



**UNIVERSITY OF  
FACULTY OF HUMAN MOVEMENT AND  
QUALITY OF LIFE SCIENCES  
DEPARTMENT OF SPORTS  
ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT**

MASTER'S THESIS

"OLYMPIC STUDIES, OLYMPIC EDUCATION, ORGANIZATION AND  
MANAGEMENT OF OLYMPIC EVENTS"

## **THE SIZE AND NATURE OF THE SPORT SECTOR IN MAURITIUS**

Udylen Veerasamy

**Supervisor:** Vasiliki Avgerinou

Professor

Sparta, August, 2013



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## **ABSTRACT**

The researchable issue cropped up in the researcher's mind after consultation with her supervisor and a lot of observations and reflection. Being an athlete for many years and teaching physical education and sports for more than fifteen years now, he has asked himself many times a lot of questions about the whereabouts of sports in his beloved country Mauritius.

This thesis gave the researcher the opportunity to investigate the openness of the sport policy in Mauritius, i.e. what are the factors that influence our sport policy makers, the state of art of elite sport in Mauritius and the promotion of the concept of 'Sport for All' in the country. In the course of the study, it was found that the sport policy is influenced by the prevailing economic situation, by the number of medals won by our athletes at International competitions and by societal health issues.

The study moreover revealed that the Government of Mauritius indeed invests huge amount of money to promote sports and health. Nevertheless, despite all the Mauritian Government efforts to develop elite sports and to promote physical activity and health, it was observed that there was a loophole somewhere which inhibits broad participation in both recreational and competitive sport. A comparison was made with Jamaica, a developing country just like Mauritius but with a long history of successful world-class elite athletes, in order to try to find an explanation to why sport is not that prominent in Mauritius.

At the end of the thesis, the researcher suggested some recommendations for the Mauritian sport sector to boost up and become a more prolific endeavour.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

1. AGOA: Africa Growth and Opportunity Act
2. BECS: Brevet d'Etat de Cadre Sportif
3. CSR: Corporate Social Responsibility
4. GDP: Gross Domestic Product
5. Govt: Government
6. HLSU: High Level Sports Unit
7. IGFA: International Game Fish Association
8. IMF: International Monetary Fund
9. IOA: International Olympic Academy
10. IOC: International Olympic Committee
11. MNOA: Mauritius National Olympic Academy
12. MSC: Mauritius Sports Council
13. MYS: Ministry of Youth and Sports
14. NAPPA: National Action Plan on Physical Activity
15. NCD: Non-communicable disease
16. P.E: Physical Education
17. PIOJ: Planning Institute of Jamaica
18. PSC: Public Service Commission
19. RCA: Roman Catholic Aided
20. SDF: Sports Development Foundation Limited

21. SSS: State Secondary School

22. TFES: Trust Fund For Excellence in Sports

23. US: United States

24. WHO: World Health Organization

## CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Introduction

This thesis sets out to investigate the size and nature of the sports sector in the Republic of Mauritius. More specifically, the investigation seeks to examine the making of sports policy as a field of state activity and as a process involving various projects, agents and transformations. The research aim, in fact, is to explore the actual state of sport in Mauritius, the prevailing governing policies in the sector, the effectiveness of the Mauritian approach to elite sports, the efficiency of the state to promote physical activities and health, and the barriers that hinder the Mauritian in general to exercise regularly. A comparison with Jamaica, a developing country just like Mauritius will also be made to identify what are the loopholes in the Mauritian sport sector which hinder us from being as successful as the Jamaicans in sport.

Taken from a strategic relations perspective, this task demands an analysis which can account for the political, social and economic environments in which sport policies are made, and also for the structures and actors involved. Given the scope of the study and the lack of similar investigations in domestic and foreign literature, this shall prove to be a challenging undertaking.

In this chapter, the researcher outlines the background of his research and gives reasons for undertaking his research. He also states what he wishes to achieve in this context and why it is important for him to do so. Finally he describes the different foci of the research and explains the aims and purposes of his research and how he proposes to fulfil these aims and purposes.

The topic was provoked particularly by the current decline in sports performance at international level of Mauritius and the manifest loss of interest and commitment to sports by the Mauritian in general. The project reflects the author's personal involvement in events since 2000, and many years of studying the topic.

## 1.2. History of sport in Mauritius

According to Jangeer-khan et al. (1990), there is no precise record of physical activities that went on during the very early stages of Mauritian history. However, it can be said that certain activities like jumping, running, hiking, mountaineering and swimming existed as far back as when the Dutch settlers came here. Military exercises must have been there to keep the soldiers physically fit.

Around 1800, the “plan Lakanal” was adopted by the French government for the opening of a national institution which was known as “L’EcoleCentrale” in Port Louis. Children were taught gymnastics, swimming, running and jumping as this institution was functioning on the same level as the other ‘lycées’ in France.

One of the oldest institutions to provide recreation in Mauritius came into existence in 1812, when Colonel Draper founded the Mauritius Turf Club. But the first recorded sports day was that of the military personnel which was held at Réduit. In 1925, rugby was played for the first time in Mauritius and five years later the “StadeOlympique” at Curepipe was inaugurated on the 23<sup>rd</sup> November 1930. The following year on the 14<sup>th</sup> of January 1931, the first athletics championship was held between the island of Bourbon and Mauritius. The year 1931 was very fruitful because another game known as handball was introduced and the demonstration was given by a team from the German battleship “Emden” at the Rose-Hill stadium. The first annual athletic meeting was organized at the Gymkhana, Vacoas in April 1939. Some of the events were Long jump, High jump, Discus, Shot, 100yards, 220 yards, 440 yards, 880 yards, 120 yards hurdles and so on. During the Second World War there was no significant development in the field of sports as such in Mauritius, the main activities were army exercises and drills.

The British brought along with them games like Football, Volleyball, Hockey, Cricket, tennis and other. The Asian immigrants brought in GoolDanda, Wrestling, Hop Scotch, Judo among others. The indigenous activities were Lamoquecapsene, Jakana, CasseCasse Nikola, Sapsiwaille.

After the year 1950, several clubs and associations started coming up. The clubs were organized under six federations namely the Port Louis Youth Federation, the Plaines

Wilhems Urban Youth Federation, the Plaines Wilhems and Black River Youth Federation, the Northern Clubs Association, the Southern Association of Youth Clubs and the Moka Flacq Youth Federation.

In 1953, the Mauritius Sports Association was founded and it worked in close collaboration with the Ministry of Youth and Sports in order to promote all the sports practiced in Mauritius. The Ministry of Youth and Sports which came into existence on the 1<sup>st</sup> December 1969 after a reshuffling of the cabinet caters for the promotion of sports in Mauritius. It has been providing many expert coaches in various fields like, Football, Volleyball, Table Tennis, Cycling, Wrestling, Swimming and others.

According to Stokkermans (2011), Mauritius has been competing in several international meets in Football, Volleyball, Track and field etc. From 1947 till 1963 each year a regional football tournament was organized between Mauritius, Madagascar and Reunion Island called the ‘Tournoi Triangulaire’ and Mauritius came first in the first 8 competitions from 1947 till 1954.

In 1979 there were the first Indian Ocean Island Games in Reunion Island in which took part Mauritius, Reunion Island, The Seychelles Islands, Comoro Islands, The Maldives and Madagascar. In the 1<sup>st</sup> game Mauritius came fourth in Football. In athletics but the Mauritian team won a record of 16 gold medals (Stokkermans, 2011). In the 2<sup>nd</sup> game in 1985 and 6<sup>th</sup> game in 2003 both hosted by Mauritius, the Mauritians, boosted by a whole nation conquered the Gold medal in Football beating their fiercest opponent Reunion Island in the final in both games. In 1979 still in the ‘Tour de la Reunion’ a cycling competition, our patriot Gabriel Anazor came first in Reunion Island.



### 1.3. Sports in Mauritius now

The state of the Mauritian sport can be said to be satisfactory. This is because almost all summer sports have its Association or Federation in Mauritius. And almost all of them are affiliated to the International Sports body. The list of Sports Association and Federation in Mauritius are as followed:

*Table 1: List of Sports Association and Sport Federations in Mauritius (Mauritius Sports council, 2011)*

<b>Sports Association</b>	<b>Sports Federation</b>
Mauritius Athletics Association	Mauritius Basketball Federation
Mauritius Badminton Association	Mauritius Billards & Snooker Federation
Mauritius Amateur Boxing Association	Fédération Mauricienne De Boxe Française Et Disciplines Assimilées
Mauritius Football Association	Mauritius Bridge Federation
Mauritius Handball Association	Mauritius Chess Federation
Mauritius Scuba Diving Association	Mauritian Equestrian Sports Federation
Mauritius Secondary School Sports Association	Mauritius Judo JuiJitsu Federation And Associated Disciplines
Mauritius Squash Rackets Association	All Mauritius Karate Federation
Mauritius Table Tennis Association	Fédération Mauricienne De Kickboxing Et Disciplines Assimilées
Association Mauricienne De Triathlon	Mauritius Tennis Federation
Mauritius Volleyball Association	Mauritius Chess Federation

Mauritius Amateur Weightlifter's And Powerlifter's Association	Mauritius Swimming Federation
Mauritius National Wrestling And Allied Games Association	Fédération Mauricienne Des Sports Corporatifs
Mauritius Yachting Association	Mauritius Sumo Federation
Rugby Union Mauritius	Mauritius Tae Kwon Do Federation
	Mauritius Archery Federation
	Federation Mauricienne De Motocyclisme
	The Aurally Handicapped Persons Sport Federation
	The Mentally Handicapped Persons Sport Federation
	Physically Handicapped Persons Sports Federation
	Visually Handicapped Persons Sports Federation Of Mauritius
	Mauritius Golf Federation
	Mauritius Wushu Federation

Mauritian athletes have won numerous medals at regional, African and at international levels. Also the Ministry of Education and Human Resources has made it compulsory for all children attending Primary Schools (children of 6 to 11 years) and Secondary Schools (children of age 12 to 18) to have at least one period of 40 minutes of Physical Education

per week. At primary level along with physical Education, sports had not been neglected as every year there is the inter school cross country, football and handball tournament.




These competitions are organized by the Physical Education Organizers of the Ministry of Education and Human Resources. At Secondary School level, the Mauritius Secondary School Sports association organizes the different inter College competition with the collaboration of the Ministry of Sports. These competitions are well structured and organized, only students possessing a sports license are allowed to participate in these competitions. These competitions are organized first at regional level then the best in each region compete at National level.

The Mauritius Football Association is a very active one where every year there is 12 football teams competing in the first division and 12 teams in the second division and all the other registered team at the regional level. The same thing can be said about the Mauritius Volleyball Association. In both Football and Volleyball the winning teams represent the country in the African continent.

Mauritius first participated at the Olympic Games in 1984, and has sent athletes to compete in every Summer Olympic Games since then. The nation has never participated in the Winter Olympic Games. Mauritius also supported the American-led boycott of the 1980 Summer Olympics.

As of 2008, Mauritius was awarded a bronze Olympic medal. At the 2008 Beijing Games, Bruno Julie secured Mauritius' first ever Olympic medal in the bantamweight boxing semi-finals.

*Table 2: Table showing list of Mauritian Olympic medallists (Mauritius Sports council, 2011)*

Medal	Name	Games	Sport	Event
 Bronze	Bruno Julie	 2008 Beijing	 Boxing	Bantamweight

## 1.4. Mauritius geographic situation

Mauritius, officially the Republic of Mauritius is an island nation in the Indian Ocean about 2,000 kilometres (1,200 mi) off the south east coast of the African continent. The country includes the islands of Mauritius, Rodrigues, 560 kilometres (350 mi) east of the principal island, the islands of Agaléga and the Saint Brandon. The islands of the Republic of Mauritius form part of the Mascarene Islands, which also include the neighbouring island of Réunion. The area of the country is 2040 km<sup>2</sup> and its capital is Port Louis (Government of Mauritius, 2012).



*Fig 1: Location of Mauritius*

## 1.5. Jamaica geographic situation



*Fig 2: location of Jamaica*

Jamaica is an island country situated in the Caribbean Sea, comprising the third-largest island of the Greater Antilles (Cesky, 2005). The island, 10,990 square kilometres (4,240 sq mi) in area, lies about 145 kilometres (90 mi) south of Cuba, and 191 kilometres (119 mi) west of Hispaniola, the island containing the nation-states of Haiti and the -Dominican Republic. Jamaica is the fifth-largest island country in the Caribbean. The indigenous people, the Taíno, called it Xaymaca in Arawakan, meaning the "Land of Wood and Water" or the "Land of Springs" (The United Confederation of Taíno People, 2007).

## 1.6. Comparison of Jamaica to Mauritius economically and in terms of sports achievement

Indeed, Jamaica resembles Mauritius in many ways. For instance, both were former colony of the British Empire and gain their independence in the 1960's from the United Kingdom. The total nominal GDP for 2011 for both countries was estimated around \$12 billion (IMF,

2012). The two countries are islands with a small population, about 1.2 million and 2.8 million respectively for Mauritius and Jamaica.

Nevertheless sport is an integral part of national life in Jamaica and the island's athletes tend to perform to a standard well above what might ordinarily be expected of such a small country, in contrast to Mauritius which struggles to find sportsmen of international level. While the most popular local sport is cricket, on the international stage Jamaicans have tended to do particularly well at track and field athletics.

Over the past six decades Jamaica has produced dozens of world class sprinters including Olympic and World Champion Usain Bolt, world record holder in the 100m for men at 9.58s, and 200m for men at 19.19s. Other noteworthy Jamaican sprinters include Arthur Wint – the first Jamaican Olympic Gold Medallist, Donald Quarrie – Olympic Champion and former 200m world record holder, Roy Anthony Bridge, part of the International Olympic Committee, Merlene Ottey, Delloreen Ennis-London, Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce – the current World and Olympic 100m Champion, Kerron Stewart, Aleen Bailey, Juliet Cuthbert, Veronica Campbell-Brown, Sherone Simpson, Brigitte Foster-Hylton, Yohan Blake, Herb McKenley, George Rhoden—Olympic Gold Medalist, Deon Hemmings – Olympic Gold Medalist as well as former 100m world record holder and 2x 100m Olympic finalist and Gold medal winner in the men's 2008 Olympic 4x100m Asafa Powell.



*Fig 3: Usain Bolt*

Jamaica has also produced several world class amateur and professional boxers including Trevor Berbick and Mike McCallum. First-generation Jamaican athletes have continued to make a significant impact on the sport internationally, especially in the United Kingdom where the list of top British boxers born in Jamaica or of Jamaican parents includes Lloyd Honeyghan, Chris Eubank, Audley Harrison, David Haye, Lennox Lewis and Frank Bruno.

Table 3: Jamaican Olympic medallists (IOC, 2012)

Games	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
1948 London	1	2	0	3
1952 Helsinki	2	3	0	5
1956 Melbourne	0	0	0	0
1960 Rome	<i>as part of the British West Indies</i>			
1964 Tokyo	0	0	0	0
1968 Mexico City	0	1	0	1
1972 Munich	0	0	1	1
1976 Montreal	1	1	0	2
1980 Moscow	0	0	3	3
1984 Los Angeles	0	1	2	3
1988 Seoul	0	2	0	2
1992 Barcelona	0	3	1	4
1996 Atlanta	1	3	2	6
2000 Sydney	0	6	3	9
2004 Athens	2	1	2	5
2008 Beijing	6	3	2	11
2012 London	4	4	4	12
2016 Rio de Janeiro	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>67</b>



Fig 4: Bruno Julie medallist Bruno Julie who won bronze in boxing during the 2008 Beijing Games.

Mauritius production of athletes is quite poor compared to Jamaica. We produced only three athletes so far who made it to an Olympic final. They are Jonathan Chimier, who came 8<sup>th</sup> at the long jump Olympic final in Athens, Stephan Buckland who crossed the line 4<sup>th</sup> on the 200m final at the Athens Olympics as well and our only Olympic

### 1.7. Budget allocated to sport by the state

Concerning the amount of money that is invested in sports there is a great disparity between the two countries. While the whole budget for sports in Mauritius for the year 2013 is only \$14.5 million (Ministry of Finance, 2012), that of Jamaica is \$340.7 million. Along with the \$340.7 million given to sports in Jamaica the Sports Development Foundation (SDF) has also provided an annual average of \$57.0 million in project funding

over the period 1999–2013 for the development of sport infrastructure and facilities island-wide, as well as over \$65 million annually in funding support for national sport associations. So in terms of investment concerning sports although Jamaica is a developing country just like Mauritius, the government is investing massively in terms of money and infrastructure as compared to Mauritius. The result is obvious. While Mauritius has won only one bronze Olympic medal in total, Jamaica has a total of 67 medals (17 gold, 30 silver and 20 bronze). Of these 67 medals won over the years, 11 medals (4 gold, 3 silver and 2 bronze) were won in the 2008 Summer Olympic Games and 12 medals (4 gold, 4 silver and 4 bronze) in the 2012 Summer Olympic Games. So after having invested heavily in 2007 (from a budget of 10.2 million dollars in 1990/1991 to 340.7 in 2007/2008) Jamaica has won 23 of its total medals so one third of its total medals.

*Table 4: Summary of comparison between Mauritius and Jamaica*

	<b>Mauritius</b>	<b>Jamaica</b>
<b>Population</b>	1.2 million	2.8 million
<b>Size</b>	2,040 km <sup>2</sup>	10,990 km <sup>2</sup>
<b>Official Language</b>	English	English
<b>National Language</b>	Creole (Mauritian Patois)	Creole (Jamaican Patois)
<b>Independence year from UK</b>	1968	1962
<b>Total Nominal GDP</b>	US\$ 11.26 billion	US\$ 14.44 billion
<b>No. of Olympics</b>	8	17
<b>No. of Olympic medals</b>	1 (1 bronze)	67 (17 gold, 30 silver, 20 bronze)
<b>Investment in sport from the state</b>	\$14.5 million	\$340.7 million

## 1.8. Research Focus

The purpose of the study is to provide understanding of the state of art of Mauritian sport. Actually, no such study has been made so far. In this thesis, the researcher will analyse the sport policy prevailing in Mauritius and establish similarities and differences with that of Jamaica a developing country sharing several common features with Mauritius.

The primary questions of the research are:

1. What are the contributory catalysts to the sports agenda in Mauritius?
2. What is the Mauritian approach to elite sport development?
3. What is the Mauritian approach to grass root level sport people?
4. What are the developments in the promotion of physical activity and health nationwide?
5. What are the fallacies of the existing sport structure?
6. What are the international or global factors that influence the national sport policy?

The secondary questions of the research are:

1. What can be done to make sports more popular?
2. How can Mauritius raise its standard in sports at international level?
3. Why is Jamaica so successful in sports, in contrast to Mauritius?



