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## **The Development of Pakistani Kabaddi in China in the Perspective of State Presence (1989-2021)**

### **Abstract**

*The spread of Kabaddi sport, a traditional Pakistani sport, in China has experienced a history of more than three decades, and its trajectory can be broadly divided into three periods: the rise of Kabaddi in China from 1988-1990; the stagnation of Kabaddi in China from 1991-2008; and the revival of Kabaddi from 2009-2021. Through the study of the spread of kabaddi in China, this research finds that the trajectory of kabaddi's spread in China is a comprehensive reflection of China's national sports development strategy. The historical period of kabaddi's spread in China coincides with the historical phase of the rise of Chinese sport. Under the dominance of state discourse, China's sports development has experienced a shift from a focus on competitive sports to a focus on mass fitness, which in turn is a shift from an Olympic strategy based on the country's political-diplomatic needs to a strategy of a strong sports nation based on the need for national fitness. In this process, the stage-by-stage adjustments and changes in the national discourse are projected onto the development of kabaddi in China, resulting in corresponding stage-by-stage changes in the spread of kabaddi.*

**Keywords:** China; Pakistani Kabaddi; history of communication; politics and sports

### **Introduction:**

Kabaddi is a sport popular in South Asia, very popular in Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka and other countries, since the 1990 Beijing Asian Games, Kabaddi began to move from South Asia to the whole of Asia, and became the official competition programme of the Asian Games. Kabaddi's entry into China also began with the 1990 Beijing Asian Games, and along with the 2010 Guangzhou Asian Games and the 2023 Hangzhou Asian Games, the spread of kabaddi in China has seen three major development opportunities. Based on a historical timeline, this study analyses the history of the spread of Kabaddi in China under the perspective of the state presence.

The history of the spread of kabaddi in China reveals that the trajectory of the spread of kabaddi in China is a comprehensive manifestation of China's national sports development strategy. The historical period of the spread of kabaddi in

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China coincides with the historical phase of the rise of Chinese sports. Under the dominance of state discourse, China's sports development has undergone a shift from a focus on competitive sports to a focus on mass fitness, which in turn is a shift from an Olympic strategy based on the country's political-diplomatic needs to a strategy of sports power based on the need for national fitness. In this process, the stage-by-stage adjustments and changes in national discourse are projected onto the development of kabaddi in China, resulting in corresponding stage-by-stage changes in the spread of kabaddi.

This study combines elements such as national political demand and people's mass fitness demand to sort out the timeline of kabaddi's development in China, analysing on the one hand the process of kabaddi's dissemination in China and on the other hand the strategy of China's sports development in the last thirty years. The highs and lows of the spread of Kabaddi in China have been accompanied by the restructuring of China's sports strategy, and reflect the importance of State presence for the development of sports programmes in the context of China's national system model of sports development.

### **Literature Review**

The origin of Kabaddi is in ancient West Asia, dating back as far as the Vedic era (1500 BC to 500 BC). It is an ancient folk game with a long history, which has been in circulation since the time when the epic Mahabharata was produced. It is currently very popular in South and West Asia, such as Pakistan, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, etc. It officially became a competition event in the Asian Games in 1990, which opened the way for the spread of Kabaddi to all of Asia. According to the limitation of the selected topic of this study, the studies related to it are mainly divided into: the spread of Kabaddi in Asia; the spread of Kabaddi in China.

Diffusion of Kabaddi in Asia: The sportification of Kabaddi refers to the process of transforming Kabaddi from a folk traditional sports game to a competitive sport, the sportification of Kabaddi has made Kabaddi an international sport and there are now 26 countries that have formed Kabaddi federations.<sup>1</sup> Kabaddi was made an official event at the first Asian Beach Games in Bali in 1998, men's kabaddi became an official event at the 1990 Asian Games in Beijing, and women's kabaddi became an official event at the 2010 Asian Games in Guangzhou, and in 2014, the International Kabaddi Federation (IKF) was established to manage kabaddi events, which currently has 34 member countries and 9 non-member countries.<sup>2</sup> Kabaddi is gaining popularity and is now one of the sources of revenue for the Indian sports and tourism economy.<sup>3</sup> Kabaddi has so far developed into one of the major sports in Asia, spreading in various Asian countries.

