
INTEGRITY AT PLAY: LEGAL, CULTURAL, AND ECONOMIC PERSPECTIVES ON MATCH-FIXING AND SPORTS BETTING

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the legal implications of match-fixing and sports betting. The study explores historical viewpoints, following the development of sports betting and match-fixing throughout history. The study identifies and examines intersectionality, cultural and economic considerations, and legal difficulties as important elements affecting sports laws. Using information from case studies and the body of existing literature, strategies for overcoming these obstacles are examined. Comprehensive solutions for eliminating anti-social concerns in sports are included in the study's conclusion. Legal changes, awareness and education campaigns, sociocultural interventions, economic empowerment tactics, inclusive policies, and cooperative efforts between the government and non-governmental organisations are all included in these recommendations. The dissertation highlights the value of using a variety of strategies to deal with the intricate web of issues facing the sports industry. This research paper advances knowledge of sports legislation by combining legal analysis, theoretical frameworks, case studies, and suggestions. It urges lawyers, legislators, communities, and civil society to work together to create an atmosphere that supports and enhances sports integrity.

Keywords: Sports, Gambling, betting, legal framework, India

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I. INTRODUCTION

Betting and match-fixing scandals have plagued the sports industry in recent years. In addition to endangering the fairness of sporting events, these problems also bring up difficult legal concerns pertaining to responsibility, enforcement, and regulation.³ The goal of this dissertation is to examine the many facets of the complex legal environment surrounding gambling and match-fixing from a legal standpoint.⁴ For decades, gambling has been a component of sports, providing chances and excitement for both players and spectators. However, worries regarding its effects on sports integrity have increased because to the growth of online betting sites and the accessibility of gambling markets. Furthermore, the legitimacy of competitions across several sports disciplines has been called into question by the rise of match fixing, in which people tamper with athletic events for their own benefit.⁵

Legally speaking, dealing with the problems of gambling and match-fixing necessitates a multipronged strategy. The effectiveness of the current legal frameworks controlling gambling activities in preventing sports corruption will be examined in this paper. It will also examine the difficulties presented by international gambling operations and the changing role of technology in enabling and identifying instances of match fixing.⁶ Additionally, the dissertation will investigate the culpability of players, coaches, officials, and gambling operators, among other stakeholders involved in gambling and match-fixing. It will evaluate critically whether current rules and regulations are sufficient to hold these parties responsible and discourage such behaviour in the future.⁷ This study aims to add to the current conversation on protecting sports integrity and advancing fairness and transparency in competitions by analysing the legal difficulties underlying gambling and match fixing. It seeks to provide insights into possible reforms and approaches for resolving the difficulties presented by these widespread problems by a thorough examination of pertinent case studies, legislative actions, and court rulings. This study essentially aims to clarify the legal complexities involved in the relationship between gambling and match-fixing, opening the door for educated debates and

³ Ryan M. Rodenberg & Elihu D. Feustel, *Sports (Betting) Integrity: Detecting Match-Fixing in Soccer*, 19 GAMING L. REV. & ECON. 689, 690 (2015).

⁴ Minhyeok Tak, Michael P. Sam & Steve J. Jackson, *The Problems and Causes of Match-Fixing: Are Legal Sports Betting Regimes to Blame?*, 4 J. CRIMINOLOGICAL RES., POL'Y & PRAC. 73, 74 (2018).

⁵ Dheeraj Kumar, *Sports Betting and Legal Implications in India: The Regulation of Gambling and MatchFixing in Sports*, 14 INT'L J. RES. PEDAGOGY & TECH. EDUC. & MOVEMENT SCI. 1, 3 (2025).

⁶ Gaurav Mittal, Yatish Pachauri & Touheed Akhter, *Sports Betting, Online Gaming, and Legal Compliance: Analyzing India's Emerging Regulatory Landscape*, 6 J. INT'L COM. L. & TECH. 559, 562 (2025).

⁷ Law Commission of India, *Legal Framework: Gambling and Sports Betting Including in Cricket in India*, Report No. 276, at 12–15 (2018).

legislative changes intended to protect sports integrity in the face of changing challenges.