## **1.9. Significance of research**

The researcher has observed that the national level of performance in sport as well as the number of people practising sports is decreasing alarmingly despite all the measures and structures put in place by the state. Social practice of sports is gradually disappearing, leading progressively to the extinction of the sports culture in Mauritius. The researcher will investigate the size and nature of sports in Mauritius, with the strong conviction that proper situational analysis of the sport policy prevailing will allow us to gain a better understanding of the current sport sector situation and consequently identify the eventual loopholes in our policies.

If the weaknesses of our sport sector are found and delved properly, then the culture of sports in our society may be revalorised. Through the perception of people involved in the sports field, this thesis aims at bringing about recommendations of how to make sports a more popular endeavour in the Mauritian society and how to produce successful elite athletes.

## **1.10. Structure of Dissertation**

A six chapter structure has been adopted in order to cater with the numerous issues pertaining to our research “The size and nature of the sport sector in Mauritius.”

### **Chapter 1:**

Chapter one introduces the research topic and background and outlines the path taken by the researcher to answer the research questions and the purpose and significance of the research.

### **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

Chapter two reviews the literature that underpins the arguments of the study. This review explores the characteristics of sports policies, the conceptualisation of elite sport development models and theoretical points in the promotion of physical activity and health promotion.

### **Chapter 3: Situation Analysis of Sport in Mauritius**

Chapter three provides an overview of Sport in Mauritius. More specifically, the author examines the Mauritian approach to elite sport and the Mauritian National action plan on physical activity 2011-2014.

### **Chapter 4: Methodology**

Chapter four explains the methodology employed for the research. It discusses the ontological and epistemological justification for the overall methodology of the research. The chapter then describes the multiple methodological approaches undertaken and the associated data gathering procedures.

### **Chapter 5: Analysis of Results**

Chapter five will explore the steps that go into presenting, analysing and interpreting data pertaining to our field of study.

### **Chapter 6: Conclusion & Recommendations**

Chapter six concludes the thesis and comes up with recommendations to make the sports sector more attractive to the Mauritian community and to produce successful elite athletes.

## CHAPTER 2 – LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1. Introduction

Each country faces a challenge when it comes to developing sports policies; the dilemma is how to balance between the demands of elite athletes and that of Sport for All. Franks et al. (1988) argued that to perform at the level of international elite competition

*“... an athlete must now train full-time and must be supported by a retinue of coaches, trainers, logistical staff, and others. The myths of amateurism, individual achievement, and equal opportunity still have power, but the reality is that Olympic and other international success requires an expensive, bureaucratic, and highly technical elite athlete delivery system. Some countries have come to terms with this reality better than others”.*

In many democracies, this paradox is clearly manifested in government struggles to balance commitments to this expensive, bureaucratic, and highly technical elite athlete delivery system, while at the same time attempting to meet more democratic, social equity goals related to the provision of sport and recreation opportunities at grass roots levels. While this paradox/tension is evident in communist countries, most of the liberal democracies face pressure from their electorates to balance the sometimes conflicting requirements of elite athletes and grass roots level participants.

The chapter is structured as follows. Firstly, we shall examine the particular characteristics of the sport policy sector. Secondly, we shall review the different elite sport development models. The section coming after shall describe the main theoretical points involved in the promotion of physical activity. The ensuing topics in this chapter shall build the theoretical framework of our research.

## **2.2. Characteristics of the sport policy sector**

According to Houlihan (2000), there are three key characteristics that distinguish the sport policy sector. These are:

- i) openness
- ii) general weakness of the sport policy community and
- iii) the increasing internationalisation of many aspects of sport policy-making (Houlihan, 2000).

These three characteristics are discussed in turn.

### **2.2.1. Openness**

The characteristic of “openness” refers to the “vulnerabilities” of the sport policy agenda to intervention by non-sports interests and policy sectors (Roche, 1993: 77). Such openness is the result of a number of other features of the sport policy sector, including instrumentality, administrative dispersal, variable salience and recency.

Sport, as a “policy instrument” or, in other words, perceived as a means rather than an end in itself (Houlihan, 2000b: 4) is a utility adopted by many governments. For example, sport has been, and continues to be, extolled as a means to confront social and political problems surrounding juvenile crime, cardio-vascular health problems, low international prestige and economic development. The instrumental use of sport in the Labour's social exclusion agenda is, arguably, the latest and most high profile exemplar in this context in the UK (Oakley & Green, 2001b). On the other hand, in Canada, the deliberations underlying the Canadian sport policy reveal evidence of the emphasis put upon the value of sport in helping to alleviate health problems (Oakley & Green, 2001b).

With regard to ‘administrative dispersal’, Houlihan (2000b: 4) argues that no policy area can be delineated with precision. The UK sport policy sector has been characterised by administrative disunity, leading Roche (1993: 91) to conclude that “structural disorganisation and internal conflict are at least long-standing and probably endemic”. This pervasive administrative dispersal or disunity is not only apparent between central government departments, but also between different levels of government, as local government has a vital role to play in delivering sporting opportunities across a broad spectrum of services.

Moreover, the involvement/influence of national governing bodies of sport and, increasingly, international sporting organisations/federations have also to be factored into the equation. Such influences are apparent at both governmental (for example, the African Union) and non-governmental levels (for example, the International Olympic Committee - IOC). In relation to sport policy, the characteristic of administrative dispersal, therefore, raises a number of empirical questions for this study. For example, from a policy networks perspective (Marsh & Rhodes, 1992b) and/or the advocacy coalition framework (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1999), such questions might include the following: within the broader sport policy sector, can we identify discrete policy communities or advocacy coalitions within the “narrower” sport development policy subsystem? If so, is it possible to discern which of these communities/coalitions dominates and is it possible to identify the key protagonists therein?

Claus Offe's (1975, 1984), a leading political sociologist of Marxist orientation maintained that the crucial feature of the state is the way it is enmeshed in the contradictions of capitalism, arguing, essentially, that the state is in a structurally contradictory position. On the one hand, the state must sustain the process of accumulation and private appropriation of resources; equally, it must preserve belief in itself as the impartial arbiter of class interests, thereby legitimating its power (Offe, 1984). Moreover, Offe argues that the institutional separation of state and economy means that the state is dependent upon resource flows from the organisation of profitable production. As Held has argued (1996: 223, original emphasis), given that, in general, it is beyond the power of the state to organise resources from the accumulation process, there is an "institutional self-interest of the state' and an interest of all those who exercise state power, to maintain the strength of the economy.

Offe's work retains intrinsic inconsistencies if the aim is to understand better the state/group relationships underpinning modern liberal democratic states; in this case, relationships within and between the sport policy sector, the sport development policy subsystem and the potentially overlapping interests of other policy sectors, most notably, education and health. For example, Offe has been criticised for underestimating the capacity of political representatives and administrators to be effective agents of political strategy. The propensity to illustrate the development and limitations of state policy by

reference to functional imperatives, namely, the necessity to satisfy capital and labour, accumulation and legitimation, plays down the interaction between government and state agencies, and thus does not allow for a full understanding of the “diverse patterns of state activity in liberal capitalist societies” (Held, 1996: 226).

A further feature of the characteristic of openness is that of sport's “variable salience”, especially with regard to government intervention. Houlihan (2000) notes that this is ‘highly variable, relying more on exogenous factors such as crisis for its elevation on the public agenda.’ This view can be related to Chalip's (1995) notion of focus events that can act as significant catalysts for political action. For example, in the case of elite sport in the UK, the relatively disappointing medal tally at the 1996 Atlanta Olympic Games has been cited as a contributory catalyst for the implementation of the UK Sports Institute and the setting-up of the World Class Performance programme for elite athletes (DCMS, 2000; Sport England, 1999; Theodoraki, 1999). In Canada, such an event would be the 1988 Seoul Olympic Games and the Ben Johnson drugs affair that led to a number of inquiries into the type of values/belief systems underlying the Canadian sport delivery system (Blackhurst et al., 1992; Canada, 1992; Dubin, 1990).

The final feature of the characteristic of openness is that of ‘recency’, which refers to the argument that, in the UK the development of government involvement in sport has for much of its history been chaotic (Houlihan, 1997). Consequently, although Horne et al. (1999) suggest that there has been a long-term structural relationship in the UK between the state and sport at local, regional, national and international levels, they also argue that “this involvement may not have taken the explicit form of intervention until the latter half of the twentieth century”. Sport can hence be said to sometimes not only be in the process of adapting from its traditional, functionally-oriented administrative system but it also lacks a tradition of sustained policy involvement (Roche, 1993).

### **2.2.2. General weakness of the sport policy community**

The second major characteristic of the sport policy sector is the 'general weakness of the sport policy community' (Houlihan 2000b: 5); a characteristic clearly related to the consequences of variable salience and recency discussed above. Indeed, Houlihan (2000a: 178-179) contends that the notion of a sport policy community is better conceived of as a loose issue network rather than a mature policy community. Whether Houlihan is correct in his line of reasoning remains an empirical question for this research through a pertinent meso-level theoretical lens. However, it is noteworthy that, within a discussion surrounding the vulnerability of the sport policy sector to spill over from adjacent policy sectors, Houlihan has argued that the elite sport development policy community can greatly strengthen its voice and influence over government.

### **2.2.3. The increasing internationalisation of sport policy making**

The final characteristic of the sport policy sector is the increasing internationalisation of many aspects of sport policy-making in the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. Clearly, the increasing influence of business interests is significant here, as is the increase in transnational forums for sport policy-making; an instructive example of the latter is the International Forum on Elite Sport, which convened its inaugural meeting in Sydney in 1999 and brought together 53 actors from 17 countries to discuss, inter alia, the essential factors in a successful elite programme and the organisation and funding of elite sport. Therefore, issues that have been habitually framed within a domestic perspective are now increasingly being addressed within an international milieu. For example, Houlihan (2000b: 6) argues that the selection of sports to benefit from public subsidy is often determined by their inclusion in the Olympic programme, rather than by other domestic factors such as national popularity or relevance to national sport development strategy.

Elsewhere, Hay (2002) has argued that, with regard to sport and the role of the state, there is a distinction to be made between internationalisation and globalisation.

The conclusion of Hay argument is that the globalising pressures affecting sport are located within a pattern of international governance within which the state and international governmental organisations play a central role. Moreover, the concept of globalisation is one that has been highlighted by Marsh (1995a) and Marsh & Stoker (1995a) as particularly salient to political science and the study of policy processes. In developing their argument,

Marsh & Stoker (1995a: 297) have much in common with Houlihan (2001), in arguing that “it becomes less acceptable to study in isolation the experience of particular countries. In a world in which political actors and interests are experiencing the impact of globalisation, then political science cannot be immune from such forces”. Consequently, under these conditions both politicians and the electorate are more able to observe the policy problems faced, and the solutions adopted, by other countries and, as Marsh & Stoker (1995a: 295-296) have also noted, “This is reflected in the growing interest that politicians, and political scientists, have taken in policy transfer”.

These are interesting observations, not least for the reference to policy transfer. Policy transfer (Dolowitz & Marsh, 1996; Evans & Davies, 1999; Stone, 1999) can be viewed as the broader concept within which the more specific concepts of 'policy oriented learning' (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1999) and “lesson-drawing' (Rose, 1991a, 1991b, 1993) can be delineated. It is important to signpost the significance of these concepts, which is further developed below within the discussion of meso-level approaches, as they may prove to be important variables for understanding and explaining policy change in relation to elite sport policy developments in Mauritius.

### **2.3. Conceptualising elite sport development models**

A central theme running through the evolution of successful elite sport development models is the notion of a strategic, planned and co-ordinated approach. As a former director of the Australian Institute of Sport (AIS) has argued, “Passion alone is not enough anymore. You need to have the infrastructure, the support and the strategic approach at the national level to achieve results” (de Castella, 1994).

Although the increasing phenomenon of what might be termed commercial or “market models” of elite athlete development is acknowledged - for example, the academy-based schemes in soccer in the UK or the High Level Performance Centre (HLPC) in Jamaica (athletics), Mauritius (athletics) or Malaysia (badminton) - this study's focus is on the development of models funded primarily through public sector bodies. It is also acknowledged, however, that the dividing line between such models is becoming increasingly blurred.



For example, funding for youth soccer development in England is now part-funded by Sport England, a quasi-public sector organisation and the HLPCs are funded mostly by the respective affiliated international federation.

With the above caveats in mind with regard to different types of models, Fisher & Borms (1990: 9) have argued that, although many countries have discovered the benefits which accrue from encouraging high levels of sporting achievement, the trends in performance levels probably mean that success in Olympic or world events will become increasingly unlikely, unless the haphazard emergence of talent becomes more organised. Two key components of any elite sport development model are talent selection/identification and talent development and it is important to note that these two components of talent promotion should not be treated as discrete entities (Fisher & Borms, 1990: 10; Abbott et al., 2002). In other words, they are complementary and interdependent and should be considered as such when devising models or schemes to promote excellence in sport.

### **2.3.1. Systematic and asystematic models**

Fisher & Borms (1990: 37) identify what might be termed a “dualism” of talent selection and development: the “systematic” and “asystematic” models. In the latter, a talented young person might emerge and demonstrate potential for sport at an elite level but the structure and organisation for sport is inadequate to help develop this potential. Fisher & Borms (1990: 37) suggest that this model is typical of the situation in many developing countries, where issues such as basic nutrition and health care exacerbate the difficulties involved in developing elite athletes. With regard to the systematic model, this is further sub-divided into:

- a) 'system -related' models, where private or state organisations actively search for talent in an organised, systematic manner through testing or competitive procedures, and
- b) 'person-related' models, where talented individuals emerge from a mass base premised on, for example, Sport for All principles, with structures available to then nurture the talented athlete.

Fisher & Borms (1990: 37) suggest that, to a greater or lesser extent, the latter has been the traditional model for many countries in their development of young sporting talent.

## 2.4. State of art in physical activity and health promotion

This section describes the main theoretical points involved in the promotion of physical activity.

### 2.4.1. Physical activity and health

Nowadays, sedentary lifestyles are very common in our society. People spend almost half of their daily time in sitting positions at work. Once at home they are usually too tired to undertake physical activity of any sort. The time spent sitting behind a desk is not the only characteristic of our sedentary society. Most people will not adopt a more active lifestyle during their holidays either. They will usually not invest this time in outdoor physical activities (*e.g.* riding a bicycle, swimming, playing with their children, hiking, trekking or simply walking). As mentioned before, people tend to adopt sedentary leisure activities such as reading, playing computer games, surfing on the internet or watching television (Cavill *et al.*, 2006).

Sedentary lifestyles have serious consequences on public health. Around 600,000 deaths per year are attributed to the effects of physical inactivity in the European region (5-10% of total mortality rate depending on the country (Cavill *et al.*, 2006).

The definition of physical activity (PA) adopted here includes everyday movement such as walking and climbing stairs, while exercise will refer to structured physical activity (Biddle, 1994). A more standard definition considers physical activity “any bodily movement, produced by skeletal muscles, that results in energy expenditure” (Carpensen *et al.*, 1985). One can perform physical activity while carrying out domestic duties, transporting oneself (*e.g.* cycling to work), during leisure-time (*e.g.* doing sports or conditioning exercises) and while at work (*e.g.* climbing stairs or when one performs manual tasks) (WHO-Europe, 2007). In general, one could say that normal and simple activities such as walking, cycling, climbing stairs, manual labour, swimming, hiking, gardening, recreational sport and dancing are the main sources of health-enhancing physical activities (WHO-Europe, *op.cit.*).

Despite this fact, around 17% of the world population over 15 years of age is sedentary, while 31% to 51% perform physical activity below recommended levels (*i.e.* below 2.4 hours per week of moderate physical activities) (WHO, 2002).

### **2.4.2. Recommendations for maintaining good health**

The World Health Organization (WHO) Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health (2004, p.7) describes the recommended amount of physical activity required to keep an adult healthy:

“It is recommended that individuals engage in adequate levels of physical activity throughout their lives. Different types and amounts of physical activity are required for different health outcomes: at least 30 minutes of regular, moderate-intensity physical activity on most days reduces the risk of cardiovascular disease and diabetes, colon cancer and breast cancer. Muscle strengthening and balance training can reduce falls and increase functional status among older adults. More activity may be required for weight control.”

This recommendation was first proposed in 1995 by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention and by the American College of Sports Medicine (Pate *et al.*, 1995), and differs from the previous guidelines that were based on the amount of activity needed for developing and maintaining cardio respiratory fitness (American College of Sports Medicine, 1990). This change was probably motivated by the fact that less strenuous levels of physical activity are more likely to be performed by the normal population than the more structured, vigorous-intensity prescription suggested in previous guidelines (Welk, 2002).

### **2.4.3. Intensity of physical activity**

Estimating the intensity of physical activity required to maintain health is no easy task. First of all, the total amount of caloric expenditure associated with physical activity depends on the amount of muscle mass producing the bodily movements, as well as on the intensity, duration and frequency of the muscular contractions. Moreover, this may vary considerably from individual to individual, as well as over time for the same individual (Carpensen *et al.*, 1985). Health status is one important factor to take into consideration when administrating physical activity. The same exercise given to improve or maintain the flexibility of a person with arthritis will require a different intensity when applied to a gymnast. Similarly, the amount of effort made by an individual may vary widely depending on the type of activity being performed and on his/her physical capacity. Running is of higher intensity than brisk walking, and a young fit individual will find it easier to walk at a higher pace than an older and less fit person (Cavill *et al.*, 2006).

In general, one can say that for most inactive people brisk walking is considered a moderate-intensity physical activity. However, for active and fit individuals fast walking or slow jogging is needed to raise heartbeat rate and to leave them feeling warm and slightly out of breath, which are typically reactions for moderate-intensity activities. In the same way, vigorous-intensity physical activity usually makes people sweat and feel out of breath. While moderate-intensity activity increases body metabolism by 3 to 6 times the resting energy expenditure, vigorous-intensity activity raises the metabolism by at least six times (Welk, 2002). Physical activities leading to increase in body metabolism by less than 3 times (or those leading to a heart rate which is under 50% of the maximal), such as stair descent and slow walking, are considered low-intensity activity (Eves & Webb, 2006; Murphy, 2004).

#### **2.4.4. Health benefits of physical activity**

Health benefits of physical activity depend both on the intensity and on the kind of exercise practiced. There is evidence that the performance of aerobic activity promotes the prevention of several diseases (Cavill *et al.*, 2006; Kokkinos, 2008; Schüle, 2006). Regular aerobic training improves blood pressure and cholesterol levels, which in turn reduce the risk of cardiovascular problems (Cavill *et al.*, *idem*; Kokkinos, *idem*). Associating aerobic training with a diet of low calorie intake helps to maintain body weight and further prevent cardiovascular diseases and diabetes type 2 (Pritchard *et al.*, 1997; WHO-Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health, 2004). Anaerobic training, on the other hand, increases bone density and promotes stability while standing or walking (Cavill *et al.*, 2006). In this way, strength, flexibility and balance exercises help to avoid hip fractures by preventing falls and osteoporosis, especially among older people. Finally, regular performance of physical activity of any kind promotes several psychological benefits. Evidence suggests that physical activity affects psychological well-being by reducing symptoms of depression, stress and anxiety (Cavill *et al. op.cit.*; NHS, 2008).