The spread of Kabaddi in China: The emergence of Kabaddi in China began in 1989. Kabaddi culture, technical content and competition rules<sup>4</sup>, history of kabaddi development, countries of circulation<sup>5</sup>, analysis of kabaddi techniques and tactics<sup>6</sup>. Since then, there have been two climaxes of spread with the 1990 Beijing Asian Games, and the 2010 Guangzhou Asian Games. Although Kabaddi has been in China for a long time, the spread of Kabaddi in China is still in the early stage,

and more efforts are needed for wide spread and promotion, which should improve the association of promotional organisations, and make use of the power of the network for publicity and promotion.<sup>7</sup> Kabaddi has great advantages for the development of physical and mental health of students in colleges and universities, and its dissemination within colleges and universities is one of the shortcuts to kabaddi.<sup>8</sup> Kabaddi can enrich the content of sports activities in colleges and increase the fun and entertainment of the sport.<sup>9</sup> The spread of Kabaddi in China mainly focuses on spreading within the campus, relying on the physical education classroom, and becoming a sport that enriches students' physical activities.

### **Research Methodology**

This study systematically comprehends the history of the spread of Kabaddi in China using research methods such as documentary research, logical analysis, and expert interview method. Firstly, the historical timeline of kabaddi transmission in China from 1989 to 2021 is analysed in depth and systematically using documentary research and expert interviews, and the three climaxes of kabaddi transmission in China are summarised. The logical analysis method is used to analyse the reasons for the three climaxes of kabaddi dissemination and the historical background behind them from the perspective of the state presence. Finally, it is concluded that the spread of kabaddi in China is not an isolated history, but is influenced by China's Olympic strategy, the strategy of strengthening the country through sport, the national fitness programme, and other national strategies, and that the spread of the development of kabaddi is in the context of China's sports development in the past three decades.

‘State presence’ refers to the intervention, differentiation, integration and leadership of the state, in one form or another, in economic and social affairs.<sup>10</sup> In the field of sports, due to the competitive and representative nature of sports, it is the embodiment of the national image, which can best reflect the importance of ‘State presence’. The ‘State presence’ is one of the major causes of the change in the international competitive sports landscape.<sup>11</sup> Looking around the world, the rise of great and powerful countries is often accompanied by the rise of competitive sports, especially for competitive sports have shown a strong ‘State presence’, which is one of the reasons for the sustained development of competitive sports. Since the twentieth century, the rise of the great powers and the development of competitive sports is closely related to the rise of competitive sports in the Soviet Union not only marked the Soviet people to the social and cultural and regime of the identity, but also reflected in the national strength of the far ahead. The rise of competitive sports in the United States marked the hegemony and leadership of the United States. The rise of competitive sports in Japan signalled the emergence from the haze of war into the orbit of becoming an economic power. Kabaddi sport and China have deep historical roots, and the trajectory of kabaddi development in China follows the theory of state presence.

## **1 The Rise of Kabaddi in China (1988-1990)**

### **1.1 Background to the Rise of Kabaddi**

On 21 September 1988 in Seoul, South Korea (now Seoul) held the seventh plenary session of the Olympic Council of Asia, Kabaddi was listed as the official competition for the 1990 Eleventh Asian Games, since then Kabaddi from the South Asian sports circle into the Asian sports circle.

Kabaddi was introduced to China in 1990 when the 11th Asian Games were held in Beijing, China. At this stage, China's contact with Kabaddi was mainly focused on observing and understanding the form of sports expression, and Chinese sports people have always maintained a positive attitude towards learning in the face of a brand new form of sports in an unfamiliar culture.

### **1.2 Manifestations of the rise of Kabaddi in China**

The manifestation of the rise of Kabaddi in China is mainly in two aspects, one is scientific research, many sports scholars began to pay attention to the Kabaddi sport, and gradually published relevant papers in well-known Chinese sports journals. The contents include popularising the knowledge of Kabaddi, such as Zhong Xu and Wan Ying's 'Introduction to Kabaddi' published in December 1989, which introduced Kabaddi to China for the first time, and the contents mainly popularised the rules of Kabaddi from the point of view of the needs of sports competitions.<sup>12</sup> Ran Qianghui and Wang Hai, 'Kabaddi,' describes the cultural background, countries of transmission, and history of development of kabaddi, and briefly describes the process of kabaddi competition.<sup>13</sup> As well as a more in-depth introduction to the cultural origins and analysis of techniques and tactics, Sun Minzhi's 'Introduction to Kabaddi' describes in more detail the origins of kabaddi in the ancient Indian epics and the course of its development, analyses of the main techniques and tactics of kabaddi, and analyses of the strengths of the kabaddi participating countries in the 1990 Asian Games.<sup>14</sup>

