

## **SPORTS PROMOTION OF PAKISTAN INTERNATIONAL AIRLINES CORPORATION LIMITED: EXAMPLE OF CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND BEYOND**

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### **ABSTRACT:**

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*This study aimed to investigate sports promotion of Pakistan International Airlines Corporation Limited (PIACL) throughout the history in the country. Study has performed content analysis of secondary data published through annual reports, websites and key documents of the corporation. Study found out that PIACL has supported a large number of sportsmen and invested generously to promote different sports especially squash, hockey and cricket at local, national and international levels. Many sports icons once played on the panel of PIACL at different occasions which has set an example for many organizations. Study concludes that there is urgent need of public-private partnership support and promote sports to develop national talent particularly in youth.*

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### **Introduction:**

Investing in sports promotion through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) brings about long-term social impact. Sports promotion and sports personalities possess higher influential power that could usher social change.

CSR is a mechanism for aligning company policies and practices with the socioeconomic, cultural and environmental challenges societies face (Jhatial et al, 2014, p.111). CSR has drawn attention of businessmen and re-

searchers to the profit of companies and how much of that is being returned to communities' welfare through activities such as health, education and sports.

Such activities help companies to earn reputation and fulfill their responsibilities towards society (Kiran et al., 2015; Aid, 2004).

Commission of European Communities (2001) defined CSR as a "concept of companies' social and environmental integration,

concerning voluntarily interaction between the business operations and stockholders”.

Likewise, CSR is a voluntary commitment of business organizations on continuous basis to enhance the quality of life of workforce, their families, communities at local levels and all other stakeholders (Worthington, Ram and Jones, 2006).

More recently, many studies have observed that sports organizations within the sport industry such as Nike and Reebok to the NBA and NASCAR have long adopted CSR programs (Cornelius et al. 2008).

Smith and Westerbeek (2007) noted that sports play unique role to keep society healthy and fit. Walters (2009) observed that ‘community sports’ an independent charitable trust which works as non-government organization in UK delivered a range of community-oriented initiatives of sports, health, education and social inclusion activities.

PIACL (e.g., it is also commonly referred as national flag carrier or corporation, which may

appear in text below) is a commercial public sector organization. It has been playing very vital role to promote youth development and sports activities within country by supporting major sports in the country.

PIACL which is also known as ‘flag carrier’ with its sports division has been facilitating sports by providing employment to talented athletes from various sports.

Apart from providing employment, flag carrier has also been arranging various national as well as international level sports events on regular basis (The Express Tribune, 28th August, 2015).

From extensive review of literature, it has been observed that very limited research is undertaken on the role of PIACL on sports promotion in the country. It is imperative to examine the role of big commercial organizations for sports promotions for social development.

As a result, this study attempted to investigate the role of

PIACL in sports promotion in the country.

it-making but also contributes to social development of the people.

### **Literature Review**

The concept of CSR was first time introduced by Bowen Howard in 1953. It was the first major work on CSR titled as 'Social Responsibilities of the Business'. This book is considered by various authors as first book on CSR (Valor, 2005) as a result many believe Bowen is 'Father of CSR' (Carroll, 1999; Windsor, 2001).

Bowen defined CSR as an obligations of business to follow policies, make decisions desirable in terms of objectives and values of society. Many other scholars have defined CSR beyond social responsibility obligations.

According to them CSR not only deals with 'social responsibilities' obligations but it also deals with legal obligations beyond economic obligations making business more responsible to societies (McGuire, 1963; Davis, 1960; Sethi, 1975).

Carroll (1979) argued about CSR as social responsibility which concentrates not only prof-

Aupperle et al. (1985) surveyed CEOs and found most of business organizations invest according to Carroll's model and improve social development. UNIDO (2009) pointed out that relationship is shifting towards corporate social responsibility from philanthropy, either business run by private or public sectors need to answer various questions raised by consumers.

Because in this age of sophisticated technologies independent media and internet customers are well aware of corporations and their social responsibilities (Chandler and Mazlish, 2005).

Gamble et al. (2007) suggested that state-owned enterprises (SOEs) in order to benefit stockholders should practice strategies of good corporate citizen by displaying social conscience while running corporations.

To achieve this, the top level management of SOEs monitor and audit that what overall impact their decision making have on employees' wellbeing, on

community, environment and on society.

Walter and Idowa, 2009 noted that SOEs need to be responsible for their actions and mandatory obligations to every stakeholder. Corporations are considering CSR as an important element to judge business and its performance these days. This is what makes their business different from others.