*Table 5: Health benefits due to physical activity*

<b>Health problems</b>	<b>Active lifestyle</b>
Cardiovascular diseases	50% less risk
Diabetes type 2	30% less risk
Colon cancer	40-50% less risk
Breast cancer	30-40% less risk for postmenopausal women
Prostate cancer	Possibly 10-30% less risk for individuals engaged in vigorous exercises
Lung cancer	30-40% less risk
Hip fractures due reported falls	Reduced risk
Osteoporosis	Reduced risk
Depression, anxiety, stress	Reduced risk
Obesity / overweight	Reduction in weight gain
Back pain	Possible preventive effect and a better rehabilitation outcome after pain incidents
Cognition performance	Better results associated with aerobic activities

Interestingly, physical fitness is also associated with cognitive performance. A cohort study investigated the relationship between physical fitness and intelligence performance in a sample of over 1 million Swedish men (Aberg *et al.*, 2009). These results were associated with school and professional achievements, as well as with the socioeconomic status attained later in life. Cardiovascular fitness, measured by ergometer cycling, was positively associated with intelligence. Moreover, the changes in cardiovascular fitness taking place between 15 and 18 years of age predicted the cognitive performance at 18 years of age. Finally, cardiovascular fitness at the age of 18 years predicted educational achievements later in life. It is important to note, however, that muscle strength was not associated with cognitive performance (Aberg *et al.*, *op.cit.*). A brief summary of the health benefits resulting from an active life style is presented in Table -1.

#### **2.4.5. Environmental issues and its impact in physical activity practice**

During the last 15 years health promotion institutions have increasingly emphasised the role of the environment in the adoption of active behaviour (NHS, 2008; WHO, 2007). This notion has been based on the idea that it may be difficult for a person to become active if the surrounding environment, both urban and natural, does not contribute to this behaviour. Thus, promoting a more active lifestyle should include basic infrastructure modifications in the transport systems, schools, workplaces and public open facilities (NHS, 2008).

In the last 30 years the distances that have been walked or ridden by bicycles have decreased by around 23% (Cavill *et al.*, 2006; NHS, *op.cit.*). One reason for this drop might

lie on the existing network of roads, routes and paths which make walking or cycling a difficult task. Therefore, in addition to making roads and streets more pedestrian and cyclist friendly, one should widen pavements and introduce new cycle paths. The adoption of these procedures is likely to contribute to the WHO goals for the year of 2015, which aim at increasing the proportion of trips made by bicycle or walking: from 10 to 20% for adults, and from 40 to 60% for children and adolescents (WHO, 2007). Furthermore, the infrastructure of schools and workplaces influence the physical activity habits of their users. Strategies to encourage the use of active locomotion include providing convenient, safe and attractive access to staircases. These should be well-decorated and strategically positioned in order to reinforce their use (NHS, *op.cit.* and Cavill *et al.*, *op.cit.*; The Toronto Charter for Physical Activity, 2010).

Finally, living or working near public open spaces may favour the performance of physical activity during leisure time. Public spaces offer a green and calm atmosphere, which encourages outdoor physical activity (Cavill *et al.*, 2006). Another way to increase the use of these spaces is by providing good accessibility by public transport or by bicycle.

In conclusion, there are many variables which may be related to physical activity behaviour. First, characteristics linked to the individual influence the motivation, confidence and intention to exercise. Second, the intensity and frequency and type of exercises during intervention programs need to be planned in order to encourage adherence. Finally, the surrounding environment plays an important role in the personal decision to become active. Some studies defend the hypothesis that the greatest challenge is not exercise adoption but its adherence. The next section will address issues related to exercise adherence.

#### **2.4.6. Barriers to physical activity**

The study of the barriers that prevent people from exercising has a crucial importance to public health since it may help to understand why some people are able to maintain active behaviour while others are reluctant to adopt it. Therefore, studying the barriers may offer ideas on how to deal with adherence problems. One of the most reported barriers for adherence to exercise programs is the lack of time due to job and family responsibilities (Iverson *et al.*, 1985; Trost *et al.*, 2002). Both sedentary and active individuals report lack of time as a barrier to exercise. Intriguing, however, is that active people did not consider this factor as a justification for inactivity. This suggests that “lack of time” actually reflects lack of interest or inadequate motivation to be active (Dishman *et al.*, 1985; Ljubic *et al.*, 2006).

Motivation may increase when exercises are performed in groups (Häkkinen *et al.*, 2005; Pahmeier, 2004). A study comparing group versus individualised exercise programs found dropout rates of 18.2% and 52.5%, respectively (Pahmeier, 2004). It is possible that group sessions promote a more intense interaction among participants, which might in turn increase the social support and the enjoyment while performing physical activity (Pahmeier, 2004; Kaewthummanukul *et al.*, 2006). Perceived barriers to perform exercises usually lead to physical inactivity and to low adherence to physical activity programs (CDC, 1996).

## **CHAPTER 3 – SITUATION ANALYSIS OF SPORT IN MAURITIUS**

### **3.1. Introduction**

This chapter shall make a situational analysis of sport in Mauritius. We shall in a first instance consider the Mauritian approach to elite sport development. Then in the following section, we shall discuss the Mauritian National Action Plan on Physical Activity 2011-2014, its goals and vision. Within the same section, we shall compare the proportionality of mortality due to Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) between Mauritius and those of Jamaica and UK.

### **3.2. Mauritian approach to elite sport development**

Consideration to elite sport in Mauritius is a quite recent phenomenon. Formerly, i.e. from 1969, the year of our independence till the early 20's, the state policy did not lay much importance to elite sport. However, in the recent decade the Government started investing more than ever in elite sports than it used to do.

While in western countries 'Sport for All' is regarded as a foundation to promote elite sport, in Mauritius, the Ministry of Sports focuses all its efforts and the lion part of its budget in the promotion of elite sports. Grass root level sport is mostly the concern of the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life. The latter institution being more concerned about health rather than elite sports can in no way provide a pool to identify young talents. In the following paragraphs we shall discuss two instances set by the Ministry of Youth & Sports to promote elite sports.

#### **3.2.1. Trust Fund for Excellence in Sports (TFES)**

The TFES was founded by the Ministry of Sports in 2008. It is now a fully functional body working under the aegis of the Ministry. The TFES has a sport-academic project which aims at offering adapted pedagogical and technical support to promising Mauritian athletes so as to provide them the best chance to success. The Chief Executive of the TFES, Michael Glover in his opening speech during the launching of the body, said



“The TFES project provides to young talented athletes a professional support taking into consideration the respect of equilibrium between sport, studies and primordial values such as fair play and refusal to doping. TFES offers a real opportunity to young Mauritian sports persons who dream of making international careers.” (Group Ciel, 2008)

The Budget 2012 makes provision for the Trust Fund for Excellence in Sports (TFES) to extend its mandate in training and empowering young sports men and women. The number of beneficiaries was 20 in 2008 and 2009. In 2011, the number of athletes benefiting from the TFES services passed to 80. This year, 2013, the programme has been extended to 250 athletes while the disciplines covered increases from initially 2 sports to today 12 different disciplines. (Ministry of Finance, 2013)

In a view to nurturing the talents of young sports men and women, the national Budget 2012 allocated Rs.4.5 million (approximately \$150,000) for awarding six scholarships annually to promising athletes to train overseas. These scholarships are administered by the TFES and cover living expenses and coaching fees abroad (Ministry of Youth and Sports, 2012).

Besides the scholarships allocation, the TFES has a budget envelope of Rs.12.4 million (approximately \$413,000) according to the budget 2012 (Ministry of Finance, 2012). The TFES also benefits from financial agreements with some private companies that substantially contribute to the organisation in the order of Rs.6 million altogether (approximately \$300,000) (Ministry of Youth and Sports, 2012).

The TFES fund makes provision also for the setting up of the Mauritius Schools Football League which organises inter-school tournaments among secondary schools on Saturdays thus providing leisure and sport opportunities.

### 3.2.2. Ministry of Sports – High-Level Sport Unit (HSLU) Scheme

The HLSU scheme is a result-oriented system which was introduced in 2002. It is a monthly allowance granted to an elite athlete who has recorded an outstanding performance in an international competition. The elite athlete should equally have the required potential to improve and reach higher levels of performance in line with the target set within a given period of time (Ministry of Youth and Sports, 2012). Financial assistance of high level athletes is based on the performance in his or her sport event at the regional level at least. The number of high level athletes thus may vary every quarter. Table 1 shows the total monthly financial assistance to high level athletes by sports discipline and month for the year 2012.

**Table 6: Total monthly financial assistance to high level athletes by sports discipline and month, 2012 (High Level Sport Unit, Ministry of Youth & Sports, 2012)**

Month	Financial assistance to high level athletes by sports discipline (Rs)												Total (Rs)
	Athletics	Tennis	Badminton	Swimming	Table Tennis	Cycling	Boxing	Judo	Weight lifting	Beach Volley	Triathlon	Kick boxing	
January	49,000	8,000	6,000	17,000	8,000	13,000	61,000	14,000	4,000	8,000	7,000	9,000	204,000
February	49,000	8,000	6,000	17,000	8,000	13,000	61,000	14,000	4,000	8,000	7,000	9,000	204,000
March	49,000	8,000	6,000	17,000	8,000	13,000	61,000	14,000	4,000	8,000	7,000	9,000	204,000
April	43,000	8,000	6,000	13,000	8,000	13,000	51,000	14,000	4,000	8,000	7,000	9,000	184,000
May	43,000	8,000	6,000	13,000	8,000	13,000	51,000	14,000	4,000	8,000	7,000	9,000	184,000
June	43,000	8,000	6,000	13,000	8,000	13,000	51,000	14,000	4,000	8,000	7,000	9,000	184,000
July	47,000	8,000	8,000	15,000	8,000	13,000	51,000	23,000	4,000	8,000	7,000	9,000	201,000
August	47,000	8,000	8,000	15,000	8,000	13,000	51,000	23,000	4,000	8,000	7,000	9,000	201,000
September	47,000	8,000	8,000	15,000	8,000	13,000	51,000	23,000	4,000	8,000	7,000	9,000	201,000
October	44,000	8,000	8,000	15,000	4,000	11,000	43,000	20,000	4,000	8,000	5,000	9,000	179,000
November	44,000	8,000	8,000	15,000	4,000	11,000	43,000	20,000	4,000	8,000	5,000	9,000	179,000
December	44,000	8,000	8,000	15,000	4,000	11,000	43,000	20,000	4,000	8,000	5,000	9,000	179,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>549,000</b>	<b>96,000</b>	<b>84,000</b>	<b>180,000</b>	<b>84,000</b>	<b>150,000</b>	<b>618,000</b>	<b>213,000</b>	<b>48,000</b>	<b>96,000</b>	<b>78,000</b>	<b>108,000</b>	<b>2,304,000</b>

### **3.2.3. Volunteering as a barrier to sport**

The Mauritian sport sector owns its salute largely to passionate volunteers. However, consisting of benevolent people, many managerial and technical committees of several federations are not as efficient for sport promotion, since these persons give only their free time for the sport and are not 100% active.

Goboodun (2004) suggested that professionalizing the sector with paid managers, coaches and other technical staff can be the solution to the poor performing Mauritian sport sector. If the decision-makers and technical staff of federations were employed and hence accountable to an employer, they would have had to bring some achievements.

### **3.3. The Mauritian National Action Plan on Physical Activity 2011-2014**(Ministry of Health and Quality of Life, 2011)

The National Action Plan on Physical Activity (NAPPA) 2011-2014 was prepared mainly in response to the growing problem of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) in Mauritius, where more than 70% of the burden of disease is attributable to NCDs. The national NCD survey carried out in 2004 showed that among adults aged 30 years and above, 19.3 % had diabetes and 29.7 % had high blood pressure. It also indicated that only one in four (24.5%) adult Mauritian males and one in ten (9.5%) adult Mauritian females practised regular physical activity. The results from the NCD Survey 2009 indicate that in the age group 25 to 74 years, the prevalence of diabetes is 23.6% and that of hypertension is 37.9%. The percentage of men and women practising sufficient leisure physical activity is 23.2% and 10.9% respectively. The Global School Health Survey 2007 conducted among students aged 13 to 15 years shows that only 13% were engaged in regular physical activity while 34.8% had sedentary habits.

Due to rapid industrialisation and general improvements in living standards over the past five decades Mauritius has undergone an epidemiological transition in the profile of diseases. In Mauritius the NCDs account for more than 70% of the burden of disease and have assumed epidemic proportions. Successive national noncommunicable disease surveys since 1987 have revealed a high prevalence of noncommunicable diseases and their risk

factors. The last survey conducted in 2009 indicated the following findings in the age group 25 to 74 years (Table 7):

*Table 7: NCDs survey (Mauritius National NCD Survey, 2009)*

<b>Disease/Risk factor</b>	<b>Prevalence (%)</b>
Diabetes Mellitus	23.6
High blood pressure	37.9
Obesity	16.0
Overweight	34.9
High cholesterol	34.7

Heart diseases and diabetes mellitus were the first two principal underlying causes of mortality in 2009 with 19.0% and 22.8% deaths respectively. Deaths due to cancer were in the third position accounting for 12.1% of deaths. The distribution of deaths per chapter of the International Classification of Diseases indicated that diseases of the circulatory system and diabetes mellitus were responsible for 35% and 22.8% of the deaths respectively in 2008. The trend over the past three decades is shown in the table below:

*Table 8: Underlying cause of death (Health Statistics Report, 2009)*

<b>% Underlying Cause of death</b>	<b>1975</b>	<b>1985</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2009</b>
Heart Diseases	17.2	19.7	21.5	22.8	19.0
All Circulatory Diseases	28.4	32.4	35.3	37.3	33.7
Diabetes Mellitus	2.7	7.8	14.8	21.1	22.8
Total Circulatory & DM	31.1	40.2	50.1	58.4	56.5

### **3.3.1. Situation Analysis**

Levels of inactivity are high in virtually all developed and developing countries. In developed countries more than half the adults are insufficiently active. Data gathered on the health surveys from around the world is remarkably consistent. The proportion of adults who are sedentary or nearly so ranges from 60 to 85%. (WHO, 2009)

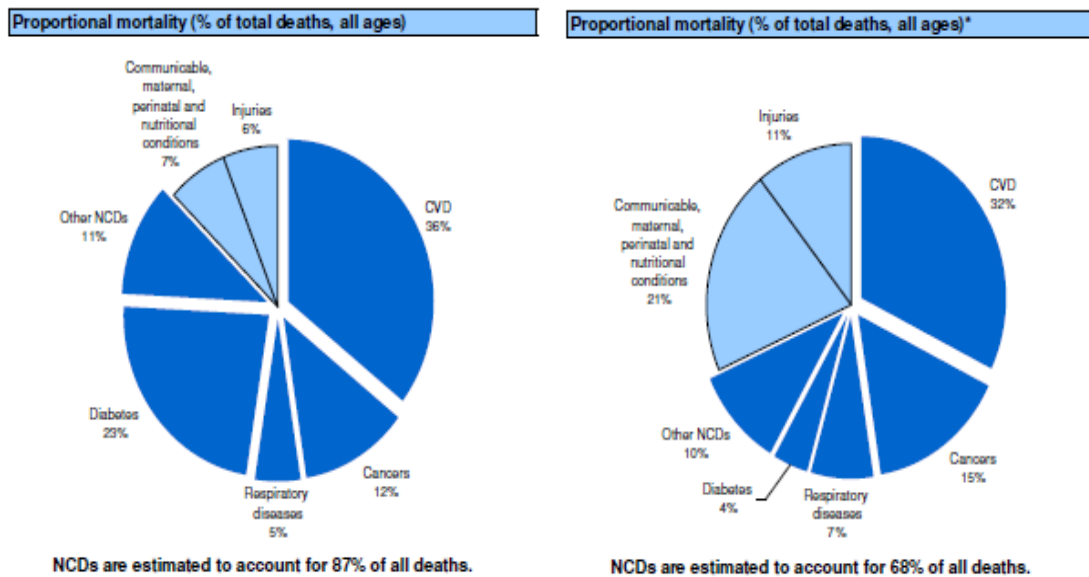
In Mauritius, though there has been an increasing trend in physical activity level since the first National NCD Survey in 1987, the stark reality is that only one in every four Mauritian males and one in ten Mauritian females aged 35 – 54 years is engaged in adequate physical activity, as indicated in Table 9:

**Table 9: Physical activity level of people age 35 – 54 years old** (Mauritius NCD Survey Report, 2004)

Sex	1987*	1992*	1998*	2004*
Male	11.8	17.3	21.2	24.5
Female	1.4	2.3	7.2	9.5

\* Adjusted for age

According to the World Health Organisation (2011), Mauritius compared to Jamaica has a higher percentage of mortality due to NCDs as illustrated by the figure 1. Mauritius has a mortality rate linked to NCDs estimated to 87% of total deaths whereas for Jamaica the rate is only 68%.



**Figure 5: Graphs comparing proportional mortality in Mauritius and Jamaica.** (WHO, 2011)

Comparing with surveys made by the WHO in UK, the figures are slightly less than those of Mauritius. UK has 83% of mortality in Country side and 72% on regional average.

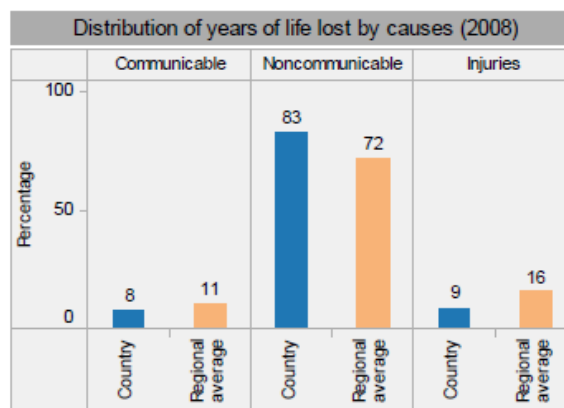


Figure 6: Graph showing distribution of years lost by causes in UK(WHO, 2011)

Data from the National NCD Survey 2009 for Mauritius show that only 16.5% of Mauritians aged 25 to 74 years undertake sufficient vigorous or moderate physical activity to meet the national guidelines of 30 minutes of exercise each day (Table 10).

Table 10: Physical activity level for people age 25 – 74 years old (Mauritius NCD Survey Report, 2009)

Sex	*2009
Male	23.2 %
Female	10.9 %
Both	16.5 %

Furthermore, obesity among children is an emerging public health problem. The prevalence of obesity in children and adults in Mauritius as per the National Nutritional Survey 2004 is as follows:

Table 11: Prevalence of obesity in children and adults in Mauritius (National Nutritional Survey, 2004)

Age group	Overweight (%)	Obesity (%)	Overweight & Obesity(%)
5-11 yrs	7.7	8.1	15.8
12-19 yrs	8.4	7.3	15.7
20-74 yrs	25.4	10.3	35.7

There is evidence that an increasing number of youngsters are developing Type 2 diabetes in all races. Moreover 80% of Type 2 diabetes patients are obese at the time of diagnosis. Around the world physical activity levels are decreasing among young people. The WHO (2007) estimates that less than one third of young people are sufficiently active to benefit their present and future health and well-being.