Secondly, the State Sports Commission selected 20 students with an average age of 20.5 years and an average height of 1.85m from the university students of Beijing Normal College of Physical Education (now Capital University of Physical Education And Sports) in November 1989 to form the Chinese Kabaddi Training Team.<sup>15</sup> However, the training conditions were very difficult, there was no professional coach, no professional training materials and no professional training equipment, from the coach to the athletes had never seen this sport, there were only two video clips of matches, and all the training content came from the observation and imitation of the video clips of the matches.

At this stage, the exposure to Kabaddi surface sport forms is mainly reflected, and there is no in-depth understanding of Kabaddi culture. Whether it is sports scholars or kabaddi training team coaches and athletes do not have the experience of learning and exchanging with professional kabaddi personnel in South Asian countries, the understanding of kabaddi sport mainly stays on the cognition of kabaddi surface sports and surface culture, and does not have an in-depth understanding of the essence of kabaddi culture and the key points of the game techniques and tactics. Of course, this has also laid a certain foundation for the spread of Kabaddi in the later stage and left room for improvement.

### **1.3 Influence of State presence on the rise of Kabaddi in China**

In the history of world sports, the hosting of large-scale games is by no means just a demonstration of sporting strength and competition; it is a manifestation of the country's status, the embodiment of the nation's honour, the promotion of traditional culture, and the appeal of political goals.<sup>16</sup> China faced many difficulties at this time in its history and needed to break the blockade and sanctions imposed on it by hostile forces with the successful hosting of the Beijing Asian Games. For this reason the organising committee of the Beijing Asian Games at that time set three goals: firstly, to achieve a double success in sports performance and spiritual civilisation; secondly, to unite the whole country, to enhance national self-esteem and self-confidence, and to strengthen national cohesion and centripetal force; and thirdly, to use the Asian Games as a window to express its stance and determination to continue to deepen reform and opening up, and to break the isolation and sanction of China by the reactionary forces of the international arena.<sup>17</sup> Under the guidance of the international situation and the objectives of the Asian Games in Beijing, China has been actively preparing for the Asian Games and exploring the possibility of winning gold medals in each sport. Based on this, and with Kabaddi as a new sport in the Asian Games, the Chinese Kabaddi Training Team was born. Although the Chinese Kabaddi Training Team knew nothing about Kabaddi, all the members of the team prepared for the Asian Games with a high level of motivation. Although China did not win a medal in Kabaddi in the Asian Games, it was a first step in spreading Kabaddi in China.

The birth of the Chinese Kabaddi team was the result of various overlapping historical reasons - the international situation, the new Asian Games programme, the goals of the Beijing Asian Games, and so on. Here too, the reason for China's absence from the Kabaddi programme at the Asian Games since then can be well explained. China's participation in the Asian Games Kabaddi programme can be said to be a political manifestation of a special historical moment, when China completed this goal, the direction of sports strategy development to focus on the Olympic strategy, so with the development of the Olympic programme of competitive sports dominance, naturally there has been since the Asian Games Kabaddi programme of China's team has been absent.

## **2 Stagnation of Kabaddi in China (1991-2008)**

### **2.1 Background of the Stagnation Period**

Sports are competitive and political. Sports competitions between two countries not only measure the level of sports, but also the strength of a country's overall comprehensive national power in terms of economy, culture and social development. Sports are sports, but they are not just sports! Because foreign exchange through sports can fully reflect the strength of the country.<sup>18</sup>

After the founding of New China, a hundred things were waiting to be done. At that time, China's economic level was low, and politically it was facing the blockade of European and American countries. In such a difficult situation both internally and externally, China needed a breakthrough to break the situation, to show the strength of the nation and the country on the one hand, and to inspire the

unity of people of all nationalities in the whole country to seek for the rejuvenation on the other hand, and the athletic sports are just a good carrier.<sup>19</sup> In the face of this predicament, China actively studied and referred to the Soviet Union's model of sports development, which was a government-led form of sports development, before proposing a strategy for sports development: the nation-building system. The national sports system is a system whereby the national sports governing body mobilises relevant resources and forces throughout the country in the national interest, and whereby the state pays for the deployment of excellent coaches and hardware and software facilities, and concentrates on selecting, developing and training talented athletes to participate in international sports events such as the Olympic Games and other international sports events, and to compete with other countries in order to achieve excellent results, break records and win gold medals.