There are still obstacles in the way of successfully reducing sports gambling and match-fixing in India, despite these legislative measures and regulatory initiatives. Authorities now face additional enforcement challenges as a result of the quick growth of online betting sites and the anonymity provided by digital transactions. The regulatory environment is further complicated by the international scope of gaming activities and the involvement of organised crime syndicates.⁸ In light of this, the goal of this dissertation is to present a thorough examination of Indian legislation concerning match-fixing and sports gambling. It seeks to clarify the advantages, disadvantages, and deficiencies in the current legal system by looking at pertinent statutes, court rulings, and regulatory frameworks. Additionally, it looks on ways to improve the efficacy of laws protecting sports integrity and maintaining moral principles in the area of match-fixing and sports betting in India. A number of high-profile cases involving sports gambling and match-fixing in India have drawn public attention and spurred discussions regarding the integrity of sports and the efficacy of regulatory measures in preventing such malpractices. The legal discourse around sports integrity has been significantly shaped by these cases, which have also brought attention to the difficulties authorities have in controlling gambling and stopping match-fixing. The 2013 Indian Premier League (IPL)⁹ spot-fixing controversy is one such instance that had an impact on Indian sports. A network of corruption within one of cricket's most profitable events was exposed by the scandal, which involved players, team officials, and bookies. It called for strict anti-corruption measures within the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) and other cricketing authorities, highlighting the weaknesses in the game's governance system.

The 2014 FIFA World Cup betting scandal is another significant event that raised awareness of sports gambling. This case highlights the widespread nature of sports betting in India and the difficulties in regulating internet gambling platforms. A number of people were detained for operating illicit betting operations on FIFA World Cup matches. In order to combat the growth of internet betting and safeguard the integrity of international sporting events, the case highlighted the necessity of extensive regulatory frameworks. In addition, a lot of attention has been paid to the continuing legal dispute over the legalisation of sports betting in India. The Supreme Court of India is hearing the case, which might have an impact on how sports

⁸ S. K. Verma, *Match Fixing and Sports Fraud in India*, 62 J. INDIAN L. INST. 145, 151 (2020).

⁹ Board of Control for Cricket in India, *Anti-Corruption Code for Participants*, Rule 2.1 (2013).

gambling is regulated in the nation going forward. It highlights the difficulties in developing sensible legal frameworks for sports gambling by posing fundamental queries about how to strike a balance between individual liberties, the general welfare, and the avoidance of corruption in sports. These and other incidents highlight the complexity of the problems caused by match-fixing and sports gambling in India.¹⁰ They draw attention to the necessity of an all-encompassing strategy that includes legislative changes, regulatory actions, and cooperative initiatives involving government authorities, law enforcement, and sports leagues. Through a thorough analysis of these cases, this study seeks to shed light on India's changing legal environment regarding sports integrity and make suggestions for resolving the intricacies of match-fixing and sports gambling within the nation's legal system.¹¹

India has seen a rise in sports enthusiasm in recent years, along with an increase in gambling and worries about match-fixing. The confluence of integrity, gambling, and sports presents important legal issues that call for a careful analysis of India's current legal system. Cricket is the most popular sport in India, which has a strong sports culture. But in addition to the passion for sports, there is a booming legal and criminal gambling sector that is becoming more and more entwined with athletic events.¹² The mutually beneficial relationship between gambling and sports has raised ethical, legal, and regulatory issues, especially with regard to match fixing, a practice that jeopardises competition and fair play. The regulatory framework controlling sports betting and match-fixing in India is at the center of the issue. Although state laws pertaining to gaming varies, the Public gaming Act of 1867 is the main federal law that forbids most types of gambling.¹³

However, under some circumstances, a number of exceptions and state-specific regulations allow certain types of gambling, such as horse racing and lotteries.¹⁴ The Indian Penal Code of 1860 and the Prevention of Corruption Act of 1988 are important laws that deal with matchfixing and similar crimes in the context of sports integrity. These laws make bribery, cheating, and fraud illegal. These crimes are frequently linked to the manipulation of sporting results for unlawful purposes. In order to prevent match fixing in their respective sports, sports

¹⁰ Ajit Singh Shekhawat, *Need for Match-Fixing Law and Legalized Betting*, TIMES OF INDIA, Sept. 17, 2019, at 12.