According to the Global School Health Survey (2007) conducted among students aged 13 to 15 years in Mauritius, only 13% were engaged in regular physical activity of at least 60 minutes per day and 34.8% had sedentary habits. A survey on health risky behaviour among youths in 2006 indicated that only 14.8% engaged in vigorous exercise and 17.7% in moderate exercise.

However, in Mauritius there is an absence of data regarding levels of knowledge, attitudes and perceptions about physical activity in the population in general and a lack of data on levels of physical activity in the age group of 54 years and above.

### **3.3.2. Vision, Goals and Objectives**

The National Action Plan on Physical Activity covers a period of four years, from 2011 to 2014. The vision behind it is to make Mauritius a physically active and healthy nation.

#### **Goals**

The main goals of the action plan are:

1. To increase and maintain adequate levels of health enhancing physical activity for all people.
2. To contribute to the prevention and control of chronic non-communicable diseases.
3. To contribute to the achievement of optimal health for all Mauritians.

(Ministry of Health and Quality of Life, 2011)

## Objectives

The NAPPA is guided by the following main objectives:

1. To increase the level of adequate physical activity in adult male population from 23.2% to 35% by 2014.
2. To increase the level of adequate physical activity in adult female population from 10.9% to 20% by 2014.
3. To raise awareness and knowledge of the health benefits of physical activity in the adult population.
4. To raise awareness and knowledge of the health benefits of and increase level of physical activity in the school going population.
5. To increase awareness of the importance of physical activity among key stakeholders.
6. To implement transport and land-use policies that creates appropriate conditions for safe walking and cycling.
7. To ascertain commitment of ministries and local authorities to increase recreational facilities for physical activity.
8. To conduct research and national monitoring of levels of physical activity using standardized surveillance tools. (Ministry of Health and Quality of Life, 2011)

The SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Timely) approach was used in implementing the Action Plan.

### **3.3.3. Existing Infrastructure and Actions in Mauritius** (Ministry of Health and Quality of Life, 2011)

The setting up of proper infrastructure is one of the key determinants in the population for the practice of physical activity. As indicated below, a number of Ministries and local governments have invested in this direction as well as in manpower capacity, community mobilisation, media and other activities:



I. The *Ministry of Health and Quality of Life* set up a Task Force in December 2002 in order to make recommendations for the promotion of physical activity in the Mauritian population. In June 2003 the Task Force submitted its report which also included a draft policy on physical activity.

Subsequently, a National Action Plan on Physical Activity for the period 2004-2006 was developed. Five health clubs were set up throughout the island. With increasing demand from the public, two more health clubs have been set up and are operational.

Three of these clubs are equipped with treadmills. Physical activities (yoga, aerobic dance and Tai-Chi) are presently carried out in 54 sites in the community. Seventeen instructors are employed by the Ministry of Health & Quality of Life on a part-time basis to run classes on yoga. One Health Track was constructed in Rose-Belle in 2010 and is now operational.

Regular talks on importance of physical activity and healthy lifestyle are given in the primary schools by the community health nurses as a component of the school health program. The Ministry of Health & Quality of Life also conducts such talks in schools and community settings and produces health education material on diet and exercise. NCD patients are briefed appropriately by doctors, NCD nurses and dieticians during visits to clinics.

In 2005, a media campaign was carried out on non-communicable diseases which included the production and broadcasting of one TV and two radio spots on physical activity.

II. The *Ministry of Education and Human Resources* runs 63 State Secondary Schools out of which 30 schools have a gymnasium/multipurpose hall (27 have gymnasias and 3 have multipurpose halls). These schools have sports facilities such as football grounds, volleyball, basketball, handball pitches etc. The students use these facilities during school hours and the general public has access to some of the facilities after school hours subject to certain conditions.

In all primary schools:

(a) two slots of 25 minutes each are allocated for Physical Education lessons to each class weekly.

(b) one slot of 25 minutes is allocated for health education lessons to each class weekly.

In all secondary schools, two successive periods of 40 minutes each have been allocated to each class weekly for physical education lessons. All state secondary schools and state colleges are serviced by at least one qualified education officer for the teaching of physical education. Monitoring is done by physical education organisers.

The school curriculum for physical education includes lessons on minor games, kids' athletics, simple physical activities and breathing exercises. The Ministry of Education & Human Resources has embarked on a pilot project in 14 secondary schools from January 2010 for the introduction of physical education as an examinable subject at school Certificate/O Level in 2011.

The ministry in collaboration with other stakeholders organizes activities on related issues like nutrition, sports medicine, diet, obesity and non-communicable diseases besides sports competitions/activities.

Health clubs have been set up in most of the 67 state secondary schools and in 77 out of 109 private secondary schools throughout the island.

The Mauritius Institute of Education offers full-time and part-time Diploma in PE, full-time and part-time Bachelor of Education in PE, and a Post Graduate Certificate in Physical Education. The University of Mauritius runs a diploma course in Sports Science and Recreational Management with an admission of 30 students every two years.

**III. (1) The *Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare*** operates through a network of 16 Women's Centres across the country. In all these centres the following activities are organized:

- yoga
- aerobics
- gym
- weight management
- healthy eating
- self-defence

Up to date 11,000 women have benefited from the courses/activities.

(2) 16 Women's Sports Associations (WSAs) have been launched in the Women's Centres to specifically address the issue of obesity and physical fitness among women. They conduct the following sports and physical activities: petanque, volleyball, badminton, Tai-Chi, walking, keep fit exercises, table-tennis and swimming.

(3) A National Awareness Campaign is held yearly in four regions of the island to encourage women to be members of sports associations.

(4) The newly inaugurated National Women Development Centre at Phoenix is provided with an equipped Keep Fit corner under a gym instructor.

(5) Training programmes on "Healthy Eating and Nutrition" are held in 25 centres targeting 500 women in general per year.

(6) 30 Weight Management Clubs have been set up targeting overweight or obese adult women younger than 55 years of age.

(7) For promoting physical activities the ministry organizes a National Sports Day yearly in collaboration with the Commission Nationale du Sport Féminin and the Ministry of Youth and Sports besides inter-centre competitions in various sports disciplines.

**IV.** The *Ministry of Youth and Sports* has five swimming pools which at the disposal of the general public and swimming classes are held under the supervision of qualified instructors. The most recently constructed one is at Mare d'Albert. There are about 900 members in swimming clubs which are open to those aged 16 to 80 years.

It also organizes on a regular basis outdoor physical activities for the youth such as trekking. Women in rural areas are encouraged to participate in sports and leisure activities organized by the ministry ....did you want to add something here? There was no full stop. The ministry organizes training of trainers' courses in yoga, Tai-Chi and aerobics d with an intake of 10 trainers yearly. Courses are also delivered in youth centres across the island.

**V.** The *Ministry of Environment* has created 10 Health Tracks (“parcours de santé”) in various parts of the island which are widely used by Mauritians. These tracks provide an opportunity to the population to indulge in physical activities such as jogging and leisure walks in a natural environment.

**VI.** The *Ministry of Social Security and National Solidarity* has:

- 56 Social Welfare Centres throughout the island that are equipped with sports and related facilities and which are put at the disposal of different age groups.
- 16 Day Care Centres for elderly where physical fitness equipment are made available.
- 17 Gym Clubs for different age groups for promotion of physical fitness and healthy lifestyles.
- 20 Health and Nutrition Clubs operating at Social Welfare Centres.

Regular physical activities such as walk for health, yoga, and taekwondo are carried out at all the Social Welfare Centres.

**VII.** The *Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund* which also operates under the aegis of the Ministry of Social Security runs more than 120 Community Centres which offer facilities such as volley-ball grounds, petanque courts, equipments and table tennis tables for the practice of physical activity.

Courses are offered in karate, taekwondo and yoga. Facilities are extended to health clubs for senior citizens and women.

Activities such as family jogging, indoor and outdoor games, national community games are organized in collaboration with other ministries and non-governmental organizations on a fairly regular basis.

**VIII.** The *Municipality of Vacoas/Phoenix* runs sixteen gymnasia in different localities within its catchment area which are open to the public for indoor games. It has eleven football grounds equipped with lighting facilities at the disposal of clubs in the respective localities. It also offers facilities for the practice of yoga, aerobic and karate.

Two Omni-sports complex have been opened at Phoenix and Paillote for the benefit of the inhabitants.

Recreational parks have been set up in different regions of the town where jogging can equally be practiced.

**IX.** All *Municipalities and District Councils* have playgrounds for football, volleyball and petanque which are open to the general public. Some of them have health tracks as well. Many offer courses in yoga, aerobic and modern dance. The municipalities of Quatre-Bornes , Beau-Bassin/Rose-Hill, Vacoas/Phoenix and Port Louis all have gymnasia.

The district councils have an impressive number of sports infrastructures which include Football Grounds, Volley Ball pitches, Petanque Courts and Children Play Area and which they manage. Recreational parks are also available.

**X. The Public Officers Welfare Council** under the aegis of the Ministry of Civil Service & AR, organizes recreational, sports and leisure activities amongst others for public officers thereby providing them with opportunities to maintain their physical fitness and also enabling them to practice their favourite sports activities.

## CHAPTER 4 - METHODOLOGY

### 4.1. Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher looks at the two major paradigms used in research to establish the most suitable one for his enquiry. He takes great care of ethical considerations, data collection procedures and data analysis.

Denzin & Lincoln (2000) define a research paradigm as a basic set of beliefs that guides action. Bassegy (1995) identifies two major research paradigms: the positivist/quantitative and the interpretative/qualitative paradigms. Each paradigm is underpinned by its own philosophical perspectives and assumptions and has its own epistemology which in turn affects the methodology involved. Hitchcock & Hughes (1989) defines a methodology as an analysis of how research should operate.

### 4.2. The positivist/quantitative paradigm

Auguste Comte was the first thinker to use the word positivism for a philosophical position (Beck, 1979). Comte's position was to lead to a general doctrine of positivism which held that all genuine knowledge is based on sense experience and can only be advanced by means of observation and experiment. Following in the empiricist tradition, it limited inquiry and belief to what can be firmly established and in thus abandoning metaphysical and speculative attempts to gain knowledge by reason alone, the movement developed what has been described as a 'tough-minded orientation to facts and natural phenomena'. Positivism here involves a definite view of social scientists as analysts or interpreters of their subject matter. Positivism may be characterized by its claim that science provide us with the clearest possible ideal of knowledge. But positivism has its limitation as stated by Habermas (1972) who argues that the scientific mentality has been elevated to an almost unassailable position- almost to the level of religion (scientism) - as being the only epistemology of the west. In this view all knowledge becomes equated with scientific knowledge. This neglects hermeneutic, aesthetic, critical, moral, creative and other forms of knowledge. It reduces behaviour to technicism. For this research, the researcher has not make use of the positivist paradigm, instead he has used the interpretive paradigm.

### **4.3. The interpretive/qualitative paradigm**

The interpretive paradigm according to Douglas (1973) is characterized by a concern to the individual. The central endeavour in the context of the interpretive paradigm is to understand the subjective world of human experience. To retain the integrity of the phenomena being investigated, efforts are made to get inside the person and to understand from within. The imposition of external form and structure is resisted, since this reflects the viewpoint of the observer as opposed to that of the actor directly involved. Furthermore Glaser & Strauss (1967) states that the interpretive researcher begin with individuals and set out to understand their interpretations of the world around them. Theory is emergent and must arise from particular situations; it should be ‘grounded’ on data generated by the research act. Theory should not precede research but should follow it. The limitation of interpretive paradigm according to Layder (1994) is that it is an approach that neglects the power of external – structural-forces that shape behaviour and events. There is a risk in interpretive approaches that they become hermetically sealed from the world outside the participants’ theatre of activity – they put artificial boundaries around subjects’ behaviour. Interpretive paradigm can be criticised for their narrowly micro-sociological persuasion.

The researcher uses the interpretive paradigm as he wanted to have the views of people that are actively involved in the sports field.

### **4.4. Survey**

Best & Kahn (1986) define a survey as a method that gathers data from a relatively large number of cases at a particular time. It is not concerned with characteristics of individuals as individuals. It is concerned with the generalised statistics that result when data are abstracted from a number of individual cases. The survey is an important type of study. It must not be confused with the mere clerical routine of gathering and tabulating figures. It involves a clearly defined problem and definite objectives. It requires expert and imaginative planning, careful analysis and interpretation of the data gathered, and logical and skilful reporting of the findings. Furthermore Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2000) see surveys as the gathering of data at a particular point in time with the intention of describing the nature of existing conditions, or identifying standards against which conditions can be compared, or determining the relationships that exist between specific events.

A survey has several characteristics and several claimed attractions, typically it is used to scan a wide field of issues, populations, programmes and others in order to measure or describe any generalised features. It is useful in that it usually, according to Morrison (1993):

- gathers data on a one-shot basis and hence is economical and efficient;
- represents a wide target population (hence there is a need for careful sampling);
- generates numerical data;
- provides descriptive, inferential and explanatory information;
- manipulates key factors and variables to derive frequencies (for example the numbers registering a particular opinion or test score);
- gathers standardised information (that is using the same instruments and questions for all participants);
- ascertains correlation (for example to find out if there is any relationship between gender and score);
- presents material which is uncluttered by specific contextual factors;
- captures data from multiple choice, closed questions, test scores or observation schedules;
- supports or refutes hypotheses about the target population;
- generates accurate instruments through their piloting and revision;
- makes generalizations about, and observes patterns of response in, the targets of focus;
- gathers data which can be processed statistically;



- usually relies on large data gathering from a wide population in order to enable generalisations to be made about given factors or variables.

In his survey, the researcher has identified standards first by collecting documentary evidence, in the form of articles, journal and web sites. From the documentary evidence he has elaborated the interview and questionnaire method to get the perception of athletes, coach, PE teachers, PE organizers, PE lecturers and Presidents of selected Sports Federations who are very active in the sports field. The findings will enable him to see what is the state of art of the sport field in Mauritius and comes with suggestions to make sports more prominent on the Mauritian scene.

#### **4.5. Research context**

The research aim is to explore the actual state of sport in Mauritius, the prevailing governing policies in the sector, the effectiveness of the Mauritian approach to elite sports, the efficiency of the state to promote physical activities and health, and the barriers that hinder the Mauritian in general to exercise regularly.

Based on the hypothesis that the findings might reveal that the national sector has some fallacies, the researcher shall eventually come with recommendations of how to make sports a more successful endeavour.

#### **4.6. Population and Sampling**

##### **4.6.1. Selection of teachers**

The Mauritian secondary cycle is divided into four zones. In zone 1 there are 19 State Secondary Schools (SSS) and 28 private/confessional secondary schools. There are 14 SSS and 24 private/confessional secondary schools in zone 2. In zone 3 the number of SSS is 7 and that of private/confessional secondary schools amount to 28 whereas in zone 4 a total of 17 SSS and 2 private/confessional secondary school can be found. The overall total number of all types of schools combined is 102. (Ministry of Education and Human Resources, 2013).

For this survey, 50 physical education teachers were selected at random from the 102 secondary schools to answer the questionnaire (refer Appendix A) set by the researcher.

#### **4.6.2. Selection of P.E and Sports lecturers**

In Mauritius we have more than 15 institutions which give tertiary education to Mauritians. But among these institutions, only two of them run courses on P.E and Sports. Hence only P.E and Sports lecturers from these two institutions were chosen for the questionnaire, in fact a total of ten lecturers, five from each of the tertiary institutions concerned.

#### **4.6.3. Selection of Presidents of Sports Federation**

In Mauritius among the numerous Sports Federations only forty of them received money from the Ministry of sports of Mauritius. Ten presidents from the most popular practised sports in Mauritius have been selected to participate in the questionnaire survey.

#### **4.6.4. Selection of athletes**

50 athletes irrespective of gender were chosen, each from one Sports Federation initially chosen for the sake of this study.

#### **4.6.5. Selection of principal, senior and physical education organisers.**

The physical education cadre at the Ministry of Education is responsible for the physical education and sports section at the Ministry of Education.

The physical education cadre consists of;

- (a) One principal physical education organiser
- (b) One senior physical education organiser
- (c) Four physical education organisers
- (d) Education officers (physical education)
- (e) Health and physical education instructors

The principal and the senior physical education organisers are based at IVTB House, Phoenix.

The principal physical education organiser is appointed by promotion on basis of experience and merit of officers in the grade of senior physical education organisers who are able to motivate team of officers.

The senior physical education organiser is appointed by promotion on basis of experience and merit of officer who hold a substantive appointment of the grade of physical education organiser.

Of the two officers mentioned above, the researcher will interview with one of them.

Physical education organisers are promoted by selection from education officer of physical education and there are four in total and they are based at the four educational zones in Mauritius.

The researcher will have an interview with one of the four physical education organisers chosen at random.

#### **4.6.6. Selection of participants for interviews**

For the interviews , 1 physical education organiser, 1 senior physical education organiser, 2 sport federation presidents and 2 athletes were chosen so as to delve further the topic and for clarification of data from the questionnaire.

#### **4.7. Data collection and analysis**

Data analysis is an ongoing process during research. The starting point in analysing qualitative data, according to Hammersley & Atkinson (1995) and Cresswell (1998) is a careful reading or several readings through the data to become familiar with it. Any tool for data collection provides only one picture of the social world, it is the matches and mismatches between data gathered through a methodological triangulation that help to enrich understanding of what is going on (Simpson & Tuson, 1995). Hence, in the survey, documentary evidence, interview and questionnaire shall be used to collect data and thus ensure validity and reliability. These different data gathering methods shall be analysed both quantitatively and qualitatively.

#### **4.7.1 Documentary evidence**

Documentary evidence provides an important first step in getting to know about the research issue (Hopkins, 1993). The researcher first of all went through the different web sites of the different sport organisations namely the Ministry of Youth and Sports, the Mauritius Olympic Committee, Mauritius Sports Council. He also gathered information from the PIOJ (2009) to try to note down the similarities and major differences between Jamaica and Mauritius in terms of their approach to sports.

#### **4.7.2. Interview**

Interviews are used as a means for gathering data, evaluating or assessing a person. (Cohen & Manion, 1994). The use of the interview in research marks a move away from seeing human subjects as simply manipulative and data as somehow external to individuals, and towards regarding knowledge as generated between humans, often through conversations (Kvale, 1996, p.11). Regarding an interview, as Kvale (1996) remarks, as an interview, an interchange of views between two or more people on a topic of mutual interest, here the researcher interviewed one principal physical education organiser and one physical education organiser where the interviewer and the interviewee both shared the same interest that is the advancement of physical education and sport. Interview is not exclusively either subjective or objective, it is intersubjective. Interviews enable participants to discuss their interpretations of the world in which they live, and to express how they regard situations from their own point of view. The interview is not only concerned with collecting data about life: it is part of life itself, its human embeddedness is inescapable.

