neeraj Chopra (Silver, Men's Javelin Throw)

- Finals: 1

Avinash Sable (11th, Men's 3000m Steeplechase)

Analysis:

Neeraj Chopra did brilliantly to win silver in the same event where he won gold three years back in Tokyo. It was a silver lining to a rather disappointing campaign from India's Athletics contingent. Avinash Sable fought valiantly to come 11th in the Men's 3000m Steeplechase but it was clear that there still remains a long way to go.

Takeaway: CONFEDERATION OF SPORTS & RECREATION INDUSTRY

Out of 27 competitors who represented India, only two reached the Finals. There are young athletes who have shown potential in world meets earlier but were unable to replicate at the Olympics. It is imperative to understand and analyse their performance so that there is an improved display by the 2028 Olympics.

III. Wrestling

India sent 6 competitors (5 female and 1 male)

- Medals: 1

Aman Sehrawat (Bronze, Men's 57 kg Freestyle)

Analysis:

India started at a disadvantage as they were able to send only one wrestler in the Men's Freestyle. While for the 2nd Olympics running, there was no representation in Greco-Roman. However India's only male representative Aman Sehrawat brought home a medal. The performance in Women's Wrestling was reasonably alright despite no medal, Vinesh Phogat herself reached the final till she was disqualified for being 100 grams over the requisite weight. Nisha Dahiya was leading 8-1 in the quarterfinals till she suffered an excruciating injury while Reetika Hooda also gave a good account of herself.

Takeaway:

India put up a credible display at the Paris Olympics despite not having a full-strength contingent. There is a lot of good talent coming through in the sport within the country and if we can field a bigger contingent compared to this time, there is no reason why India cannot win more medals in 2028. Also India needs to do a lot better in the Greco-Roman category.

IV. Hockey

Men's Hockey Team

- Medal: 1

Bronze

Analysis:

India was in a very tough group and secured 2nd place after beating Australia for the first time in 52 years at the Olympics. They then pulled off a miraculous victory over Great Britain in the quarterfinal after one of their key players Amit Rohidas was shown a red card. Despite a narrow defeat to Germany in the semifinals, they went on to beat Spain in the bronze medal clash and secure their second consecutive medal.

Takeaway:

India has a solid base of players who are coming through in the sport despite the retirement of legendary goalkeeper PR Sreejesh and the fact that some other senior players may not be seen in four years. The absence of the women's team definitely denied India a shot at two medals and it is imperative for Hockey India to prepare themselves to ensure they have two teams by the next Olympics.

V. Archery

Competitors

6 across 5 events

- 4th place

1 (Mixed Archery team – Dhiraj Bommadevara and Ankita Bhakat)

Analysis:

India performed really well on the ranking round which allowed us to have a good draw in all the events, thus improving our medal chances. The Men's team was seeded 3rd while the Women's team was seeded 4th. Unfortunately across five events, India was able to reach the semifinals in only the Mixed Team event where we were beaten by the USA in the bronze medal clash missing out on what would have been a historic medal. In both the Men's and Women's Team events, despite getting a direct entry into the quarterfinals, India was comfortably beaten by lower-ranked opposition.

Takeaway:

India has fared better in Paris 2024 compared to previous editions and reached a semifinal for the very first time. However despite a strong showing in the ranking rounds, it was visible that India both individually and in the team events crumbled at the knockout stage. This is not an anomaly and seems to take place in every Olympics. Moreover when India does not have the same issue in other international events where they win medals regularly then why only the Olympics where they struggle? There is absolutely no doubt that Indian archers have to become more clinical at the world stage. Doing well in the ranking round is not good enough if they are unable to execute their skills where it matters in the knockout rounds. It shows something is missing somewhere and these gaps need to be plugged so that we are able to convert our chances into medals.

VI. Badminton

Competitors

7 across 4 events

- 4th place

1 (Lakshya Sen – Men's Singles Badminton)

Analysis:

India went without a medal for the first time in 16 years in Badminton. Lakshya Sen played a largely flawless campaign but seemingly froze when he was up a set and 8-3 in the Bronze medal clash. Highly fancied doubles duo Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty also lost in the quarterfinals. PV Sindhu too ended the Olympics without a medal for the very first time in her career.

Takeaway:

Though 2024 may only be a small blip for the sport, there still remains worrying signs as India lacks a world-class women's singles player beyond PV Sindhu who will be 33 by the time of the next Olympics.

VII. Boxing

Competitors: 6

- 2 Quarterfinals

Lovlina Borgohain (Women's 75 kg), Nishant Dev (Men's 71 kg)

Analysis:

India's best medal chance was Nikhat Zareen in the women's 50 kg but she lost to the eventual gold medalist in the Round of 16. On the whole the performance of the Boxing contingent was quite poor. Nishant Dev had a good chance of winning a medal and after looking in good shape in the first two rounds of his quarterfinal, was quite comfortably beaten in the 3rd. India finished without a medal for the 2nd time since 2008.

Takeaway:

Boxing may not figure in the 2028 Olympic program but regardless things need to improve drastically. Most of India's contingent in Paris are in their late 20s and need to fend off new challengers. It wouldn't represent a good look if India goes medal-less from the sport in 2028 too, as Boxing is one of the very few sports from where India expects medals.