### **CSR in Pakistan**

Ali et al.(2010) cited by Jhatial et al. (2014) suggested CSR in Pakistan passes through an evolutionary stage. It was Asian Institute of Management (AIM) which encouraged CSR by pioneering its activities and created a forum on CSR e.g. 'Asian Forum of Corporate Social Responsibility' to hold meetings every year in order to promote health, reduce poverty, take care of environment, support education to enhance its quality and improve workplace practices of Asian companies.

This forum awarded certification to various companies for their efforts to implement CSR

for community wellbeing at grass root levels. It has been observed that many corporations either national or multinational in Pakistan fail to address important aspects of CSR such as formal representation of workers in trade unions, gender equality, poverty reduction, anti-corruption practices, child labour, health, education and human rights (Naeem and Welford, 2009).

In response to such situation of corporate efforts a SRO No. 983(I)/2009 was issued by Commissioner of Companies dated 16th November, 2009.

Where companies were directed to disclose their descriptive CSR activities necessarily for every financial year.

The CSR information that companies need to disclose mandatory in the light of above mentioned SRO includes, environment protection measures taken by companies, corporate philanthropy, welfare schemes and community investments, energy conservations, welfare spending for under privileged classes, consumer protection measures, efforts for poverty reduction, health and occupational safety,

anti-corruption measure and business ethics and rural development programs.

### **CSR in PIACL**

Being a state-owned enterprise (SOEs) and leading commercial air transport corporation of country, PIACL is striving to build relationship with society by offering various community services e.g., customers, employees and partners.

In order to play a vital role for its stakeholders' flag carrier is rendering services through active citizen programs for example Boy Scout Association (BSA), providing social services such as supporting non-governmental organizations (NGOs), medical services through Al-Shifa Trust (AST) and services to promote education and sports within country.

To achieve this, PIACL established a CSR Committee with aim to fight corruption and ensure business ethics and recommended updated practices.

### **Research Methods**

#### **Dataset and collection procedure:**

In order to explore sports engagements of PIACL and their social impact for communities, secondary data from 2002 to 2017 were collected from PIACL annual reports, website, brochures and periodical reports.

Special focus was paid on how corporation has used the CSR umbrella to promote sports activities and reported in its various reports either available online, publication or in the national dailies such as Dawn, The News.

Dataset comprised on following aspects from various online website and printed documents or newspapers: a) the hierarchical structure of the website focusing on where CSR and sports related information is located; b) the communication techniques employed on these websites and printed material; and c) the types of CSR activities or events in which PIACL sports teams participated.

### **Data Analysis strategy:**

Content analysis is both a qualitative and quantitative technique, as it allows researcher to code qualitative data in order to conduct a quantitative analysis (Berg, 2004).

According to Schreier (2012) there are different qualitative data analysis strategies available to analyze and interpret results from the qualitative data.

Qualitative content analysis is one of those methods being used by various researchers, because it systematically describes dataset helps researchers to look at quantification aspects of dataset.

A prerequisite for successful content analysis is that data can be reduced to concepts that describe the research phenomenon by developing various categories and concepts.

### **Procedure of data analysis:**

Researchers use QCA to find about the purposes, messages and effects of communication content, because QCA is used to

quantify the occurrence or frequencies of particular events, activities, words, subjects' phrases or concepts in contemporary text. QCA is also used qualitative inferences by analyzing the meaning and semantic relationship of concepts and words.

The procedure of conducting content analysis is based on several steps (Mayring, (2014).

Firstly, to select the dataset this is to be analyzed. Secondly, units and categories of analysis are defined (units of analysis to be coded such as type of sports and sports personalities to be identified and sponsored, or frequencies of individual words and phrases). Set of categories which will be used for coding such as male, female, frequency of sports activities occurred or sponsored by PIACL).

Thirdly, is to develop rules for coding and perform coding (organizing the unit meaning into previously defined categories). Fifthly, is to analyze results and draw conclusions Mayring, Philipp (2014).

In this study, the dataset consists of the location of the CSR information and the type of CSR initiative. The location is inherently quantitative i.e. frequency of sports activities under CSR reported in dataset.

In order to understand the types and numbers of times sports activities or sports promotion under CSR done by the corporation were codified quantitatively. PIACL has several sports engagements which corporation has reported in its website, periodical reports and in annual reports, however, this study has focused on main sports such as Squash, Hockey and Cricket.

## **Results and Discussions**

### **PIA Services for Sports**

PIACL striving hard to support sports and celebrates such events. There are a number of national sports icons who played for the corporation.