The interview enabled the researcher to exchange ideas and experiences with one principal physical education Organiser and one physical education Organiser. The interview helped the researcher to ensure that the respondents gave their personal feelings and views and were not influenced by others. The interview also helped the researcher to have a better understanding on the government policy concerning sports. In fact through the interview the questions were similar to that of the questionnaire but there more details were asked and the interviewees were encouraged to elaborate more. It has to be noted that a lot of extra information were gathered during the interviews.

The researcher took an appointment with the respondents on the phone. Then he met them one at a time at a place convenient to them. In order not to waste time, the researcher had a series of questions which he asked but from time to time improvised questions were necessary so as to get further information.

#### **4.7.3. Questionnaire**

The questionnaire is a widely used and useful instrument for collecting survey information, providing structured, often numerical data, being able to be administered without the presence of the researcher, and often being comparatively straightforward to analyse (Wilson and Mc Lean, 1994). According to Hopkins (1993) the questionnaire is a quick and simple way of obtaining broad and rich information from the respondents.

To have the views of the Physical Education teachers, Presidents of Sports Federations, P.E and Sports Lecturers, and athletes the questionnaire was privileged owing to the following advantages:

- The researcher could target a greater audience, including teachers, Presidents of Sports Federations, P.E and Sports Lecturers, and athletes in his sample, thereby getting a more objective view of the problem under study.
- With the use of the questionnaire, the researcher ensures the respondent anonymity and privacy (respondents were not asked to write their name on the questionnaire). As a result, responses were more valid.
- The use of questionnaire allows a uniformity of structure so that the researcher could analyse their responses in a much comprehensive approach.
- The respondent has the possibility to think more about the questions he/she has been asked (they were given two days at least to answer the questionnaires). As a result, better responses were obtained)
- For this research, the questionnaire was found to be the efficient instrument in terms of time.

- The problem of unreturned questionnaire was minimised as the researcher dispatched and collected the questionnaire from all the respondents.

The questionnaire used comprises of 3 constructs split into 23 questions. These questions cater for personal opinion and views concerning Sports in general and on their perception of the state of art of Sports in Mauritius.

So as to ascertain that the statements were appropriate for the topic under study, the questionnaire before being typed was handed to one of my colleague. A pre-test was also carried out with the questionnaire in order to identify misconception, anomalous and ambiguous responses and to remedy appropriately these different issues. The questions in the questionnaire were all closed ended.

The questionnaire was used to gather prerequisite knowledge about the following;

- the openness of the Mauritian sport policy
- the effectiveness of the Mauritian approach to elite sports
- the efficiency of the state to promote physical activities and health

#### **4.8. Issues of access and ethics.**

Cohen (2000) state that research necessitates obtaining the consent and cooperation of all the people who are to assist in the research process. Access can therefore be said to be a negotiated interaction. The researcher personally met with all the respondents involved in the research and explained to them the aims of the research, and the respective data gathering tool. As ethics refer to the question of right or wrong, when conducting the research, the researcher did not impose on any respondent to either answer to the questionnaire or have the interview. The voluntary consent of the participants is absolutely essential in a research process (Homan, 2001). The participants were given the possibility to decline from participation at any time they wanted to do so. Also when formulating the questions in the questionnaire and in the interview, the researcher took great care so that no prejudice was caused to the respondents' cultural and religious beliefs. The researcher

ensured that the research did not harm the respondents in any way (Bogman & Biklen, 1992)

#### **4.9. Issues of Anonymity**

At all instances names of participants were not mentioned to guarantee anonymity. And also great care were taken by the researcher so that once data in the study was collected, no other persons got access to them and they were treated in strict confidentiality.

#### **4.10. Reliability and Validity**

Validity refers to the appropriateness, meaningfulness and usefulness of the inference a researcher makes (Cohen et al., 2000). Reliability is a measure of consistency of a coding process when carried out on different occasions or by different researchers. According to Yin (1994), the general way of dealing with reliability is to make as many steps as operational as possible and to conduct research as if someone were always looking over your shoulder. This survey did not use only one data collection technique but use a variety of techniques such as the documentary evidence, interview and questionnaire. Targeted groups of participants were of pluralative nature, for example, data collected was from State Secondary Schools, Private Secondary Schools and Confessional schools physical education teachers, both male and female respondents, and from various stakeholders. This allows triangulation in data for better validity and reliability

#### **4.11. Triangulation.**

The technique of triangulation defined by Cohen (2000) as the use of two or more methods of data collection in social research was popularised by John Elliot and Clem Adelman during their work with the Ford teaching Project. It involves contrasting the perception of one actor in a specific situation against those of other actors in the same situation. By doing this, an initial subjective observation or perception is fleshed out and given a degree of authenticity. Cresswell (1994) suggested that triangulation is a powerful way of demonstrating validity and reliability of research. Hammersley & Atkinson (1995) suggest that a reflexive triangulation involves not only a combination of different data but an attempt to relate different sorts of data to counteract possible threats to the validity of our analysis.

In his survey the researcher did not use only one data collection techniques but use three techniques namely the use of documentary evidence, the interview and the questionnaire. In this way triangulation was made possible

#### **4.12. Limitations of the study**

All researches have indeed limitations due to various factors. For this study we are focusing on the teachers, athletes, presidents of Sports Federations, PE organisers and PE and Sports lecturers in view of investigating the size and nature of Sports in Mauritius. Nevertheless for the thesis to have been more reliable a larger pool of respondents should have been selected, including the general public.



## **CHAPTER 5 – ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS**

### **5.1. Data analysis and findings**

“Data must not be forced; they must be allowed to speak” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998:65). Data analysis is defined as the process of simplifying data in order to make it comprehensible. The qualitative researcher is primarily concerned with the process rather than with the outcomes or products and with the ways people make sense of their experiences (Meriam, 1998)

In this chapter the researcher presents the results of the survey relating to the findings based on data collected from the documentary evidence, the interviews carried out and the questionnaire used. The researcher has not used all the information gathered as in a qualitative study, some may be discarded (Walcott, 1994b). Data gathered from multiple sources during the survey together with the researcher’s reflection shed light on what is the state of art of sports in Mauritius.

### **5.2. Brief overview of data collection exercise**

July 2012- Documentary evidence collected through various sources: the internet, books and journals

March 2013- Administration of questionnaires to 50 physical education teachers, 50 athletes, 10 presidents of sports federations, and 10 PE and sports lecturers

April 2013- Interviews with 1 physical education organiser, 1 senior physical education organiser, 2 sport federation presidents and 2 athletes

### **5.3. Findings and Data analysis**

As the researcher has used an interpretative approach, he analysed his data by means of content analysis techniques (Basch, 1987). The data collected through the documentary evidence, interviews and questionnaires are critically analysed and interpreted.

**5.3.1. Analysis of respondents per category for the questionnaire survey**

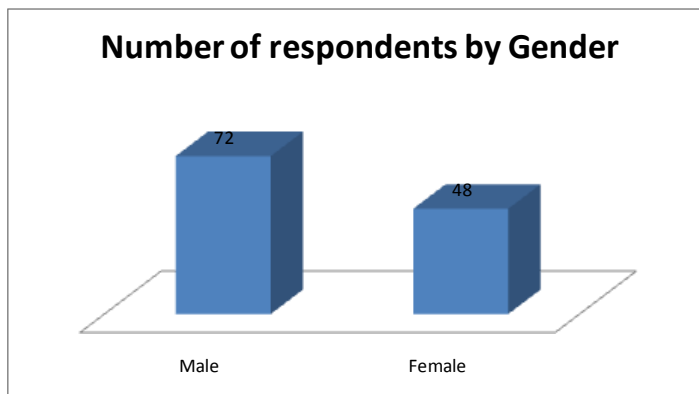
Category	Number	% of sample
Physical Education teachers	50	41.7%
Athletes	50	41.7%
Presidents of Sport federation	10	8.3%
Physical Education/Sports Lecturers	10	8.3%
Total Participants	120	100.0%

*Table 12: Number of respondents by category involved in the questionnaire survey*

Out of the 120 respondents involved in the questionnaire survey

- 41.7% were physical education teachers
- 41.7% were athletes
- 8.3% were president of a sport federation
- 8.3% were physical education/sports lecturers at university

The aim of the sampling was to have knowledgeable and active persons’ opinions in the sport sector from different perspectives. The sample enabled the researcher to have a good and realistic picture of the research topic.



*Figure 7: Rate of response by gender for the questionnaire survey*

The sample population encompasses respondents from both genders. In fact, 60% of the sampling population were males (72) and 40% were females (48).

### 5.3.2. Analysis of the Openness of the Mauritian sport policy

In this section we shall analyse the openness of the Mauritian sport policy, i.e. we shall analyse the factors that can influence our sport policy. We shall proceed by examining the findings collected from the questionnaires for this section and we shall delve further the subject with the outcomes from the interviews.

#### Question 1: The Mauritian sport policy is affected by the prevailing economic situation

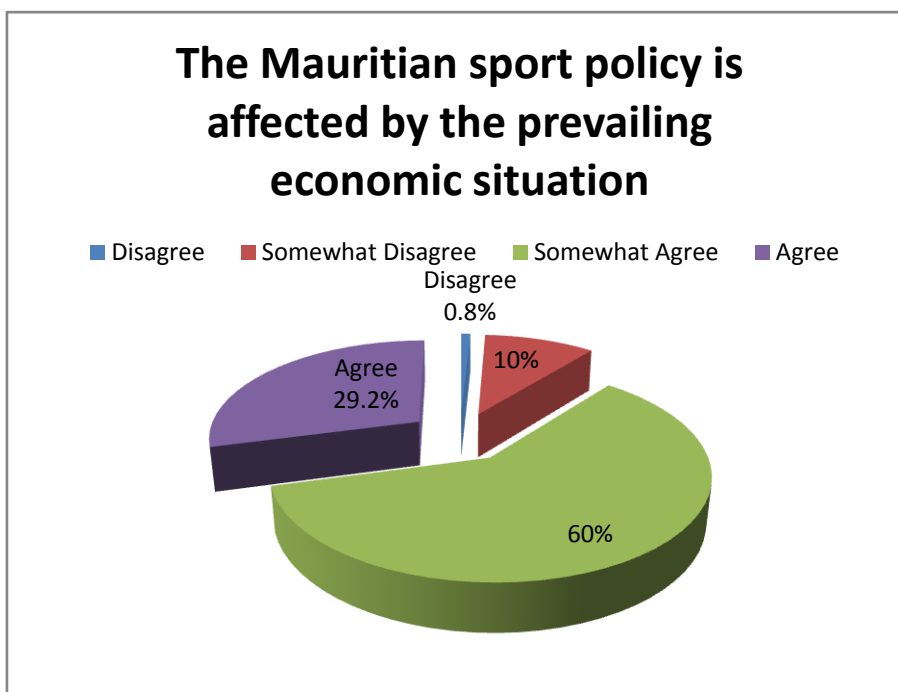
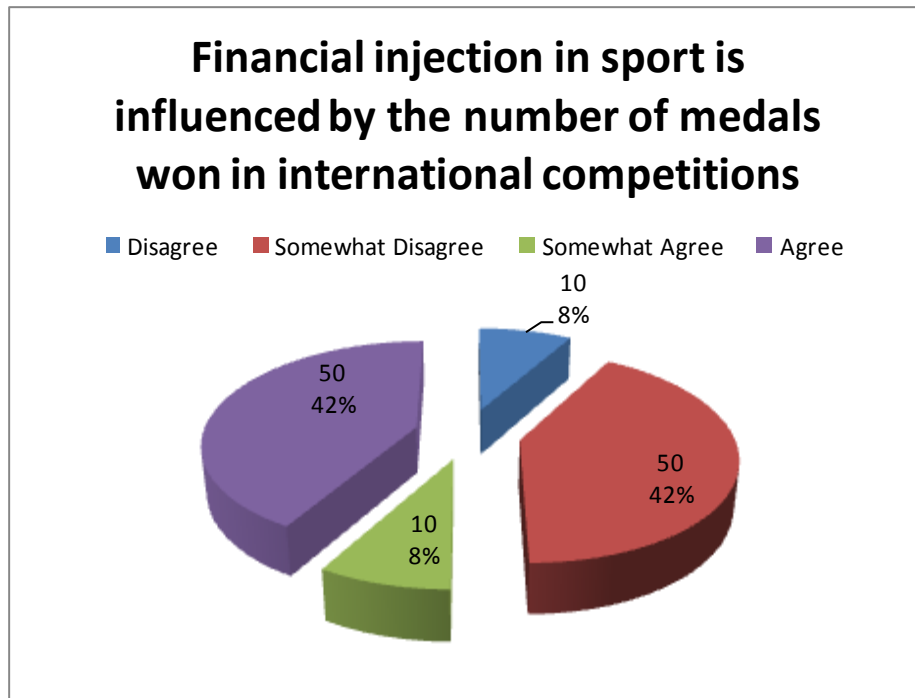


Figure 8: Response about prevailing economic factors influence on the Mauritian sport policy

Figure 3 gives an analysis of how much the prevailing economic situation is perceived to influence the Mauritian sport policy. From the graph above, most of the respondents tend to answer positively to the issue. 60% of our survey participants answered ‘Somewhat Agree’, 29.2% ‘Agree’, 10% ‘Somewhat Disagree’ and only 0.8% answered ‘Disagree’. From the interview, all the interviewees unanimously corroborated to the findings above; to the question whether the Mauritian sport policy is influenced by the economic situation they all answered positively.

**Question 2: Financial injection in sport is influenced by the number of medals won in international competitions.**

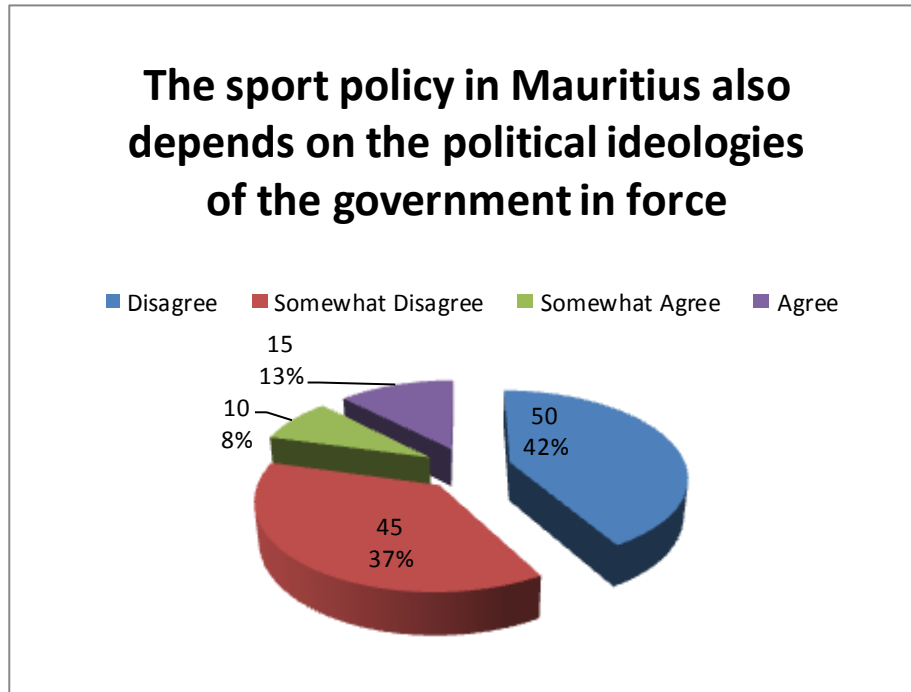


*Figure 9: Response about the influence of medals gained in international competitions on the sport policy*

According to the survey results pertaining to the direct influence of number of international medals gained by the local athletes on the sports policy, it was found that the views of the participants were more or less balanced both on the affirmative and negative side. 42% of the respondents answered ‘Agree’, 8% “Somewhat Agree’ in contrast to 42% who answered ‘Somewhat Disagree’ and another 8% who answered ‘Disagree’.

The opinions of our interviewees on the matter reveal that in fact, gaining medals in international competitions can influence the sport policy but they all agree that it could not be accounted as a rule in itself. Having athletes excelling internationally, the state may inject more money into sports but the Mauritian sport policy is subjective to influence by more dominant factors as we shall see next.

**Question 3: The sport policy in Mauritius also depends on the political ideologies of the government in power.**

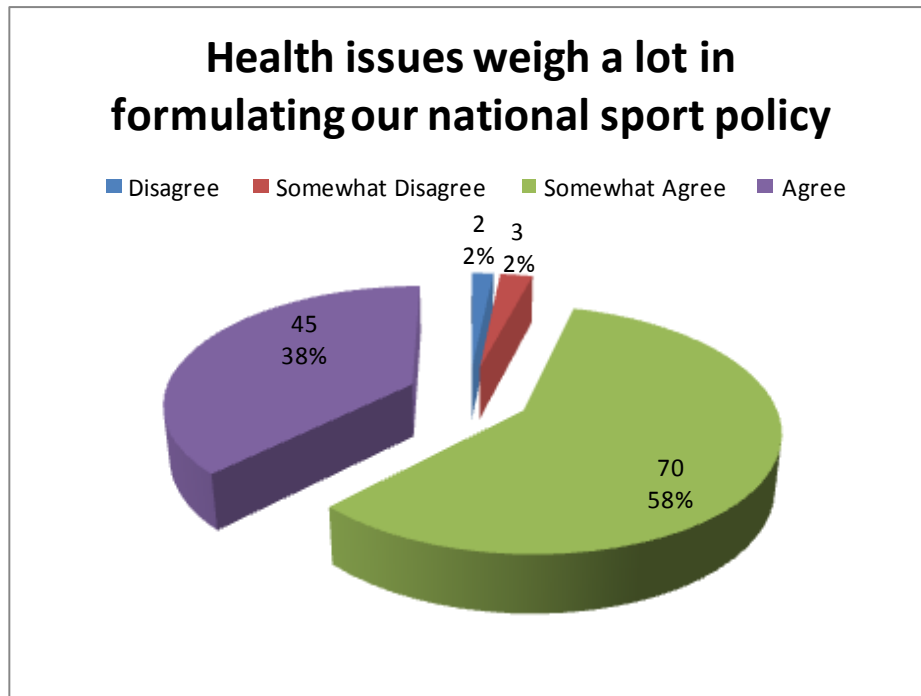


*Figure 10: Response about government political ideologies on the sport policy*

On the issue of government ideologies having an impact on the sports policy, the survey demonstrated that most of our respondents did not agree with that statement. About 42% of the participants answered to that question ‘Disagree’ and ‘37% chose ‘Somewhat Disagree’. 13% responded ‘Agree’ and 10% replied ‘Disagree’.

Based on the interviews carried out, it was pointed out that the government, independently of its political belongings, has constantly throughout the years increased the budget allocated to sports. Hence we can say that the response to the fact that the government ideologies have an effect on the sport policy proved to be a very subjective issue, depending on the respondent’s feeling rather than on facts.