¹¹ Matthew Nicholson, Russell Hoye & Bob Stewart, *SPORT AND SOCIAL CAPITAL* 167 (2d ed. 2015).

¹² Aishwarya & Subhrajit Chanda, *India: Regulation of Sports Betting*, RESEARCHGATE (Oct. 2024), https://www.researchgate.net/publication/388146766_India_Regulation_of_Sports_Betting.

¹³ India's Regulatory Dilemma: *Sports Betting*, 3 J. ADVANCE & FUTURE RSCH. 226, 228 (2025).

¹⁴ Agniva Mandal, *Legalization of Betting in Sports in India*, 5 INT'L J. L. MGMT. & HUMAN. 366, 369 (2022).

regulatory organisations like the All India Football Federation (AIFF) and the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) have also put in place disciplinary procedures and anticorruption measures.¹⁵

TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENT IN SPORTS BETTING AND GAMBLING

There are advantages and disadvantages to the advancement of technology. The development of the internet has opened up a plethora of commercial opportunities, including the possibility of online gaming and betting.¹⁶ In countries like India where gambling is prohibited, it has made things even more challenging. Even before the internet was created, law enforcement agencies were concerned about the betting market, and the internet has only made matters worse. Simply searching for "online betting" on Google in India will provide a variety of websites, making it difficult to select one. People develop a gambling addiction. Numerous psychological investigations have demonstrated this tendency. "Pathological Choice: The Neuroscience of Gambling and Gambling Addiction" by Luke Clark and associates is one such report¹⁷. Because of the very essence of betting and gambling, people are drawn to it repeatedly. However, because the web platform has made the online betting sector so large, it is now imperative that this be controlled. Additionally, it increases the amount of money that is unaccounted for in the market and contributes to money laundering. In addition to feeding terrorism, this undeclared money destabilises the nation's economy.

Online gaming is growing more and more popular these days. The internet is far simpler to use than more conventional methods. It is now simple to use the internet from any location due to its accessibility. In contrast to traditional gambling, online betting and gambling is more alluring to both operators and clients. The Covid-19 pandemic has substantially increased the number of people who gamble online. The Android and Apple app stores provide a wide range of sports betting software programs. Unquestionably, the number of people engaging in online gambling has significantly increased. The online gambling industry has grown to such an extent that it is employing "professional gamblers" to place bets. The cellphone operator Nazara intends to spend \$20 million in e-sports in India. Additionally, by the end of 2021, it is predicted

¹⁵ *Should Gambling Be Legalized in India?*, INDIAN J. PSYCHOL. MED. 43, 301, 304 (2021).

¹⁶ R. Lakshmanan, *Internet Gambling and Its Impact on Society*, 12 J. CYBER POL'Y 210, 215 (2022).

¹⁷ Luke Clark et al., *Pathological Choice: The Neuroscience of Gambling and Gambling Addiction*, 16 NATURE NEUROSCIENCE 1470, 1473 (2013).

that the online gaming market will reach \$1 billion.¹⁸ Numerous elements, including accessibility, privacy, equality, event frequency, etc., have contributed to the market's rapid expansion. Online gambling is very accessible because it can be done from any location. The number of internet gamblers has increased due to the privacy element. Another issue is that there is no room for inequality and everyone is treated equally when it comes to online gaming.

Despite the fact that the online betting business is expanding, there remains a lot of uncertainty due to the absence of a comprehensive legal framework. It is imperative that a bill to restrict online sports betting be introduced by our legislature¹⁹. On the other hand, it is challenging to outlaw all activities associated with sports betting and sports fraud. Numerous government assessments have recommended regulating rather than outlawing sports betting and fraud. Since India is a welfare state, it is the government's responsibility to shield its people from wrongdoing that harms them.