Pakistan has been consistently arranging sports activities at national levels such as National Championship, Quid e Azam Trophy, Pakistan Super League

(PSL), Under 11, Under 15, Under 19 and so on.

PIACL in collaboration with government and private businesses has developed several sports grounds and facilitates sporting events at local and national levels.

PIACL has established a Sports Division (SD) in 1958 and opened door to country's young sportsmen. Through PIA Colt Team (CT) sports persons are coached, trained on regular basis and were provided stipends with an intension to contribute to the advancement of sports within country (some of the prominent sports person supported by PIACL are mentioned in subsequent pages under the headings of squash, hockey and cricket).

The CT program for squash, hockey, football and cricket resulted in identifying promising young sportsmen who became national heroes in their respective fields.

PIACL set up unique career development plans for sportsmen and provides attractive and stable jobs to outstanding sports-

men, empowering them to focus on what they do best.

Under this program of national flag carrier sportsmen are provided with travel facilities and benefits for major sports such as cricket, hockey, football, squash, polo, tennis, chess, bridge, table tennis, cycling and body building.

### **Squash**

There have been various squash players who were identified and sponsored by PIA. Following are some of the world renowned heroes of squash players Qamar Zaman, Gogi Alauddin, SohailQasir, Jahangir Khan and Jansher Khan.

One of them is Qamar Zaman, born on 11th April 1952 in Quetta. Zaman was one of the leading squash players during 1970s-1980s. He won several titles such as Junior Squash Championship in 1968 and British Open in 1975.

Similarly, Gogi Alauddin, born on 9th September 1950 is the

winner of British Amateur Championship in 1970-1971. He won Pakistan Open in 1972-1973 and was runner-up of British Open in 1973 and 1975.

Likewise, Sohail Qasir, born in 1965, winner of World Junior Championship 1982 and British Under-23 Open at Wembley in 1982 have remained PIA squash team player.

Moreover, World's greatest and No.1 player of squash Jahangir Khan has also remained PIA's sponsored sportsman, was born on 10th December 1963 in Peshawar. He holds the record of winning World Open in 1981, 1982, 1983, 1984 and 1988.

To share his game skills and experience he wrote various books on learning squash. Furthermore, there has been another world class and world No.1 squash player that was sponsored by PIA - Jansher Khan, born on 15th June, 1969. Khan holds the record of winning World Open for eight times and British Open for six times.



Table 1 Sports events won by PIACL teams at National/International levels during 2014-15

S.No.	Sport	Event	Status
1	Hockey Team	National Championship	Winner
2	Hockey Team	Nishan-e-Haider Trophy	Winner
3	Hockey Team	All Pakistan Brigadier Atif Trophy	Winner
4	Hockey Team	Doha Tour	Winner
5	Squash-M. Huzaifa Ibrahim	Qatar Open & Doha Open	Winner
6	Squash-Ahsan Ayaz	National Champion	Winner
7	Squash-Naveed Rehman	Sindh Champion	Winner
8	Cricket Team	President Trophy	Semi Final

## **Hockey**

There have been various hockey players who were identified and sponsored by PIA. One of the famous hockey players of national flag carrier's team was Shabaz Ahmed Senior.

He was born on 1st September 1968 in Faisalabad. Similarly, Manzoor Hussain - born on 28th October 1958 has been part of PIA hockey team and played for almost a decade between 1975 and 1984.

He scored 86 goals and was capped 175 times. Likewise, Sa-

lem Sherwani - born on 4th January 1951 played as goal keeper in National Hockey.

He has been winner of silver medal in 1972 at Summer Olympics in Munich, Germany. He also won bronze medal in Summer Olympics in 1976 at Montreal, Quebec, Canada.

Moreover, Kamran Ashraf - born on 30th September 1973 in Sialkot is a former hockey player who played as center forward position scored 129 goals in 166 internationals from 1993 to 2003.

## **Cricket**

PIACL has been prominent public sector organization which promoted cricket and sponsored a huge number of cricket events and produced cricket icons in the country. There have been numerous players who were identified and sponsored by PIA.

Zaheer Abbas - born on 24th July 1947 in Sialkot. Right-hand batsman started his one day international (ODI) against England in 1974.

Current Prime Minister, Imran Khan has also been sponsored by PIA. He played as all-rounder started his ODI career on 31st August 1974 against England at Trent Bridge.

He started his Test Match career on 3rd June 1971 against England at Edgbaston, Birmingham. Moreover, Wasim Akram - born on 3rd June, 1966 left-arm fast bowler was also sponsored by PIA.

He started his ODI career on 23rd November 1984 against New Zealand at Iqbal Stadium Faisalabad. He began his test de-

but on 25th January 1985 at Eden Park, Auckland.