VIII. Weightlifting

Competitors: 1

- 4th place: 1

Mirabai Chanu (Women's 49 kg)

Analysis:

It is well-known that Mirabai Chanu was not at her 100% but despite that she lifted as much as she possibly could. Unfortunately her competitors were better than her on the day and she finished in an agonizing 4th place.

Takeaway:

Whether Mirabai figures in the next Olympics or not, India needs to find more Weightlifters. A low representation of weightlifters is certainly not helping the overall medal haul. Given that Weightlifting has a good base of players at the grassroots level, India need to groom the promising lifters at Junior and Youth Level to transition to elite and senior level. Secondly for Weightlifters we need to upgrade our targets beyond performance in Commonwealth Games.

Recommendations:

1. Much larger number of medal contenders in Paris Olympics

The performance in the Paris Olympics where a much larger chunk of our athletes were in medal contention compared to previous editions shows that India is not very far away from crossing let alone double digits but aspiring to reach close to 15 medals in upcoming Olympics.

2. Need to invest more in psychologists and mental trainers:

The failure of some of our athletes who reached 4th place or lost in medal matches is a sign of weakness in difficult situations. This points to a need of investing more and more in psychologists and mental trainers.

3. Continue to put more focus on priority sports despite underwhelming performance:

Only four sports earned medals for India at the Paris Olympics, in 2021 the corresponding number was 6. Given that India excels in only a limited number of sports, this is a very disappointing outcome. However it doesn't mean that India should stop focusing on those sports which they count as priority sports – Athletics, Archery, Boxing, Wrestling, Weightlifting, Hockey, Shooting and Badminton.

4. Need to identify 2nd run of athletes as premier athletes are getting older:

There are several glaring weaknesses if one looks at the profile of major athletes who figure in some of India's prominent sports – In Wrestling, the futures of Bajrang Punia and Vinesh Phogat are unclear and both will be in the mid-30s by the 2028 Olympics. In Weightlifting Mirabai Chanu will be 34 come the time of the 2028 Olympics and India hasn't as yet developed any good backups. Most of our high-profile boxers (if it is there in 2028) like Nikhat Zareen, Lovlina Borgohain, Amit Panghal will be in their 30s. In Hockey, PR Sreejesh has already announced his retirement and it remains to be seen how many more will follow him. In Badminton, the inability to find a women's singles player after PV Sindhu has troubled India for some time and by the time of the 2028 Olympics, Sindhu herself will be 33. Shooting is the only sport where India seems to have a bright future as most of our premier athletes are still young and it is not a high-voltage physical sport.

5. Widening the base of number of priority sports:

India participated in 16 sports out of 32 at the Paris Olympics, there were some sports where India did not even have representation even at the qualification stage. India has performed well in sports such as Rowing, Sailing, Equestrian, Judo among others at Asian Games level; however as a nation we are far behind when it comes to Olympics. Building a solid pool of players could take several years and the opportunity was lost between 2021 to 2024. Before aspiring to reach a considerable level at the Olympics, India should look at having basic infrastructure and coaching facilities in many of these sports which may not need huge investment. This will go a long way towards creating a sports culture and subsequently we can then look forward to medals from multiple sports.

6. Widening the pool of players to select and more judicious use of them in key events:

The performance at Paris 2024 clearly shows that if India strengthens its pool of players in core sports then getting good medal returns is very much possible. There are sports such as Shooting where many medals are available. It is important that in key sports such as Shooting, Boxing (if it is there in 2028), Wrestling, Archery, Badminton, India has a substantial pool of players. Beyond the top-rung players, concept of giving exposure to second and third rung of players should happen more frequently. The inclusion of Squash at the next Olympics will be an added bonus as India has always done well in the sport in the Commonwealth and Asian Games and will seek to strike rich at the sport's debut in the Olympics.

7. Increasing the number of medal contenders by 2028 Olympics

India had about 16-18 medal contenders in the Paris Olympics, this number can be closer to 25 come the Los Angeles Olympics. The higher the medal contenders, the better the prospects of recording a bigger medal haul. India should prioritise winning 12-15 medals at the 2028 Olympics from now itself.

8. Developing a better sports ecosystem

Sports has not been given adequate importance at the grassroot levels and in schools and colleges. Moreover in many cases, taking up sports where India has been successful like Shooting and Badminton can be cumbersome and expensive. However the

Government can work at the grassroots levels and with schools to make playing sports a habit. This will encourage people to not only take up those sports where India is successful but also other sports as well.

9. Investing resources in Sports conferences, research and development and other areas. Also encouraging skill development and entrepreneurship

Sports is a great tool for any nation to use its soft power but this has never been fully explored by India. In addition to sports infrastructure, coaches, experts and systems, the Government should invest in spreading knowledge through Exhibition, Conferences and Research and Development activities in collaboration with industry bodies.

Rationalisations of duties, industry status to sport, funding to sports entrepreneurs are some of the other important issues which need immediate attention.

Moreover the Government should come out with incentives which includes the Union Budget to encourage higher degrees of skill development in the sport and leisure segment.

10. Working in collaboration with Federations and other stakeholders rather than in silos

All stakeholders – The Government, the Federations, Industry Associations and others should come and work together rather than in silos or showing supremacy on each other. Implementing the Sports Code was begun with good intentions but it has now become a tool to fix those Federations that are adverse or adamant to change. This has led to more time being spent in courts rather than productive activities in spite of increase in Government's budget and interest. Ignoring sports administration experience and expertise is detrimental to manage the Federations in the long run.

#####