With the founding of New China in 1949, the strategy of sports was to enhance the physical fitness of the people to serve the needs of national defence and social construction, with the main development of national fitness, and it was only after China's participation in the fifteenth Olympic Games in 1952 that a strategy for the development of competitive sports was put forward, and since then the development of mass fitness sports and competitive sports has been given equal importance. However, due to the issue of representation of the IOC and some of the individual international sports associations for mainland China and Taiwan, China withdrew from the IOC on 19 August 1958, as well as from the seven individual international associations for track and field, swimming, weightlifting and shooting. From 1960 onwards, China's development came to a standstill, following a period of 'leftist' thinking, natural disasters, the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution. During this historical period, which lasted until 1978, the development of mass fitness sports was slow and competitive sports stagnated.

It was not until 1978, when the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee of the People's Republic of China was launched, that the development of sports in China gradually ushered in the spring, and in 1979 China resumed its legal seat on the Olympic Committee; in 1980, President Deng Xiaoping put forward the idea of perfecting the Olympic strategy and developing competitive sports. This marked the official start of the 'national system', which was dominated by competitive sports, and led to the formation of a three-tier training system for athletes nationwide, i.e., the three-tier training and talent selection system of amateur sports schools, sports schools, and professional sports teams. The implementation of this policy lasted for nearly thirty years, from 1980 to 2008, a period that witnessed not only the rise of Chinese sports (i.e. from the 23rd Los Angeles Olympic Games in 1984, when Xu Haifeng won his first Olympic gold medal, to the 1990 Asian Games in Beijing, to the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, when he achieved the first place in Olympic gold medals), but also the rise of China as a great power.

## **2.2 Performance characteristics during the period of stagnation**

Between 1991 and 1993, scholars, coaches, and athletes who were previously involved in the Kabaddi competition programme maintained their interest in the Kabaddi sport programme as the afterglow of the Beijing Asian Games was still present. During this period, researchers were mainly concentrated in the Beijing

Normal College of Physical Education, and the content of their research began to diversify. For example, Gu Wenwei's 'Kabaddi' game introduced kabaddi into teaching as a sports game for practical teaching research.<sup>20</sup> Research on Anaerobic Threshold and Maximum Aerobic Capacity of Chinese Kabaddi Athletes by Liu Guangzhi's team from Beijing Normal College of Physical Education By conducting a control group experiment on Kabaddi training team athletes who participated in the Beijing Asian Games and professional athletes from other sports, the experiment showed that the anaerobic endurance and aerobic capacity of Kabaddi training team athletes were higher than those of the control group, while the surface Kabaddi athlete selection index could increase the determination of anaerobic threshold and maximal aerobic capacity.<sup>21</sup>

The Beijing Normal College of Physical Education training team, which had previously participated in the Beijing Asian Games, also took part in the International Kabaddi Invitational Tournament held in India in 1993 and won third place.<sup>22</sup> The kabaddi training team did not train continuously after the 1990 tournament, but received an invitation before the tournament and trained for only five months. However, in the following period, the team was disbanded due to the graduation of the members of the Beijing Normal College of Physical Education, and the students and teachers of the Beijing Normal College of Physical Education gradually lost their interest in kabaddi. After that, China missed the 1994 and subsequent Asian Games due to lack of professional Kabaddi players.