**Question 4: Health issues weigh a lot in formulating our national sport policy.**

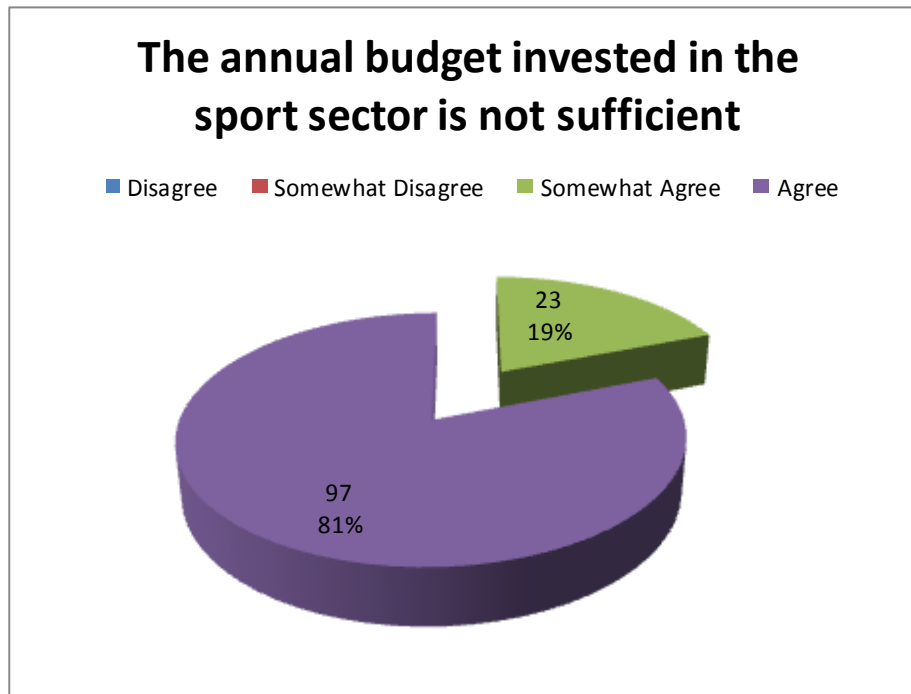


*Figure 11: Response about influence of health issues on the formulation of the sport policy*

Health issues are in Mauritius one of the variables salient affecting sport, i.e. it is a noticeable factor influencing the sport policy. 96% (58% ‘Somewhat Agree’ and 38% ‘Agree’) of the respondents tend to answer positively to the question that our sport policy may be influenced by health issues.

The interviews showed that indeed the Mauritian government constantly reviews its policy on sport, taking into account current major issues like obesity, diabetes and hypertension to formulate policy for the sector. In fact, the state is investing gradually more and more money into ‘Sports for All’ as a remedy to the several health issues encountered by our society (see p. 35 – 40).

**Question 5: The annual budget invested in the sport sector is not sufficient.**

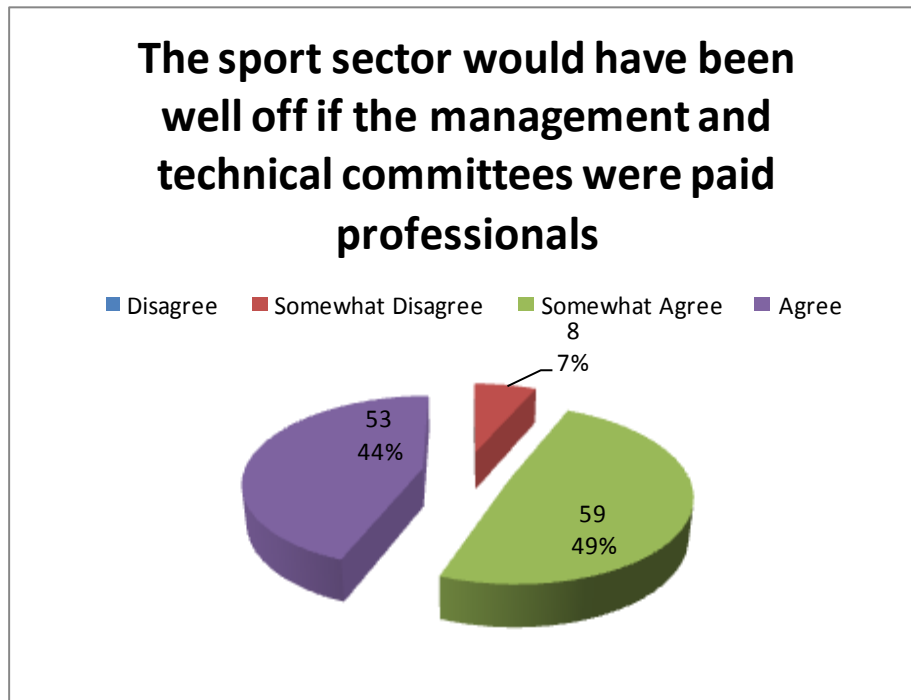


*Figure 12: Response about the adequacy of the annual budget in the sport sector*

To the question about the adequacy of the annual sport budget, the respondents almost all agreed that the financial investment in the sport sector was not appropriate. 81% of the survey participants answered ‘Agree’ to the given query and 19% replied by ‘Somewhat Agree’.

The interviewees agreed that the government increases its budget for sport every year but they also recognised that this was insufficient due to factors as inflation and increased cost of life. Hence after dealing with all its administrative and organisational costs, a federation is left with a negligible amount for investment on the athletes.

**Question 6: The sport sector would have been well off if the management and technical committees were paid professionals.**



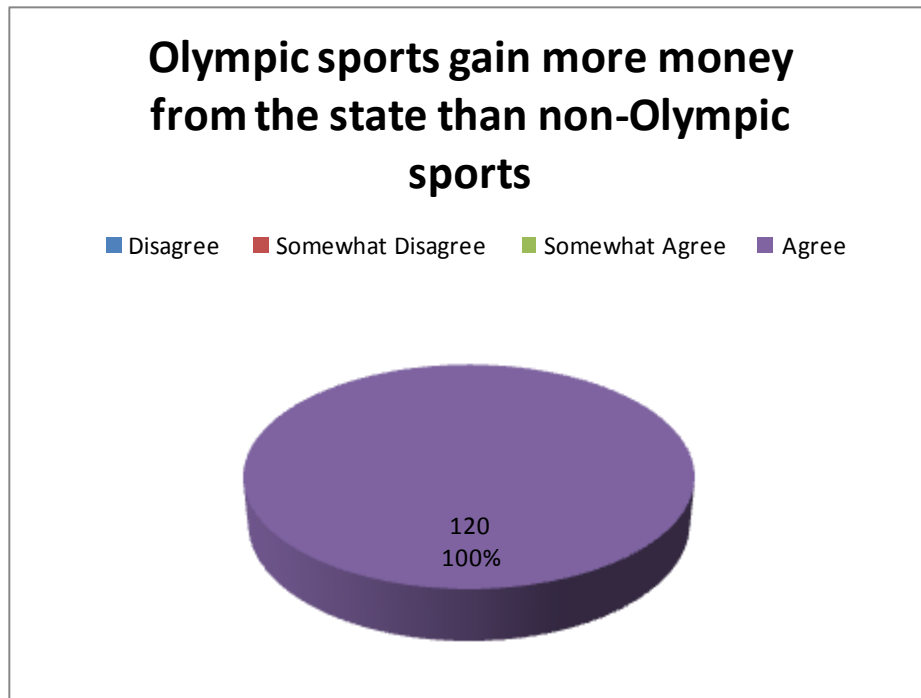
*Figure 13: Response about professionalizing the sport sector to improve it*

44% of the respondents' responses were 'Agree' to the idea of professionalizing the management and technical staff of federations. 59% answered 'Somewhat Agree' and 7% 'Somewhat Disagree'.

In the interview sessions, our participants underlined the fact that sport is not that high-flying because it is managed by volunteers. These people give 'only' their free time for their sport, they do not work full-time and since they are benevolent, we cannot and should not expect much from them. Professionalizing the sector with paid managers, coaches and other technical staff would have given a different perspective to the sport sector. The people involved would have been employed and hence they would have had to be accountable to their employers about their performance. This would have had definitely raised the status of sport in Mauritius. The sport sector being affected by administrative dispersal does not benefit from professionals employed and 100% focused on the welfare of sport.



**Question 7: Olympic sports gain more funding from the state than non-Olympic sports.**

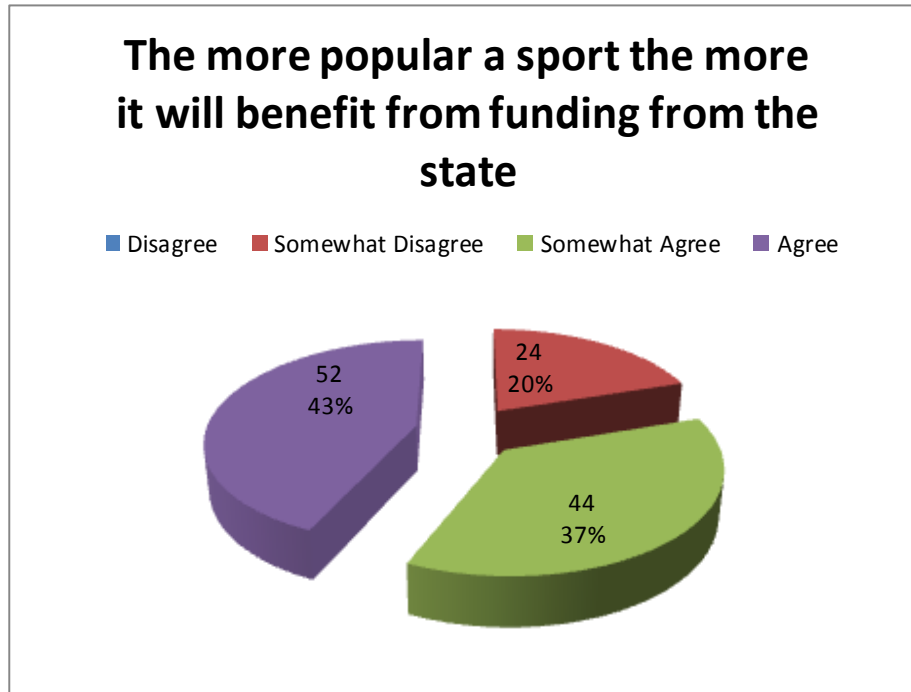


*Figure 14: Response about investment in Olympic sports vs. non-Olympic sports*

For the question about investment in Olympic sports vs. non-Olympic sports, all the respondents collectively agreed that Olympic sports attracted more investment and consideration from the state.

The interviews also reveal that this was a logical fact that Olympic sports, being more practised and having established federations managing them, benefit more from the state than non-Olympic sports.

**Question 8: The more popular a sport is the more it will benefit from funding from the state.**



*Figure 15: Response about the link between the popularity of a sport and funding from the state*

The majority of the respondents i.e. 80% as shown in the pie chart above tend to agree to the statement that the more popular a sport the more funding it will receive from the state confirming our finding in the previous question. 20% of the surveyed participants nevertheless answered ‘Somewhat Disagree’.

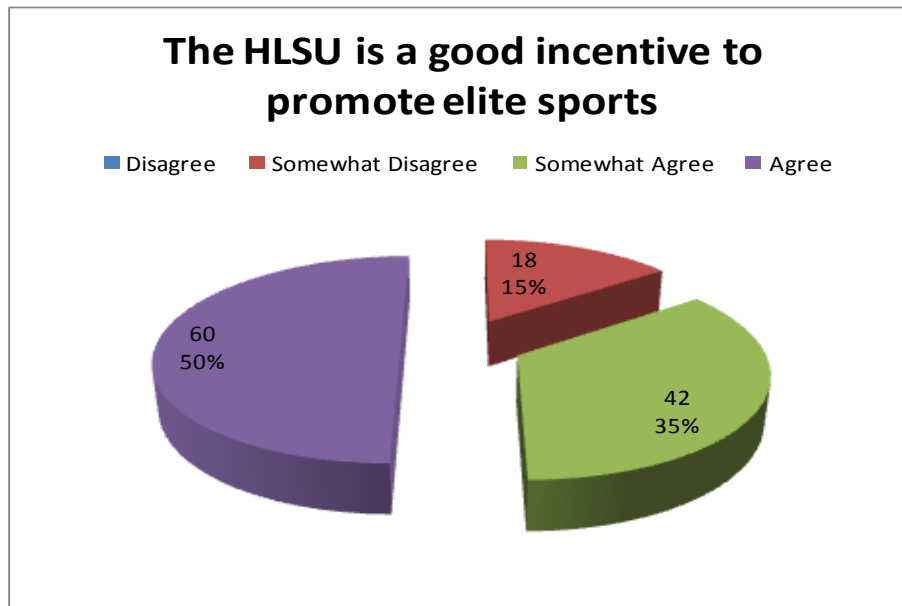
Clarifications were obtained from the interviews. The interviewees mentioned the example of football as the sport which received the most funding yet we performed quite poorly in it on the international scene. Boxing which for the last five years was classified as the number one federation in Mauritius in terms of performance also receives much funding from the state. However, although in boxing we are very successful internationally it is not a very popular sport in the country, in contrast to football.

Hence we can conclude that funding depends on two things: 1) popularity and/or 2) international success. As we saw previously, fund injection is influenced by international success. Nevertheless, though we are not very successful in football on the international scene, yet the state invests massively in it because of its popularity.

### 5.3.3. Analysis of the elite sport model in Mauritius

In this section, we shall analyse the elite sport model in Mauritius. We shall assess the different bodies put in place by the state to promote elite sports, investigate the adequacy of the budget allocating to elite sports and we shall also have a look at the availability and adequacy of the sport venues.

#### Question 9: The HLSU is a good incentive to promote elite sports.

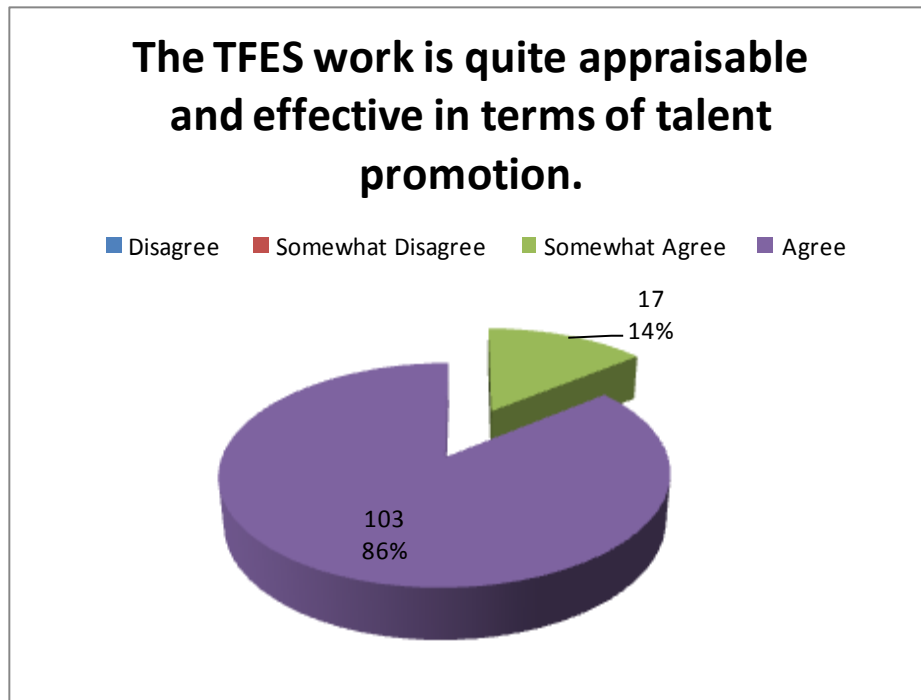


*Figure 16: Response about the positive contribution of the High Level Sports Unit (HLSU) to elite sports*

When we could have expected all our respondents to answer positively to the question that the contribution of the HLSU was a real boost to the promotion elite sports, amazingly it was not the case. 50% agree with the statement, 35% answered ‘Somewhat Agree’ and 15% answered ‘Somewhat Disagree’. Though the tendency is towards the positive, yet the data arouse questions about the HLSU.

In the interviews, the very aim of the HLSU was questioned. The HLSU appeared as a rewarding institution rather than an enhancing body to sports. Only performing top elite athletes benefit from allocations from the HLSU. Emerging athletes are unlikely to have these advantages and even top elite athletes may fall out of the system, if they under-perform.

**Question 10: The Trust Fund for Excellence in Sports (TFES) work is quite appraisable and effective in terms of talent promotion.**

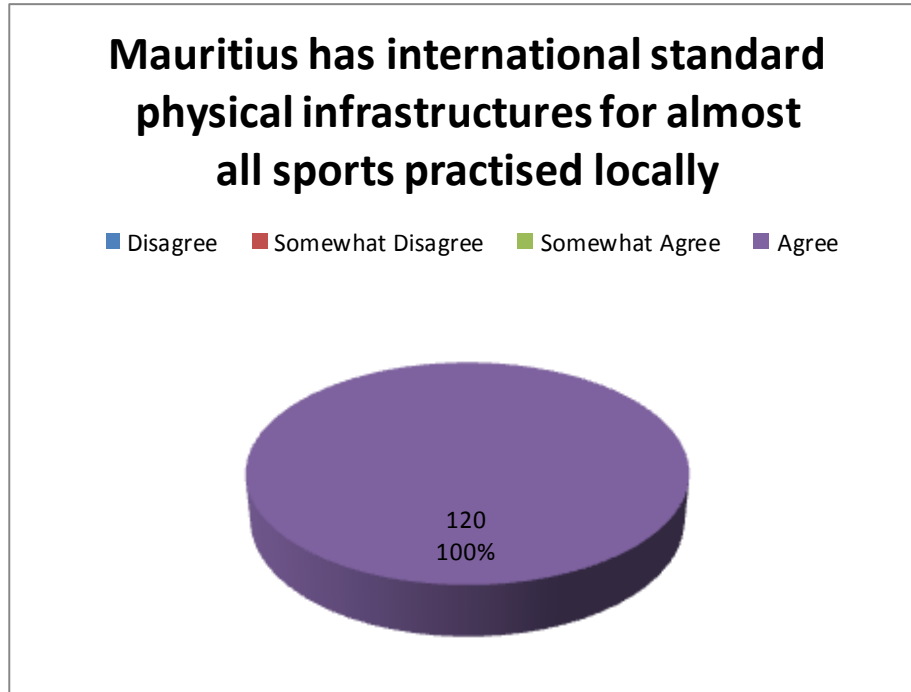


*Figure 17: Response about the TFES effectiveness in terms of talent promotion*

All the participants tend to agree to the fact that the TFES is doing an amazing job with the youngsters. In fact, 86% of our sample agrees with the issue and 14% answered ‘Somewhat Agree’.

The interviews confirmed the good work achieved by the TFES. It was also pointed out during the interviews that the TFES could be the remedy to our long unsuccessful history in sport internationally.