Even major players like Virat Kohli, M.S. Dhoni, Rohit Sharma, and others are endorsing online betting apps like Dream11 on TV and social media, which is quite concerning²⁰. In addition to advertising these gambling apps, they are also working to improve the bad reputation of online gambling. There are also additional apps that involve staking real money, such as Parimatch, 4RABET, MELBET, 1WIN, and Betway. Young people are enticed to participate in the scenario by the celebrities' devotion to these online gaming platforms, and they unintentionally develop an addiction to them²¹. These gaming systems are nothing more than internet gambling.

Because it offers so many chances and room for growth, the online gaming business is proving to be advantageous for both users and service providers. However, as a result, it has led to a number of problems, including criminal activity and problem gambling. "Participation in gambling to the point where it causes serious harm to oneself and others" is the definition of problem gambling. Severe issues include melancholy, suicidal thoughts, debt, poverty, criminality, and divorce are brought on by online gambling, while more moderate issues include chasing debts, guilt, concealment, despair, and excessive spending²². Regular bettors

¹⁸ Financial Action Task Force, *Money Laundering Risks Arising from Gambling*, FATF (June 2013), <https://www.fatf-gafi.org>.

¹⁹ Illegal Betting and Terror Funding Nexus Under Scanner, INDIAN EXPRESS, July 18, 2023, at 1.

²⁰ S. K. Verma, *Role of Celebrities in Promoting Online Gaming in India*, 5 J. MEDIA L. & ETHICS 120, 125 (2022).

²¹ Celebrities Face Scrutiny for Endorsing Betting Apps, THE INDIAN EXPRESS, Sept. 14, 2023, at 3.

²² Heather Wardle et al., *Problem Gambling and Its Social Consequences*, 18 INT'L J. MENTAL HEALTH & ADDICTION 245, 249 (2020).

also develop criminal behaviour as a result of their gambling addiction²³. This is a result of youth "showbiz"²⁴ influence and unemployment. Illegal sports betting can win the race for quick money, and the popularity of cricket in the nation makes it simpler for young people to engage in sports betting.²⁵

INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS AND REGULATIONS

This is a summary of worldwide laws and agreements pertaining to sports gambling.

1. In order to counteract the detrimental effects of sports betting on the integrity of sporting events, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has acknowledged the necessity of international cooperation.²⁶
2. With an emphasis on the value of fair play and integrity in sports, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) has created rules and guidelines to prevent and combat corruption associated to sports betting.²⁷
3. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has called for international measures to combat match-fixing and related illegal activities, highlighting the connection between organised crime and sports betting.²⁸
4. A comprehensive legal framework for preventing and combating sports competition manipulation is provided by the Council of Europe's Convention on the Manipulation of Sports Competitions, also known as the Macolin Convention. This framework includes measures to regulate sports betting and collaboration between national authorities, sports organisations, and the betting industry.²⁹

²³ World Health Organization, *Public Health Implications of Excessive Gambling* (May 12, 2022), <https://www.who.int>.

²⁴ R. K. Sharma, *Celebrity Culture, Youth Influence and Risk Behaviour in India*, 8 INDIAN J. SOC. SCI. 89, 94 (2021).

²⁵ Sally M. Gainsbury, *Internet Gambling: Current Research Findings and Implications*, 29 CURR. ADDICTION REP. 1, 5 (2015).

²⁶ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, *UNESCO and ICSS Join Forces to Protect Sport Integrity*, UNESCO (Dec. 10, 2013), <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/unesco-and-icss-join-forcesprotect-sport-integrity>.

²⁷ International Olympic Committee, *Olympic Movement Code on the Prevention of the Manipulation of Competitions*, IOC Rules & Regulations, Rule 1 (2022).

²⁸ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *Illegal Betting is the Number One Factor Fuelling Corruption in Sports*, UN Conference Hears, UNODC (Dec. 17, 2023), <https://turkiye.un.org/en/256249-illegal-bettingnumber-one-factor-fuelling-corruption-sports-un-conference-hears>.