From 1994 to 2008, only a few scholars continued to pay attention to kabaddi, and only five articles could be retrieved from the China Knowledge Network (CNN), and their contents were mainly about the popularisation and teaching of the new sport. Gao Yibin, 'The Interesting Sport of Kabaddi', Liu Wei, 'The Interesting Folk Sports Activity of "Kabaddi" Chasing Game', and Xiangbo, 'Kabaddi, the Indian Version of the Eagle Catching Chickens'. Kabaddi was reintroduced from the history and gameplay of kabaddi. Zhang Xuguang 'Jiangnan "Kabaddi"' through the modification of the rules of kabaddi, simplify the form of kabaddi game, the simplified kabaddi game into the students of physical education classroom, classroom teaching effect is good and very exercise value.<sup>23</sup>

### **2.3 State Presence's Analysis of the Causes of Stagnation**

China proposed the development of Olympic strategy in 1980 to break the bottleneck of China's development through Olympic diplomacy. So 1990 Beijing Asian Games Kabaddi in China experienced a brief rise after the fall into silence because in a specific historical period, contrary to the development of the national Olympic strategy.

This stage of the Olympic programme is the 'State presence' stage, and is also a key period in the national 'Olympic strategy'. The 'State presence' for the Olympic programme is reflected in the support of the national policy for the Olympic programme, the support of the national - provincial - municipal three-level league for the Olympic programme, the support of the national team (professional sports school, sports academy) - provincial team (sports school, sports academy) - municipal team (amateur sports school) three-level talent training mechanism for the Olympic programme, the national team of national symbols, and so on. The 'presence of the government' leads to the 'presence of the social competitive environment', and the 'presence of the social competitive

environment' leads to the 'presence of the people'. 'The people of different ages can find their belonging in the Olympic programme, which forms the 'State Presence' of the Olympic programme and the 'People's Presence'.

Kabaddi, as an Asian Games programme, belongs to the traditional sports of Asian nations and has not been included in the Olympic programme. Therefore, at this stage, Kabaddi belongs to the stage of 'national absence', there is no national policy support, no professional training team, no selection mechanism for Kabaddi talents in sports colleges, and no government-led Kabaddi sports events. 'The lack of national support will lead to the lack of effective publicity for Kabaddi, and the occupation of the soil for its survival will lead to the lack of a 'social environment for Kabaddi', in which people will not be able to find a sense of belonging to the Kabaddi programme, and naturally lose their interest in the Kabaddi programme. 'This is the current situation of Kabaddi communication at this stage.

At this stage in history, the development of sports in China was mainly centred on the Olympic strategy of competitive sports, with all energies and goals revolving around winning the Olympic Games. The development of non-Olympic sports was limited, not only by the stagnation of kabaddi in China, but also by the slow development and gradual marginalisation of traditional Chinese sports. Thus the stagnation of kabaddi development is also a typical microcosm of the development of traditional sports in China during this period.

### **3 Revival of Kabaddi in China (2009-2021)**

#### **3.1 Background to the revival**

The development of Chinese sports is closely related to the fate of the country, and in different historical periods, China's sports strategies have actively served the national development strategy and met the needs of national interests in different historical periods.<sup>24</sup> There are two lines of sports development in China: competitive sports and mass fitness sports. After 1979, due to the political needs of the country to put forward the Olympic strategy, the development of competitive sports was strongly prioritised, and the development of mass fitness sports was slow and lagging behind. The 2008 Beijing Olympic Games marked China's transformation into a major sports nation and the fulfilment of the Olympic strategic goal of competitive sports.

In the post-Olympic era, the state's attention to competitive sports gradually weakened, and the people's demand for physical exercise came into the scope of the whole of China's vision, and at this time, the sports development strategy was transformed from a large sports country to a strong sports country. During this period, social problems such as aging and declining physical fitness of young people also appeared in Chinese society, and in the face of the principles of national needs, social needs and people's needs, sports development successively put forward the development strategies of 'Fitness for All' and 'Healthy China'. Since 2009, 8 August, the opening day of the Beijing Olympic Games, has been designated as 'National Fitness Day'; in 2010, the State Council's 'Guiding Opinions on Accelerating the Development of the Sports Industry' pointed out that it would promote the transformation from a large sports country to a strong one; and in October 2014, the State Council's 'Opinions on Accelerating the