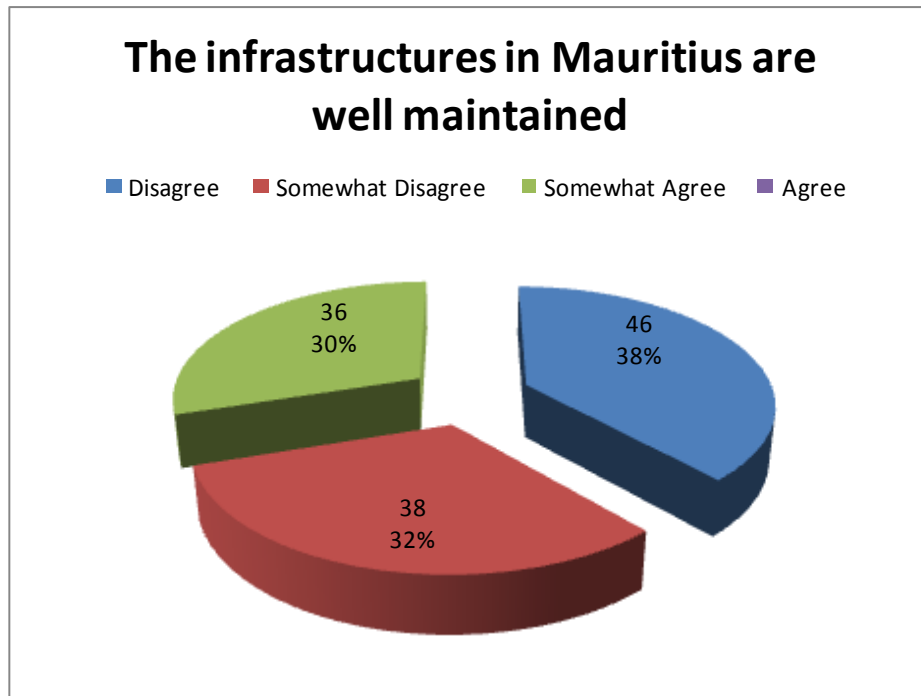
**Question 11: Mauritius has international standard physical infrastructures for almost all sports practised locally.**



*Figure 18: Response about the availability of international standard physical sport infrastructures*

100% of the surveyed participants answered positively to the fact that Mauritius has physical sport infrastructures of international standard for almost all the sports practised locally.

**Question 12: The infrastructures in Mauritius are well-maintained.**

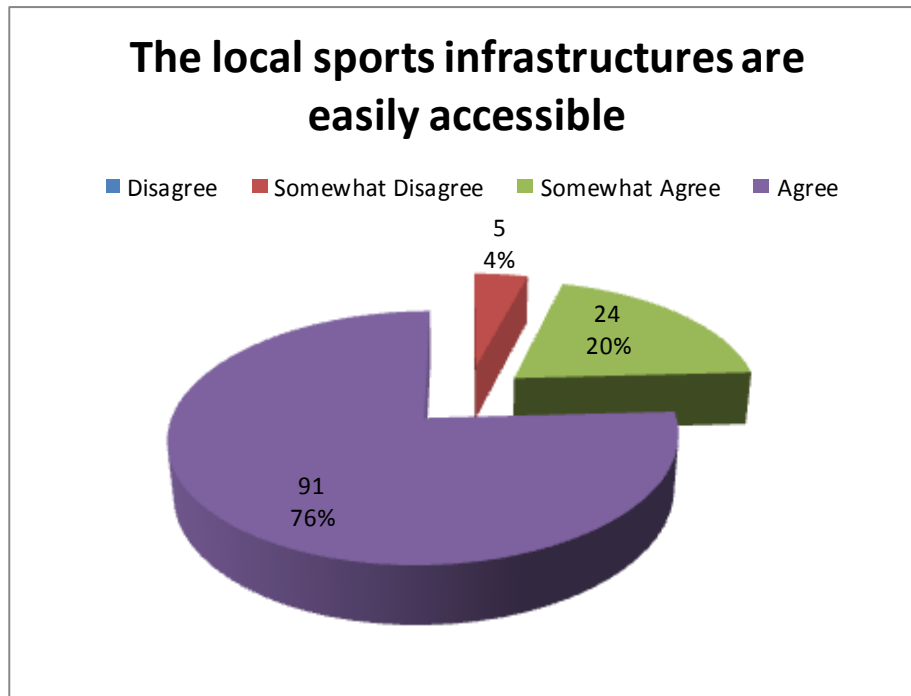


*Figure 19: Response about the maintenance of the sport infrastructures*

32% of the respondents answered ‘Disagree’ with the statement that our sport infrastructures benefit from proper maintenance. 30% answered ‘Somewhat Agree’ and 38% answered ‘Somewhat Disagree’. Hence, the majority believes that the maintenance of our infrastructures is neglected.

The interviewees underlined the fact that most of the sport infrastructures were property of the state. The state gives funding to the federations using these facilities for their organisational activities but gave almost nothing for the maintenance. The federations have to find the resources to maintain the different sport venues, digging into their organisational and administrative budget. This gives a plausible explanation why all our sport infrastructures are not properly maintained.

**Question 13: The local sport infrastructures are easily accessible.**



*Figure 20: Response about the easy accessibility of sports infrastructures*

Of the total of respondents, 91, representing 76% of our sample, answered ‘Agree’, to the item suggesting that the sport infrastructures were easily accessible. 20% answered ‘Somewhat Agree’ and 4% which represents 5 persons answered ‘Somewhat Disagree’.

From our interviews, it was pointed out that the Mauritian government had democratised sports and had consequently built several sport infrastructures in strategic zones for them to be easily accessible to both elite and casual athletes.

**Question 14: Local coaches are qualified professionals.**



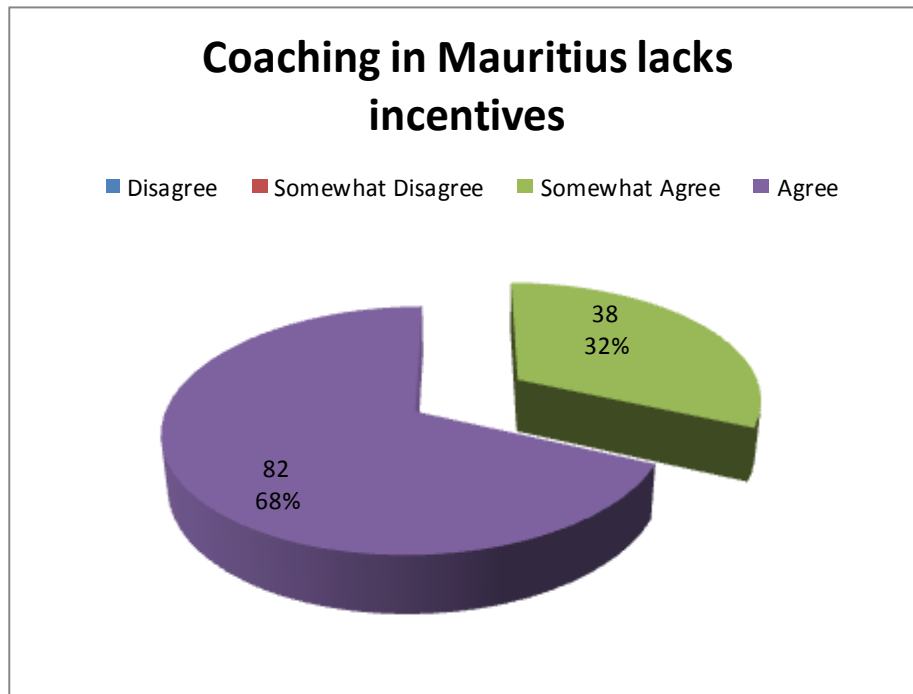
*Figure 21: Response about the qualification of our local coaches*

The result was quite ambiguous for the raised item about the professionalism of the local coaches. In fact 60% answered ‘Somewhat Agree’ and 40% ‘Somewhat Disagree’.

In the different sessions with our interviewees, it was alleged that all local coaches in whatever sport they may be, have to have followed formal training courses awarded by the respective affiliating international federation in order to be able to coach. However, between theory and practice the gap may be immense. Some of our sport interviewees argue that local coaches are qualified on paper but in practice they are questionable; they seriously put in doubt the professionalism not to say the skills of the Mauritian trainers.



**Question 15: Coaching in Mauritius lacks incentives.**

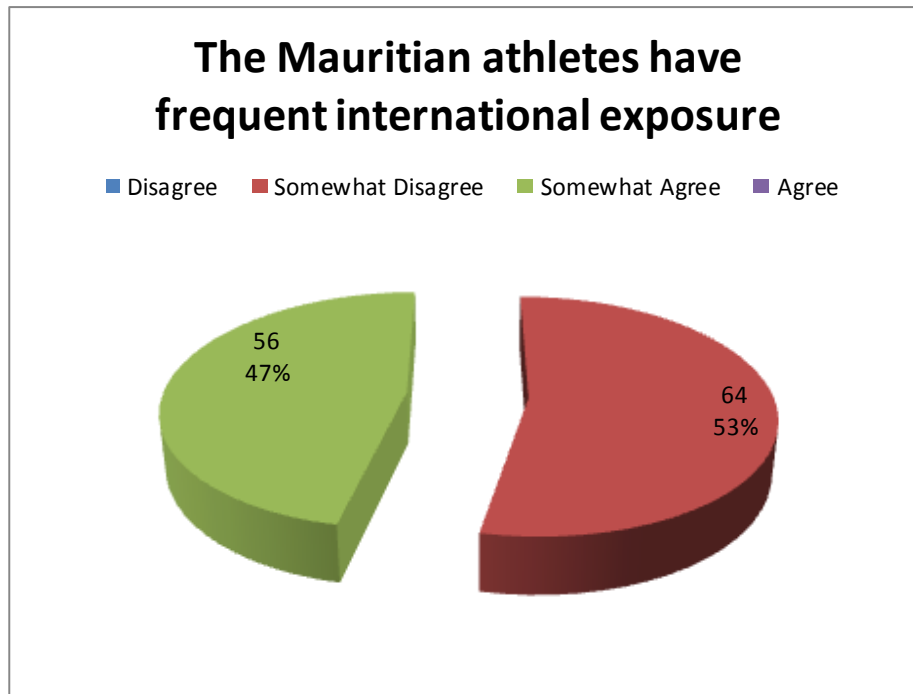


*Figure 22: Response about the fact that coaching in Mauritius lacks incentives*

The graph above pictures a positive response to the statement that there are not enough incentives to motivate our sport coaches. 68% answered ‘Agree’ and 32% answered ‘Somewhat Agree’.

In the interviews, when discussing about this issue, it was pointed out that the local sport coaches are most of them volunteers. Some few federations give to the coaches a monthly allocation but most of them cannot, being restricted by their budget. The allocation even if given, is quite insignificant.

**Question 16: The Mauritian athletes have frequent international exposure.**

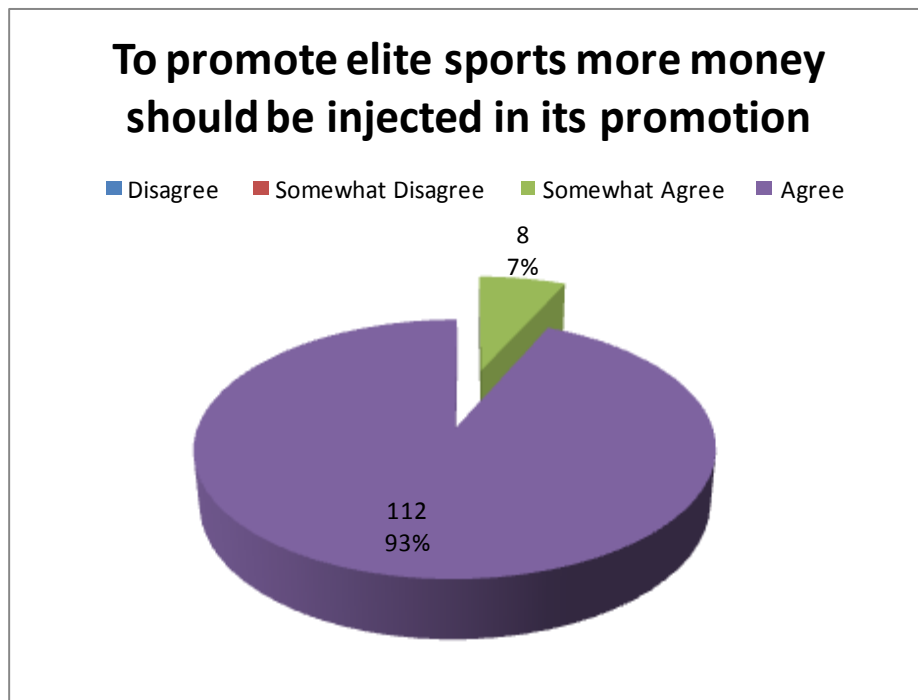


*Figure 23: Response to the fact that Mauritian athletes have frequent international exposure*

47% answered ‘Somewhat Agree’ and 53% answered ‘Somewhat Disagree’ to the statement that our athletes have frequent international exposure.

In an attempt to grasp a meaning of the above results, the question was raised during the interview sessions. The outcomes were that our athletes had international exposure but not that much which was a handicap to the progression. Most of our top elite athletes may have at most 2 international competitions annually, which is not sufficient if we expect to reach a higher level in sport.

**Question 17: To promote elite sports more money should be injected.**

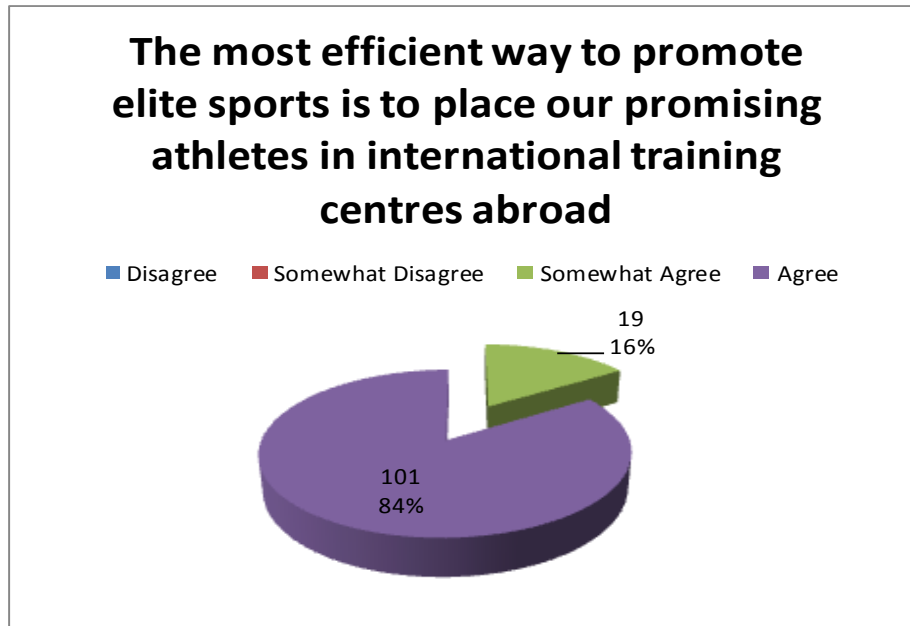


*Figure 24: Response about the fact that more investment will promote elite sports*

93% of our sample population agrees that if we want to promote elite sports more money should be invested in the sport sector as such. 7% answered ‘Somewhat Agree’.

During the interviews, emphasis was laid upon the financial contribution to the success of elite sports. It was argued that the more money in elite sports, the more we shall produce top competitive elite athletes.

**Question 18: The most efficient way to promote elite sports is to place our promising athletes in international training centres abroad.**



*Figure 25: Response to the statement that promoting elite athletes, passes via international training centres abroad*

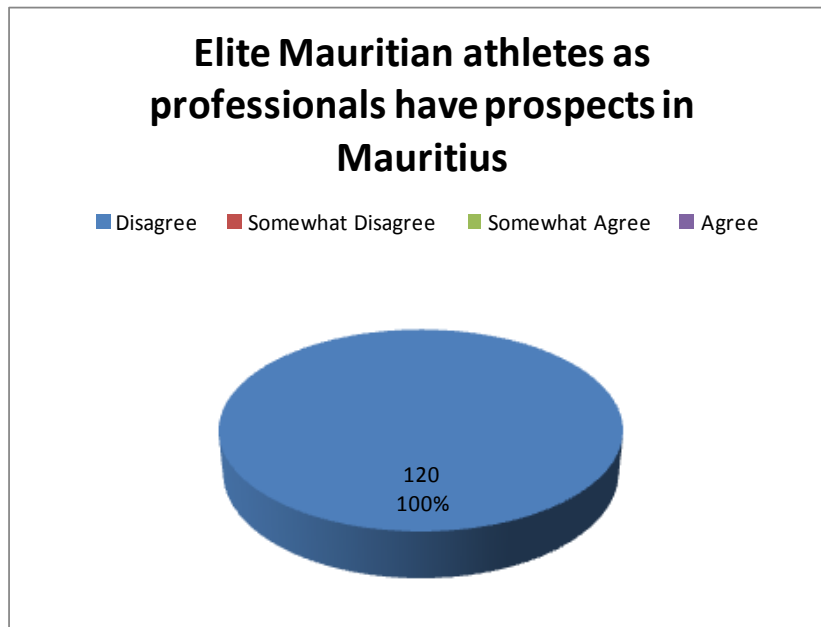
84% of the responses were ‘Agree’ and 16% of the responses were ‘Somewhat Agree’ to the proposal that elite sports would be enhanced if our elite athletes were placed into international training centres abroad.

The following explanation arose from the interviews: for some sports such as athletics placing our athletes in international training camps abroad have proved to be a strategic and winning decision in the year 2000 onwards. For instance, we had athletes like Stephan Buckland who was 4<sup>th</sup> on the 200m in the 2004 Athens Olympics, Jonathan Chimier our first Olympic finalist in long jump and Eric Milazar who challenged the best 400m runners in international competitions. All of these athletes trained in Senegal, at the IAAF international training centre of Dakar.

In Mauritius, in most of the sport disciplines we do not have the necessary technical expertise to produce competitive international athletes. It is a common belief that if a Mauritian sportsman or sportswoman wants to succeed, he/she has to go for international training camps where there will be the suitable environment for him/her to progress.

However, our most successful athletes were all trained domestically. The pugilist Bruno Julie, our first and only Olympic medallist, who was crowned at the 2008 Beijing Olympics, trained exclusively in Mauritius under the supervision of Mauritian coaches. Julie is the proof that we have the means in some disciplines to produce athletes of international standard. We have also our world champions in kick boxing in the name of Fabrice Bauluck, James Agathe, Mario Bienvenu and Facson Perrine who all train locally and yet are outstanding world standard athletes.

**Question 19: Elite Mauritian athletes as professionals have prospects in Mauritius**



*Figure 26: Response about elite athletes prospects as professional in Mauritius*

Unanimously, 100% of the respondents disagree with the statement that elite athletes have prospects in Mauritius as professionals.