²⁹ Convention on the Manipulation of Sports Competitions (Macolin Convention), Sept. 18, 2014, C.E.T.S. No. 215, art. 1.

5. Online sports betting-related offences like match-fixing, unlawful gambling, and fraud are covered by the Convention on Cybercrime, commonly called the Budapest Convention.³⁰
6. To protect the integrity of football competitions and fight match-fixing, bribery, and other forms of corruption in the sport, the Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) has put in place stringent anti-corruption rules and procedures.³¹

NATIONAL REGULATIONS AND LAWS

1. Sports betting is governed by a complicated legal framework in India. The Public Gaming Act of 1867³² is the main piece of legislation that controls gaming in India.
2. The Public gaming Act, 1867: This colonial-era statute forbids the construction of betting and gaming businesses as well as the operation of gambling houses. It does not, however, particularly target sports betting or internet gambling.
3. Legal status of sports betting: With the exception of horse racing, which is governed by state governments under the control of the federal government, sports betting is essentially illegal in India under the Public Gambling Act.
4. The Information Technology Act, 2000: This law governs gambling and other online activities in India. It does not, however, offer a clear framework for the regulation of sports betting and has few regulations pertaining to online gambling.
5. Exemption for skill-based games: There has been discussion in recent years on whether some types of sports betting fall under the category of skill-based games and are thus exempt from Indian law's ban on gambling.³³
6. State-level rules: Each state in India has its own laws and regulations controlling gambling activities, and these laws are mainly implemented at the state level.

³⁰ Convention on Cybercrime, Nov. 23, 2001, E.T.S. No. 185, arts. 7, 8.

³¹ Fédération Internationale de Football Association, FIFA Code of Ethics, arts. 13–29 (2023); see also FIFA & UNODC, Global Integrity Programme to Tackle Match Manipulation (2021).

³² The Public Gambling Act, 1867, No. 3 of 1867, § 3 (India).

³³ Law Commission of India, *Legal Framework: Gambling and Sports Betting Including Cricket in India*, Rep. No. 276, at 23–25 (2018).

In *Board of Control for Cricket in India v. Cricket Association of Bihar & Ors.*³⁴, the Supreme Court cited the Law Commission. Recommendations for gaming and betting regulation were included in this paper. The law commission made the decision to investigate the requirements for legalising gambling and betting in the wake of the Lodha and Mudgal committees. The panel considered betting and gambling to be two sides of the same coin. The commission chose to investigate the topic of legalising gaming even though the Supreme Court did not recommend it.

Justice G. Krishna ruled that the case was the best illustration of a player avoiding the grave accusations of match-fixing made against him due to the BCCI's failure to act in accordance with the legal process. Furthermore, members of the external network involved in a match manipulation transaction, including middlemen, bookies, punters, and syndicate operators, are not subject to the jurisdiction or authority of sports regulating organisations. Because it lacks the necessary legal foundation, the enforcement mechanism that is used to stop match-fixing is unable to do so. Nothing can be done until match-fixing is made illegal in India.

REGULATORY MEASURES

Through a variety of regulatory actions, sports regulating bodies are essential in preserving the integrity of sports and preventing match fixing.

1. Establishing integrity units: To monitor, look into, and stop match-fixing and other types of sports corruption, many sports organisations have set up special integrity units or departments.³⁵
2. Putting codes of conduct into practice: Sports governing bodies frequently create and implement codes of ethics or conduct that specify appropriate behaviour for players, coaches, officials, and other stakeholders, including bans on match-fixing.³⁶
3. Education and awareness programs: To increase understanding of the risks of matchfixing and encourage moral behaviour, sports organisations run education and awareness programs for athletes, coaches, referees, and other stakeholders.

³⁴ (2016) 8 SCC 535 (India).

³⁵ International Olympic Committee, *Olympic Movement Code on the Prevention of the Manipulation of Competitions Rule 7* (2022).

³⁶ International Cricket Council, *Anti-Corruption Code for Participants arts. 2.1–2.4* (2024).

