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SPORTS AS A GATEWAY TO SMART UNIVERSITIES

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Sports and games not only make students keep up their physical stamina, but also helps to develop the habit of obedience, discipline, the determination to win, willpower—all of which are essentials of life. Academic learning and sports education complement each other; they resemble the two sides of the same coin. If sports education is accompanied with the academic curriculum, the overall personality of the student is increased to quite an extent: qualities of the leadership, sharing, team spirit and tolerance are learnt from sports. Sports can teach values such as fairness, teambuilding, equality, discipline, inclusion, perseverance, and respect. It has the power to provide a universal framework for learning values, thus contributing to the development of soft skills needed for responsible citizenship.

PRELUDE

Sports and games play a major role towards the wholesome development of youth during higher education. It is a proven fact that participating in sports and games improves the confidence level, concentration, leadership quality; strengthens the health of the individual; improves socialization; and on the whole improves the quality of life. The well-being of the citizens indirectly influences the growth and economy of the country. Citizens with sound mind and body can contribute to a greater extent to the growth of the country, and therefore involving students in sports and games helps to make their personalities wholesome. There is an urgent need to inculcate sporting culture in all educational institutions and it's time to revamp and strengthen the sports and games in all our universities.

SPORTS AS A METAPHOR OF LIFE

National Sports Policy 2011, stresses the value of sports and physical education in developing human capital, increasing productivity, and fostering social harmony. In normal working days, students spend a large portion of their time at schools and colleges for acquiring quality education and knowledge. Along with quality education, it is vital to impart sports and physical education as a regular part of learning during these formative years to develop the sporting culture in students for their overall development. Activities that encourage physical movement and exercise in students create an enjoyable experience and for socialisation among students in schools and colleges (GoI, 2011).

Moreover, when sports are made an integral part of the curriculum, students report healthier eating habits, better levels of cardiovascular fitness, increased parental support, and decreased levels of anxiety and depression. A national study also displayed a positive correlation between student-athletes and decline in drug, alcohol, and substance abuse. (Nayana, 2019). Sports and games not only make students keep up their physical stamina, but also helps to develop the habit of obedience, discipline, the determination to win, willpower—all of which are essentials of life.

SPORTS – AN INTEGRAL PART OF COMPLETE EDUCATION

As the saying goes, “All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy,” academic learning and sports education complement each other. They resemble the two sides of the same coin. If sports education is accompanied with the academic curriculum, the overall personality of the student is increased to quite an extent: qualities of the leadership, sharing, team spirit and tolerance are learnt from sports.

Nowadays, the system of education makes the students stress more on their mental development and completely rejects physical activities. The overall outcome of this is that the developing groups of graduates and professionals have weak bodies and a poor physique. Hence, the curriculum needs to include sports, games and physical health education for the all-round development of the students (inspiria.edu.in).

DEVELOPING A SPORTS CULTURE

Like many other ancient civilisations, India had a tradition of sports and physical fitness from its Vedic times and has promoted the virtues of physical perfection based on a clear understanding of the body and its functions. One such manifestation of the tradition is the practice of yoga, which is “an ancient discipline designed to balance the health to the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual dimensions of the individual” (Ross and Thomas, 2010). Of all the physical activities, yoga is one that is truly of Indian origin and is now practiced all over the world.

Moreover, the epics of Mahabharata and Ramayana extolled the competitive of their heroes in the physical activities. The five Pandava brothers of Mahabharata specialised and excelled in specific physical activities and weaponry. Dronacharya was the mentor and coach of these five heroes. These figures are held as role-models even today. For instance, the highest award granted by the government of India for a sportsperson is the Arjuna award and the highest award for coaches is called the Dronacharya award. (Chelladurai, et al., 2011)

Sports’ Industry

Globally, the sports’ industry has a unifying appeal; it boasts of a dynamic appeal that most other industries worldwide are envious of. It holds the power to define nations as a whole. The sports’ industry offers a perfect opportunity to generate employment and revenue and the potential for its growth in our country is fuelled by our recent

transition from a single-sport nation to a multi-sport country. Sports business and as a consequence the education in proliferating at an unprecedented rate this is only expected to grow in the years to come.

In recent years, sports as a discipline has expanded beyond its previously defined boundaries. It is no longer limited to only sportspersons and playing sports; a number of professions have come up, that combine business and sports. This phenomenon has caused an increase in the demand for dedicated skilled professionals in many areas associated with the business of sport (Nayana, 2019).

Sports and Human Value

Sports can teach values such as fairness, teambuilding, equality, discipline, inclusion, perseverance, and respect. It has the power to provide a universal framework for learning values, thus contributing to the development of soft skills needed for responsible citizenship. Values Education through Sport (VETS) programmes support active learning, complement cognitive skills, give students increased amount of responsibility, and enhance their level of concentration. VETS contributes to the development of self-confidence, active and healthy lifestyle choices, and an understanding of rights, supporting the delicate transition to the independence of adulthood.

UNESCO is actively engaged in the promotion of sport and physical activity as an entry point for the delivery of values education, both in schools and, more generally, in society (UNESCO, 2017). Research in the field of behavioural science has time and again pointed out that Sports not only creates a healthier population, it also plays a vital role in building social and emotional skills. It enables people to bond and build a collaborative environment. Sports enable people to bond and work together. Social skills and Emotional Intelligence help people in collaborating and leading, making it as one of the most powerful leadership tool.