Another right-arm fast bowler, Shoaib Akhtar - born on 13th August 1975 in Rawalpindi, played all formats of the game over fourteen years.

Similarly, the list of PIA sponsored cricket icons is not limited, Abdul Razzaq - born on 2nd December 1979 in Lahore was also identified and sponsored by the corporation.

He started his ODI career in 1996 at Gaddafi Stadium versus Zimbabwe. He commenced his test career against Australia at the Gabba Brisbane on 5th November 1999.

Whereas, he began his twenty-twenty career on 28th August, 2006 at County Ground versus England. Sarfaraz Ahmed born on 22nd May 1987 in Karachi is latest cricket player who has been sponsored by PIA.

He is a wicketkeeper-batsman, current captain of Pakistan Cricket Team in all three format i.e. Test, ODIs and Twenty-Twenty started ODI career with ODI debut on 18th Novem-

ber 2007 versus India at SawaiMan singh Stadium, while played test debut versus Australia on 14th January at Bellerive Oval and twenty-twenty carrier in debut match against England on 19th February 2010 at Dubai International Cricket Stadium.

Table 1 presents details of participation of PIACL various sports teams in national and international sports events. PIACL teams won all sports events during 2014-2015.

As displayed in rows from 1 to 4 PIA Hockey team won National Championship, Nishan-e-Haider Trophy, All Pakistan

Brigadier Atif Trophy, and won Doha Tour by defeating Indian Airline.

Likewise, rows from 5 to 7 PIA Squash Players M. Huzifa, Ibrahim, Ahsan Ayaz and Naveed Rehman won Qater Open & Doha Open (Under-11), National Championship (Under-19) Sindh Championship (Under-15) respectively. Whereas row 8 highlights PIA cricket team reaching Semi Final in President Trophy.

Table 2: Participation of PIACL Sport Teams in National and International Team Event.

*Sports Promotion of Pakistan International Airlines Cooperation Limited*

S.No:	Sports Team	Event	Status
1	Cricket	Quaid-e-Azam Cricket Trophy-II	Winner
2	Hockey	National Hockey Championship	Winner
3	Hockey	First Late Brig Atif Sahiwal	Winner
4	Hockey	Nishan-e-Haider Hockey Tournament	Winner
5	Hockey	4 Nation Hockey Tournament Qatar Doha	Winner
6	Football	All Pakistan Football Tournament	Winner
7	Football	PFF Championship Cup	Winner
8	Squash	PIA Squash Colt U-12	Winner
9	Squash	Qatar Junior Open Tournament	Winner
10	Squash	Redtone 9th KL Jr Open Tournament	Winner

Table 2 depicts various national sports events won by PIA Cricket, Hockey, Football and Squash Teams.

### **Conclusion**

Though a sport spending through CSR does not seem to be high on the priority list of corporate sector in the country.

Nevertheless, CSR has grown enough to give a complete direction for education, health and sports promotion. This study focused on national flag carrier's sports promotion and engagements and their impact on society.

Sports promotion of PIACL has been highly encouraging for other national and multinational organizations in the country to afford such sporting activities to leave lasting impact on society. PIACL has long history of social investment especially in education, health and sports.

Corporation has promoted national talent in the field of major sports such as cricket, hockey and squash to name a few.

PIACL has this credit that it has sponsored sports icons in every sports field.

There is urgent need of doing collective and coordinated effort through public-private partnership for sports promotions. Government organizations have to identify priority areas and lead concerted efforts to promote sports also indigenous games as well.

Sports operations focus should be wide-ranging, addressing issues such as education, health, urban-rural divide, gender inequalities and the environment.

A corporate investment in sports is a collective effort towards nation building. Sports empower communities and develop skill and improve national health and talent.

In time, it leads to a healthy and vibrant 'youth force' and 'national sports talent' that boost national morale in international community. Most importantly, sports unite communities, build national pride, change mentalities, create community icons and breed next generation of leaders.

Governments, all over the world now a day's engage corporate investments for community welfare through sports participation.

Corporations through their CSR activities address socio-economic and environmental concerns make more profit and earn good name. Consumers are increasingly becoming aware of buying products and services from companies which reinvest in social development of the society.

Government of Pakistan needs to forge a collective sports strategy through public-private partnership on CSR platform and direct corporate investment in sports promotion. There is a huge talent in the country which could be given correct direction by the government towards sports.

There is urgent need to build sports grounds with necessary sporting facilities in both urban and rural areas to identify future sports icons in the country.

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