Development of the Sports Industry and Promoting Sports Consumption' elevated national fitness to the status of a national strategy. Fitness for all has been upgraded to a national strategy. 'The 13th Five-Year Plan positions Healthy China as a national development strategy, and in 2016, the National Fitness Plan 2016-2020 re-emphasised that national fitness is an important national development strategy, and included the gradual inclusion of a strong sports nation in the national strategy, such as in 2019, when the State Council issued the Outline for the Construction of a Strong Sports Nation. The Fourteenth Five-Year Plan integrates a strong sports nation into the development of a healthy China. Prosperous folk sports and fitness activities and industrial integration and development, and actively integrate the sports industry into all aspects of the development of people's livelihoods, such as health, culture and innovation, advertising, media, medical care, education, tourism, pension and so on. In 2019, the total scale of the sports industry exceeded 3 trillion yuan, accounting for more than one percent of the national GDP.2019 The State Council proposed in the Outline for the Construction of a Strong Sporting Nation that the sports industry should be developed into a pillar industry of the national economy by 2035, and that physical exercise should become a way of life for the people.2021 The State Council further improved the implementation plan and pointed out that: 2025 will be the year in which the sports industry will become a pillar industry of the national economy, and physical exercise will become a way of life for the people. On 3 August 2021, the State Council further improved the implementation plan of the National Fitness Plan (2021-2025), pointing out that by 2025, the proportion of people who regularly participate in physical exercise will reach 38.5%, the improvement of public fitness facilities for the whole nation and the community 15-minute fitness circle will achieve full coverage, and the total scale of the national sports industry will reach 5 trillion yuan.

The development of sports in China as a whole has shown an overall change from the needs of the State to the needs of the people. The people's sports needs are in the forefront, and the people's mass fitness programmes will certainly emerge as a hundred competitions based on the people's needs, geographic environment, age limitations, venue environment and so on, which also means that traditional sports based on the people's mass fitness needs for non-Olympic sports will usher in the development of the spring.

### **3.2 Manifestations of revival**

Opportunities for the development of Kabaddi: Firstly, the development of competitive sports led by the Olympic programme has been weakened, and the diversity of sports has been valued in the context of mass fitness. Based on the needs of mass fitness, the competitive nature of sports programmes has been weakened, the exercise effect of sports and the practical adaptability of individuals has been revealed, and the public's demand for diversification of sports programmes has increased; secondly, China ushered in the right to host the second Asian Games, and China has been absent from the Kabaddi programme since the 1990 Beijing Asian Games.

Firstly, there has been an increase in training in the sport of kabaddi; from 6 to 7 November 2008, the Guangzhou Asian Games Organising Committee held a kabaddi training course at the Guangzhou Sports Institute and from 8 to 9

November 2008, a kabaddi promotion event and a performance match by the Indian National Kabaddi Youth Team in Guangzhou were held at the Gymnasium of the Guangzhou University of Foreign Trade and Foreign Languages and at the Huashan Town Square in Huadu District. This event has created a good publicity effect in Guangzhou area and has been deeply and effectively popularised in Guangzhou Sports Institute, Guangzhou University of Foreign Trade and Foreign Languages and Guangzhou Sports Vocational and Technical College, and all the three institutes have set up their Kabaddi Varsity Teams at this time. The Guangzhou Asian Games Organising Committee's Kabaddi campaign is not only to reserve talents for the 2010 Asian Games, but also to sow the seeds for the spread of Kabaddi in China once again.

Secondly, the research on Kabaddi movement has increased, the organisation of the Guangzhou Asian Games in 2010 has also started the revival of Kabaddi movement in China, and the research trend has become more and more intense since 2010, as shown by the number of papers published in China Knowledge Network (CNN) from 1989 to 2020. From 1991 to 2009, the total number of papers published on China Knowledge Network was 9, less than one paper per year, and after 2010, there were more than 4 relevant papers published every year, which is a great increase in the number of papers published compared to the previous period.