4. Hotline and reporting procedures: To encourage people to report suspicions or instances of match-fixing, corruption, or other integrity violations, sports governing organisations offer private hotlines and reporting procedures.
5. Monitoring and surveillance systems: To identify suspect betting patterns and unusual activities that might point to match-fixing, many sporting organisations use monitoring and surveillance systems, which include data analysis and intelligence gathering.
6. Cooperation with betting regulators: To exchange information, keep an eye on betting markets, and spot possible risks to sports integrity, sports governing organisations work with betting regulators, law enforcement, and betting operators.
7. Integrity agreements with betting operators: To share information, put responsible gambling policies in place, and work together to stop match-fixing, certain sports organisations have integrity agreements with betting operators.
8. Disciplinary measures: Sports governing bodies have disciplinary procedures in place to look into claims of match-fixing and punish those found guilty of corruption with fines, suspensions, and lifetime bans.
9. Whistleblower protection: Sports organisations may provide whistleblower protection measures, such as anonymity and freedom from retaliation, to entice people to come forward with knowledge concerning match-fixing.

"A mutual test of prowess and a search for excellence that can only be achieved through competition" is how sports competitions are described. And the whole thrill and adrenaline rush that sports offer is lost if this pursuit of perfection is abandoned. In India, cricket is practiced like a religion, and the game has undergone many changes that have damaged its reputation as a gentleman's sport. The game's supporters place their faith and hope in it. There should be severe repercussions if there is any dishonesty in this game. However, the truth on the ground is that the game has been damaged by wrongdoers who engage in online gaming and gambling, match and spot fixing, and other activities. Due to the lax rules in our nation, match fixers, bookies, illicit betting syndicates, etc. go unpunished. The purpose of laws is to improve the nation and its people. However, the fact that our nation still lacks specific legislation regarding sports betting, online gaming, etc., is a serious worry. There are a few

exceptions, though, as certain lawmakers have filed laws pertaining to sports law, but none of them have even been discussed in the House of People. Mr. Shashi Tharoor³⁷ and Mr. Anurag Thakur are among them. A private bill called the Sports (Online Gaming and Prevention of Fraud) Bill was introduced by Thiruvananthapuram MP Shashi Tharoor. The bill attempts to control online gaming and sports betting. The Economic Times reported that Tharoor introduced the sports bill in an attempt to establish a regulatory framework for the nation's mostly unorganised online gaming market, which has experienced a big influx of new players in the past two years.

CONCLUSION

In summary, the legal environment pertaining to matchfixing and sports gambling is intricate and varied. We have examined numerous national and international rules and regulations controlling these activities throughout this study³⁸. It is clear that comprehensive and unified regulation is desperately needed to counter the growing concerns of gambling-related corruption in sports. Even if certain countries have taken strong action to combat matchfixing and safeguard the integrity of athletic events, there are still a lot of gaps and inconsistencies in the legal systems of various places. Furthermore, the growth of online gambling sites and the quick advancement of technology create new problems that call for creative regulatory solutions. Any strategy aiming at preventing match-fixing and maintaining the integrity of sporting events must include effective enforcement measures, stakeholder participation, and public awareness initiatives.³⁹ To ensure that any legislative actions are appropriate and uphold fundamental rights, it is crucial to achieve a balance between regulation and individual liberties. Initiatives to encourage education and integrity-building programs within the sports community must also go hand in hand with efforts to combat match-fixing. Although there has been a lot of progress in tackling the legal issues of sports gambling and match-fixing, much more needs to be done. We can better preserve sports integrity and the interests of athletes, fans, and the larger athletic community by taking a thorough and coordinated approach at the national and international levels.

³⁷ Shashi Tharoor, *Sports (Online Gaming and Prevention of Fraud) Bill, Bill No. 275 of 2018*, §§ 3–8 (India).

³⁸ Jack Anderson, *Integrity in Sport: The Role of Law in the Fight Against Match-Fixing* 78 (2d ed. 2018).

³⁹ International Olympic Committee, *Olympic Agenda 2020: Recommendations on Integrity and Good Governance* 15 (2014).