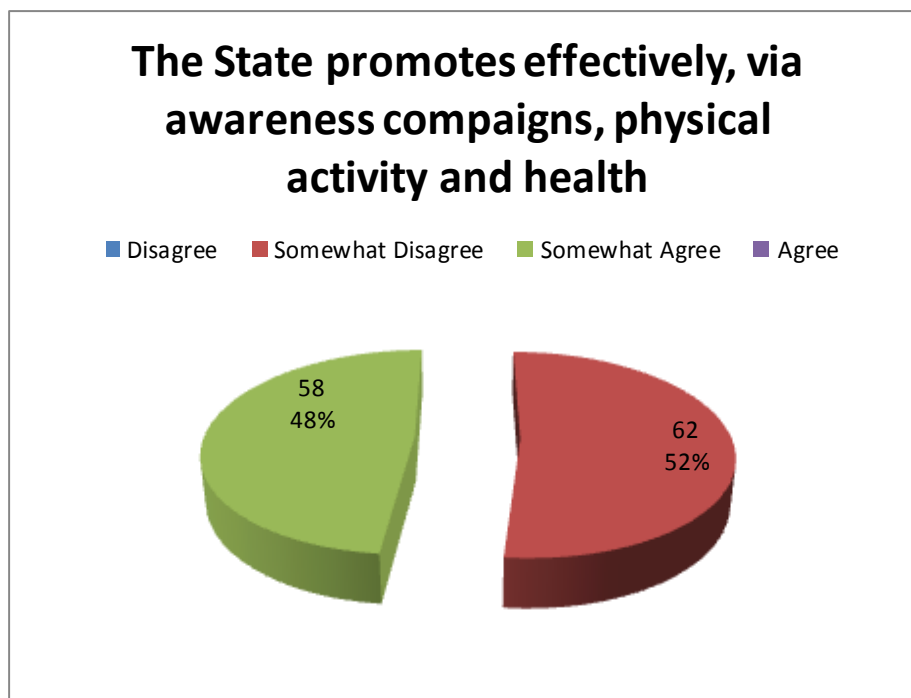
In the interviews, a similar position was adopted. It was said that the state has no policy to retain elite athletes. While athletes in other countries live from their sport achievement, in Mauritius this is very improbable. The Mauritian athlete cannot rely on sport in Mauritius to earn his/her living, he/she will have to have a job besides his/her sport career. Hence we find ourselves with several athletes performing well in their youth but since there are no

financial structure set up to help them boost their sport career, when they are supposed to reach the summit of their career, they quit.

### 5.3.4. Analysis of Sport for All in Mauritius

The last section of this chapter shall analyse the concept of ‘Sport for All’ in Mauritius, its promotion, the means for its promotion and the eventual barriers to its expansion.

**Question 20: The state promotes effectively, via awareness campaigns, physical activity and health.**

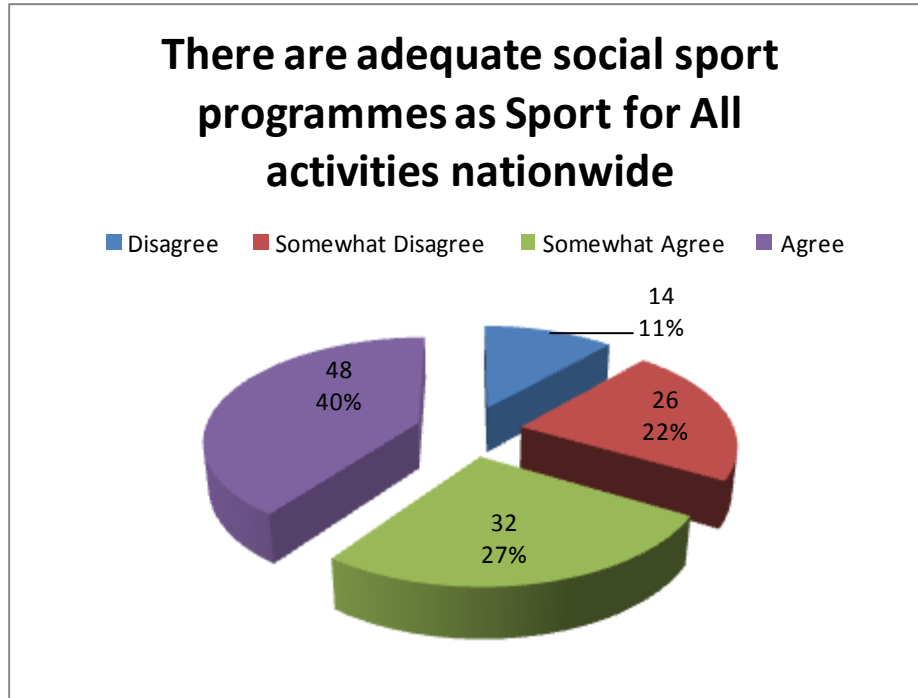


*Figure 27: Response about the effectiveness of State promotion of physical activity and health*

From our survey, it was recorded that 48% of the people who participated in our research answered ‘Somewhat Agree’ and 52% answered ‘Somewhat Disagree’ to the fact that the state promotes effectively physical activity and health via awareness campaigns.

In the interviews, attention was drawn to the fact that there are indeed campaigns that are carried out but the effectiveness in raising awareness among the people is to be investigated.

**Question 21: There are adequate social sport programmes as ‘Sport for All’ activities nationwide.**

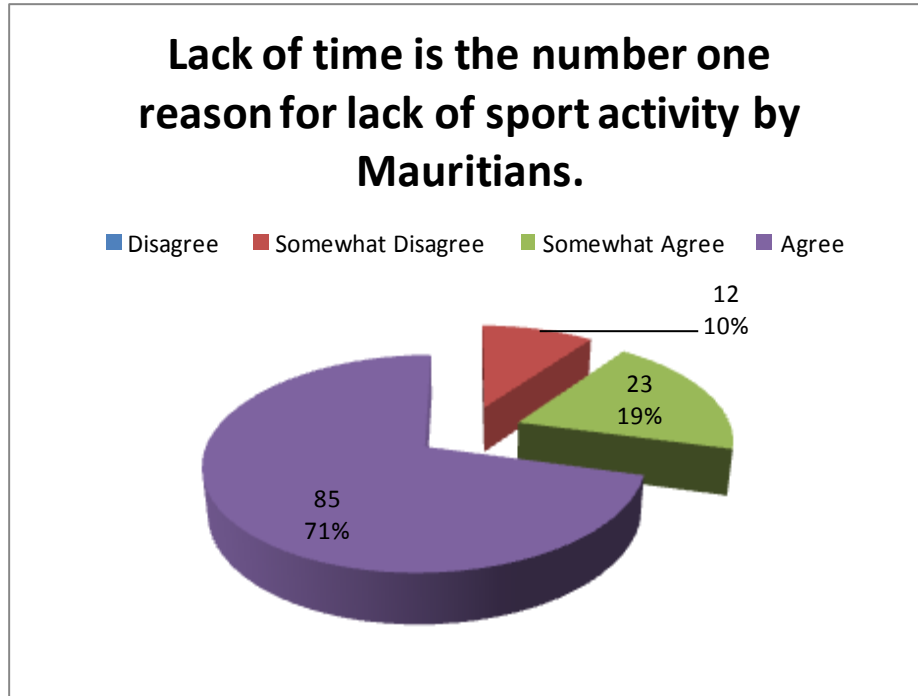


*Figure 28: Response about the adequacy of social sport programmes as Sport for All activities nationwide*

In our research, we found that in relevance to the statement that there were adequate social sport programmes as ‘Sport for All’ activities nationwide, 40% of our respondents answered ‘Agree’, 27% answered ‘Somewhat Agree’, 22% answered ‘Somewhat Disagree’ and 11% answered ‘Disagree’. The majority of the participants tend to say that we have sufficient social sport activities.

The interviewees also say that lot were done especially by the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life to promote sport activities and health. Regular campaigns are organised in community centres and schools. In village and town community centres morning exercises and many other health-promoting activities are scheduled everyday as well.

**Question 22: Lack of time is the number one reason for lack of sport activity by the Mauritian.**



*Figure 29: Response about the fact that lack of time leads to less sport activities in Mauritius*

71% of our sampling population agreed with the fact that the number one reason for lack of sport activity in our society may be lack of time. 19% responded to the statement by ‘Somewhat Agree’ and 10% by “Somewhat Disagree’.

During a discussion with our interviewees, the overall result above was corroborated. People do not exercise because they don’t have time.



## 5.4. Overall analysis and findings

1. What are the contributory catalysts to the sports agenda in Mauritius?

From the results of our survey, according to our respondents, we find that the contributory catalysts to the sports agenda are the prevailing economic situation, the level of sport success met internationally, health issues and the sport popularity. Amazingly, the survey concluded that political ideologies of the government in force have no influence the sport policy.

2. What is the Mauritian approach to elite sport development?

Mauritius has two main units to promote elite sport namely the High Level Sport Unit (HLSU) and the Trust Fund for Excellence in Sports (TFES). The HLSU reveals to be a good incentive for sportsmen. All elite athletes are classified in categories based on the performance by a committee. They receive an allowance based on their performance in international competitions. Athletes are hence provided a form of encouragement to pursue their sports career.

As for the TFES, the work done by this body is really very appraisable and effective in terms of talent promotion. Promising athletes are detected and taken in charge by the TFES. They are placed in specific schools and a special time-table made for them to provide them maximum time for training.

In terms of technical expertise in the field of sports, from the results of the research, we see the general opinion is that we indeed have qualified trained coaches. All the sport federations provide training for their respective coaches locally or in international training camps depending of their level.

The study also showed that athletes placed in international training camps proved to be a winning strategy; athletes who benefited from such opportunity indeed performed very well and even were able to challenge the best athletes in the world in their discipline. However, it was also noticed that in boxing and kick boxing, Mauritius produced several world champions domestically.

3. What is the Mauritian approach to grass root level sport people?

The Mauritian State, according to the survey participants, invests in grass root level sport people. The Ministry of Health and Quality of Life carries out awareness campaigns about non-communicable diseases and encourages the citizens to embrace practice of physical activity and good health styles. There are social sports programmes as Sport for All activities nationwide and the Government made it a point to establish sport infrastructures to vulgarise sport practice.

4. What are the developments in the promotion of physical activity and health nationwide?

As pointed out in the previous analysis, the Mauritian Government makes efforts to enhance physical activity and promote healthier life styles through its various campaigns and decentralisation of sport infrastructures.

5. What are the fallacies of the existing sport structure?

The present sport structure has numerous fallacies. It is above all influenced directly by the prevailing economic situation. Hence, in time of economic crisis sports will be the field where costs shall be cut. The sport field also suffers from insufficient investment. When compared to Jamaica a similar country to us in various angles, we find that the budget of Jamaica is more than 10 times ours.

It was also said that perhaps the sport sector would have been well off if we had professionals paid to do the job instead of volunteers who give their free time and from whom not much can be hence expected.

6. What are the international or global factors that influence the national sport policy?

In the interviews, to the question about international factors influencing the national sport policy, the interviewees mentioned that on the approach of a big international sport event, the national sport policy normally undergoes some changes. For instance, one or two years prior to the Olympic Games, the Government will inject more funds in the athletes' preparation. For the Francophone Games, the

Commonwealth Games, the African Games and the Indian Ocean Games, the Government always invest additional money when the respective mega-event is approaching.

7. What can be done to make sports more popular?

From the investigation carried out, we can say that more funds invested and better motivation for athletes in terms of allowance shall make sports really more popular.

8. How can Mauritius raise its standard in sports at international level?

Mauritius still is an amateur when we speak of sports. Professionalizing the field may be would have been a step towards raising the local sports standard at international competitive level. By professionalizing we mean employing people both for managerial and technical duties and offering athletes a financial coverage during their sports career. We found also that some of our athletes became competitive internationally because they were placed in international training camps. Implementing more of this strategy to boost the sport sector may be a solution to improve the local sport standard.

## CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 6.1. Conclusion

In broad lines the researcher investigated the openness of the sport policy in Mauritius, i.e. what are the factors that influence our sport policy makers, the state of art of elite sport in Mauritius and finally he analyses the promotion of the concept of ‘Sport for All’ in the country. In the course of the research, it was indicated that the sport policy may be influenced by prevailing economic situations, by the number of medals won by our athletes at international competitions and by societal health issues.

The study also revealed that the Government of Mauritius indeed invests huge amount of money to promote sports and health. As we saw via the thesis, the state indeed injects funds in Trust Funds for Excellence in Sports(TFES) for elite athletes, in the High Level Sport Unit (HLSU), in the sponsoring of athletes for training at international training centres and even in ‘Sports for all’. Nevertheless, despite all the Mauritian Government efforts to develop elite sports and to promote physical activity and health, it lacks the structure to support sporting activities at all levels, which inhibits broad participation in both recreational and competitive sport.

The main results of the research include the following:

1. The budget allocated to sports is inadequate, though it has drastically increased through the years. If we compared our sport budget to that of Jamaica which is a developing country just like Mauritius, we can see that Jamaica invests more than 16 times our sport budget on the promotion of sports.
2. We saw also that Mauritius, being a relatively new nation, does not have this sporting culture unlike our Jamaican peers. This can be explained in terms of participation at the Olympic Games. We participated 8 times in the Olympics for 1 medal only whereas Jamaica participated at the Olympics 17 times for 67 medals.
3. In Jamaica, there exists a real sport culture as attested by the numerous international world class athletes the country produces. In Mauritius, people are busy either studying or working. Sports are not really in-born to us.
4. The management and technical committees of sport federations are made up of volunteers who very often dedicate only their free time to the sport. Hence, not

much can be expected from them. It was suggested as finding in the study that perhaps Mauritius should head towards professionalisation of sports at all levels.

5. We found also that the competences of our local coaches were questionable and that there was a lack of incentives to encourage them.
6. Athletes do not find themselves earning from sport since sport is not professionalized in Mauritius. Hence, after some time practising, many Mauritian athletes would give up preferring to embrace a professional remunerative job.
7. For 'Sport for All', as we noted in our research, lot is being done to promote physical activity and health. Nevertheless, the Mauritian culture being what it is, the people don't have time for sport.

In comparison to Jamaica, which is a developing country just like Mauritius, we arrive at the conclusion that what is lacking to make sport really successful in Mauritius is a lack of common national vision, integrated plan for sport and last but not least massive investment.

## **6.2. Recommendations**

### **6.2.1. Increase further the sports budget**

The budget allocated to sport in Mauritius must be significantly reviewed. The state could in this context:

- I. Encourage the private sector to sponsor sports by providing them tax reductions
- II. Organize a national lottery whose revenue shall benefit directly the sport sector.

### **6.2.2. A vision and strategic plan for sports**

So far, Mauritius has no sport strategic plan. A long-term strategic vision for Sport in Mauritius must be established and built on a number of fundamental elements, as presented below:

- I. The State must ensure that the necessary conditions are in place for sport to take full advantage of the significant competitive and human resources possessed by Mauritius and to apply them for long-term economic and social development.

- II. There must be improvement in the policy and business environment for sport in Mauritius.
- III. Greater integration of sport with other economic and social sectors must be implemented.

Some goals of an eventual sport strategic plan are shown below:

<b>1. Sports for All</b>
1.1. Establishment of appropriate and effective policies, legislation and regulations to promote sport participation in public and private institutions as well as in schools
1.2. Increased number of persons of all ages participating in recreational and competitive sports
<b>2. Consistent production of Elite Athletes</b>
2.1. Establishment of advanced sport development institutions and programmes in Mauritius
2.2. Increased opportunities to participate in world-class competitions abroad
2.3. Incentives in form of employment and flexibility advantages in both the public and private sector for elite athletes
2.4. Funding of development programmes to improve local sport coaches
2.5. Professionalization of the management and technical committees of sport federation
2.6. Give sport the status of profession where high-level athletes shall be considered as public officers with a monthly salary and with similar benefits as any public officer and whereby they would be able to focus full-time on their sport career

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## APPENDIX A – QUESTIONNAIRE SAMPLE

### Nature and Size of Sport in the Republic of Mauritius Survey

Dear Participants,

I am currently having my masters in Olympic Studies, Olympic Education, organization and management of Olympic events at the University of Peloponnese and the International Olympic academy. As I am carrying out a research for my thesis entitled "The size and nature of sports in Mauritius." I would be much grateful if you could kindly answer the following questions.

The survey is divided into three parts: 1) The openness of the Mauritian Sport Policy, 2) The Elite sport and 3) Sports for All. There are no "right" or "wrong" answers to any of the questions. Please think carefully about each question and answer each one truthfully.

<b>(1) This section is about the openness of the Mauritian Sport Policy, i.e. what are the national as well as the international factors that influence our sport policy. This part of the survey shall also investigate the weaknesses of the local sport policy.</b>	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree
1 The Mauritian sport policy is affected by the prevailing economic situation	1	2	3	4
2 The sport policy is sensible to the number of medals won in international competitions	1	2	3	4
3 In Mauritius, the sport policy depends also on the political ideologies of the government in force	1	2	3	4
4 Health issues weigh a lot in formulating our national sport policy	1	2	3	4
5 The annual budget invested in the sport sector is not sufficient.	1	2	3	4
6 The sport sector would have been better if the management and technical committees were professional paid instead of volunteers	1	2	3	4
7 Olympic sports gain more money from the state than non-Olympic sports	1	2	3	4
8 The more popular a sport the more it will benefit from funding from the state.	1	2	3	4
<b>(2) This section is about the Elite sport model in force in Mauritius.</b>	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree
9 The HLSU is a good incentive to promote elite sports	1	2	3	4
10 The TFES work is quite praisable and effective in terms of talent promotion.	1	2	3	4
11 Mauritius has international standard physical infrastructures for almost all sports practised locally.	1	2	3	4
12 The infrastructures in Mauritius are well maintained	1	2	3	4
13 The local sports infrastructures are readily accessible.	1	2	3	4
14 Local coaches are qualified professionals	1	2	3	4
15 Coaching in Mauritius lacks of incentives	1	2	3	4
16 The Mauritian athletes have frequent international exposure.	1	2	3	4
17 To promote elite sports more money should be injected in its promotion	1	2	3	4
18 The most efficient way to promote elite sports is to place our promising athletes into international training centres abroad.	1	2	3	4
19 Elite Mauritian athletes as professionals have prospects in Mauritius	1	2	3	4
<b>(3) This section deals with the Sports for All policy in the Mauritian context.</b>	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree
20 The State promotes effectively, via awareness compaigns, physical activity and health.	1	2	3	4
21 There are adequate social sport programmes as Sport for All activities nationwide	1	2	3	4
22 Lack of time is the number one reason for lack of sport activity by Mauritians.	1	2	3	4

**Personal Details**

<b>In which of the following sport field are you from?</b>	<b>Athlete</b>	<b>P.E teacher</b>	<b>P.E lecturer</b>	<b>President of federation</b>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Gender</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>		
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		

**Thank You for kind cooperation**  
**Udylen Veerasamy**