The research content has also shifted from single rule popularisation articles to diversified ones, such as the study of kabaddi culture and promotion value: Yang Zhangwei and Wu Yongjie, 'The Cultural Interpretation and Promotional Value of the Game Sport "Kabaddi"', interpreted kabaddi from its historical and cultural roots, and argued that kabaddi's rules are controllable, safe, easy to play, has a wide range of audiences, and that its cultural qualities match the theme of China's leisure era.<sup>25</sup> Mao Weimin, 'On the Historical Evolution of Kabaddi and Its Cultural Connotation' Based on the sports characteristics of Kabaddi, the cultivation of the quality and ability of Kabaddi sports professionals should be strengthened, and the psychological endurance of the sports personnel should be improved so that they can achieve physical and mental unity in sports<sup>26</sup>; Research on promotion strategies in China: Ye Zhenfeng's Study on the Development of Kabaddi Programme in China and Countermeasures from the Guangzhou Asian Games argues that kabaddi is suitable for China's characteristics, is in line with the current development trend of sports in the country, has sufficient reserve talents, has a strong sports foundation, has favourable economic conditions conducive to sports development, and has already attracted the attention of governmental departments.<sup>27</sup> Xu Xiaohu, 'On the Possibility of Kabaddi Programmes in China', argues that the key to the spread of kabaddi in China lies in the construction of associations, tournament organisations and academic safeguards<sup>28</sup>; Research on Kabaddi and School Education: Dai Fangmei's 'Analysis of the Possibility of Kabaddi Entering China's School Sports' School physical education teachers believe that kabaddi is suitable for school sports because of its simple rules, low technical difficulty, no need for expensive equipment, and high degree of fun.<sup>29</sup> Chen Bing, "Research on the Application of 'Kabaddi' in Public Physical Education Teaching in General Colleges and Universities" Kabaddi can improve the physical education system of universities and cultivate the spirit of unity and

cooperation among college students.<sup>30</sup> Xu Donghui and Shang Zhanqun “Construction and Implementation of Kabaddi Sports Characteristic Curriculum in Special Schools” Kabaddi has a promotion effect on special education in terms of sports moral education, strengthening the body, rehabilitation, and cultivation of intelligence, and Kabaddi's role in the characteristic education of “Sports for Rehabilitation” .<sup>31</sup> (Xu Donghui, 2018)

Thirdly, the establishment of kabaddi sports associations and the increase in the number of events. In contrast, after the Guangzhou Asian Games in 2010, the promotion of Kabaddi in China has gradually started, and the number of Kabaddi activities and competitions in the region has also increased. The spread of the sport is centered on Henan Province and Heilongjiang Province, where official associations have been set up to actively promote the sport and gradually spread to the whole country.

In 2012, Luoyang City, Henan Province established the first Kabaddi Sports Association in China - Luoyang City Kabaddi Sports Association, and then actively launched the promotion and popularization of Kabaddi, committed to making Kabaddi a new game for students in school physical education classes. In 2014, the first Kabaddi Competition was held in Luoyang, with 168 athletes from 14 teams. Since then, a municipal kabaddi competition has been held annually in Luoyang, and by May 23rd, 2021, the “Sports Lottery Cup” Kabaddi Competition held in Luoyang City during the month of National Fitness, there will be 33 teams with 500 athletes participating in the competition in the following categories: Boys and Girls in Primary Schools, Boys in Secondary Schools, and Boys in Universities, and the Adult Groups. In March 2013, the Heilongjiang Kabaddi Sports Association was established, and since then it has been actively hosting all kinds of competitions, and actively launching promotional activities and teacher training throughout the country, with locations spreading to Hainan, Hebei, Xinjiang, Zhejiang, Henan and other places, making a positive contribution to the spread of Kabaddi in China. The spread of the phenomenon in Henan and Heilongjiang is due to the fact that the two Asian Games were held in China, and the persons in charge of the two places were the technical referees in the Asian Games, while some of the other spreaders in the other places were also the technical referees and service personnel of the Kabaddi program in the Asian Games.

Fourthly, the official Kabaddi sport promotion organisation was established. 2020 is a key year for the spread of Kabaddi in China, as 2020 saw the establishment of a government function at the national level of the Kabaddi programme. 2020 saw the establishment of the National Kabaddi Sport Promotion Committee in November 2020 by the Centre for Social Sports Guidance of the General Administration of Sport of the People's Republic of China (CASSG). The organisation states that it will gradually improve kabaddi standards and systems, organise and implement events, carry out domestic, international and regional exchanges of kabaddi sports, accumulate reserve talents for major international events, and meet the growing fitness needs of the general public. In its work plan for 2020, the organisation has also stated that it will hold the first ever National Open Kabaddi Tournament in 2021.

The National Kabaddi Sport Promotion Committee held the first National Kabaddi Sport Instructor Training Course on 23-25 April 2021 online. And on 12 July 2021, in Linzhou City, Henan Province, the National Kabaddi Work Conference was held, and the National Kabaddi Level 1 Referee and Level 1 Coach Training Course was held. These two events involved teachers from universities and colleges in 21 provinces and cities across the country. The event was of great significance, signalling the practical launch of promotional activities at the national level and pointing out that the participants were not only tasked with the promotion of the national level, but also the construction of the grassroots level of kabaddi teams and the sanctioning of large-scale events in the country. The establishment of the national level government department not only signifies the rise of Kabaddi in China, but also China's plan to form a national Kabaddi team to compete in the Kabaddi events at the Hangzhou Asian Games in 2022.

### **3.3 Impact of State Presence's Strategic Realignment of Sports on Kabaddi Revival**

The route of Kabaddi's spread in China is changing precisely in the interaction between state power dominating competitive sport and state power dominating people's mass fitness. After the completion of the Olympic strategy, the development of sports policy in China has moved from being a large sports nation to a strong sports nation, with policy development focusing on the fitness needs of the people. The development of sports policy has moved from a 'state-based' to a 'social-based' approach. Although the 'social orientation' is still guided by the presence of the state. However, the emphasis is on the fitness needs of the general public rather than on the needs of competitive sport in the presence of the state.

Kabaddi sport rules are simple, easy to learn and easy to operate, gameplay fun, and does not require special equipment, Kabaddi's natural advantages suitable for and in line with the fitness needs of the general public in this period of history. In the 2010 Guangzhou Asian Games, Kabaddi attracted national attention as the only competition event that China was absent from, and after the Guangzhou Asian Games in 2010, Kabaddi was promoted again and gradually developed all over China. Kabaddi associations were established, tournaments were organised, Kabaddi events were promoted all over China and so on. It is through the continuous development of Kabaddi activities throughout China that Kabaddi has gradually gained a mass base throughout the country, so much so that in 2020, a National Kabaddi Promotion Committee was set up at the national level based on the need for mass fitness.

The policy of 'State Presence' has led to a fitness environment of 'Social Presence', which in turn has led to the building of a fitness boom of 'National Mass Presence'. In this environment, Kabaddi has developed well, with the establishment of associations, tournaments and so on, forming a certain mass base. In this stage of development, due to the establishment of a mass base, the State General Administration of Sport set up the National Kabaddi Promotion Committee in order to meet the fitness needs of the general public and to ensure the healthy and sustainable development of Kabaddi. Kabaddi has undergone a transformation from 'Social and People's Presence' to 'State Presence'.

#### **4. Conclusion**

In the field of sports, the competitive nature of sports has given rise to ‘national teams’, ‘national groups’ and so on, and the sports groups representing the country are embedded in the spirit and culture of the country. Therefore, the national team of a sport not only represents the competitive level of a country, but also represents the image and culture of the country. Therefore, the government of each country and its associations and organisations will show strong ‘State Presence’ on the development of competitive sports, and government policies and systems play an important role in the development of sports, which is also one of the reasons for the rapid development of competitive sports in the world.

State power dominates the development of sports in China, mainly in the form of the presence of state power institutions, the presence of state political will, and the presence of state symbols. The introduction of kabaddi into China coincided with a critical period in which China completed its Asian Games goals and vigorously developed its Olympic strategy, as it was the Asian Games goals that led to the rise of kabaddi at the 1990 Beijing Asian Games. As China's Olympic strategy was to downplay non-Olympic sports, the kabaddi gradually fell into obscurity, and in 2008, when the Olympic strategy was achieved, China's diplomacy was no longer dependent on sports diplomacy, and the sports development strategy was gradually adjusted to the strategy of strengthening the country by providing a national fitness programme for all people. At this moment in history, when Kabaddi is being promoted again for the 2010 Asian Games in Guangzhou, the sport of Kabaddi is gradually gaining popularity in China with the rise of the national fitness craze. The trajectory of Kabaddi's spread in China has evolved along with China's sports strategy. The history of the spread of kabaddi in China is not only a presentation of the history of sports in China, but also a witness to the transformation of the demand for sports diplomacy in the state presence and the demand for national fitness in the state presence.

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