Sports in Developing Human Capital

Human capital is the investment on human resources in order to increase their efficiency with the aim of productivity in the future (Becker 1996). In most cases, organizational success depends on the individuals who have higher levels of competencies. In such circumstances, these individuals become valuable assets to their organization (Losey, 1999). Modern governments are aware of the role of human capital in economic growth. Sport can also add to students' cognitive skills, such as by improving their grades or their performance on standardized tests, and to their non-cognitive skills, such as by improving their self-discipline or their ability to work in teams. Sports help people applying thinking and analytical ability under stress. A sport is all about an active body and calm mind essential for success in any field. It enables people to bond and respect diversity—a critical component in building the new India. A country that plays together grows together. (Business World, Feb 10, 2018).

However, we are yet to realise and utilise the power of sports for developing our next generation leaders. Sports can be a great leveler as it has the ability to unite

diverse people and can play a vital role in National Integration. Talent alone is not enough; we need to have attitude and passion among our youth. Sports can help us transform the minds of our future leaders, enabling the emergence of India as a world economic power. This necessitates the need for induction of sports and games in higher education.

Brief Scenario of Inter University Sports

Since the inception of AIU in the year 1925, several activities have been carried out for the improvement of the higher education students in the fields of education, culture, sports, and other allied areas. The Inter University Sports Board of India (IUSBI) is one of the important components of AIU that enables the higher education sports persons reach greater heights in their game and also serves as a platform to participate in the International Inter University level sports and games (World University Games) and in other international competitions. IUSBI have been granted the status as National Sports Promotion Organisation (NSPO) to promote sports and games in our country, which is another feather in the cap for IUSBI. Further, 16 Centres of Excellence in various universities have been established to develop the sporting skills of the students in a professional way, so as to compete internationally. Since NSPO is a member in the International University Sports Federation (IUSF) in 2016, students of the Indian university are competing in the World University competitions.

The organisation recognises and honours the university that gets hold of maximum number of sports championships in the All India Inter University Tournament (Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad Trophy) and honour them with cash awards to promote the infrastructure of the university. The Annual Report of the AIU, 2017, has justified that the results of IUSBI are fruitful and remarkable improvements have been observed in the university sports at National and International level competitions in the recent days.

Assets and Liabilities of University Sports

The assets and liabilities describe the wealth of a university better: the assets are the strengths that promote the growth and the liabilities are the weakness that hinder the growth of a university. Naturally, sporting skills are imbibed within every individual and making use of those skills is in the hands of the individual, the family and the society makers.

India is known for a high number of youth population and as per the report of the HRD Ministry; nearly 3.74 crore students pursue higher education and they are the assets of our institutions and the nation. Identifying these talented persons and making use of the valuable assets is in the hands of the authorities of the institutions, the Physical Directors, Physical Trainers and the faculty members and all other public persons with an interest in developing sports. Every institution should ensure that all basic amenities are being provided by the institution for the sports aspirant to develop their sporting skills.

As per the UGC norms, it's a mandate that every institution should possess a playground and this is one of the important assets in developing university sports. Effective utilisation of the existing playground facility and the play materials are in the hands of the Physical Director of the institution.

When the facilities available are kept unused, the assets will become liabilities to the institution. Likewise, selecting a low profile/unskilled Physical Director who fails to execute the roles and responsibilities of his job, lack of infrastructure facility, mis-officiating officers, improper planning, and discouraging faculty members are the liabilities of the university sports.

Developing University Sports

Though noticeable changes have occurred in University Sports in the recent days, yet we have to run miles to make our students reach greater heights in the International sports arena. Hence, there is a need to plunge in talent search of the students in the sports field.

- Recognising the right sportsperson based on her/his talent has to begin in the root level of the university and the affiliated institutions.
- Initiation of a Sports' Board in every institution has to be made mandatory and the details of the students with sports skills have to be identified and updated from time to time. The Institutional Sports Board should be formulated in such a way that at least one faculty member should be present from each department.
- The selection of competitions and selection of players have to be done with the approval and under the monitoring of the entire Sports Board members so that meritorious students can be selected.
- Inter collegiate competitions and intramural competitions may help the institution to pick the right person with sporting skills.

Government Initiatives in Advancing Excellence in Sports

Government of India has come up with several schemes to enhance the growth of sports and games in our country through several departments, along with the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports. The government has come up with attractive awards and cash prize packages to increase the participation of youth in games and sports and to achieve international recognition through winning international sporting competitions.

Sports Authority of India (SAI) runs exclusively for the development of sports and games in India and its major role is to support National/Regional and State Sports; talent search and development; sports for women; conduct a annual sports competitions; promote rural and tribal games; initiate state level Khelo India centres; promote physical fitness among school children; and promotes sports among persons

with disabilities. Hence, a multidimensional approach has been made to develop sports and games in our country.

For running the sports' related schemes successfully, the government of India had allocated a sum of 31 crores in the 2018-19 annual budget.

Inclusive Education and Sports/Adapted Games and Sports

Adaptive sports also known as disability sports or para-sports, are sports played by persons with a disability, including physical and intellectual disabilities. As many disabled sports are based on existing able-bodied sports, modified to meet the needs of persons with a disability, they are sometimes referred to as adapted sports. Organised sport for athletes with a disability is generally divided into four broad disability groups: the deaf, the blind, people with physical disabilities, and people with intellectual disabilities. Each group has a distinct history, organization, competition program, and approach to sport.

From the late 1980s, organizations began to include athletes with disabilities in sporting events such as the Olympic Games and Commonwealth Games. However, many sports are practiced by persons with a disability outside the formal sports movements, like: wheelchair basketball, wheelchair dancing, weightlifting, swimming, and many other sporting activities.

The Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports in 2009-10 during the XI Plan Period introduced the 'Scheme of Sports & Games for the Disabled'. Adapted sports and games is the growing field in the arena of general sports and games. With a view to develop and encourage sports among differently-abled persons, the government of India had set up a training center for para athletes in Gujarat to train the para athletes to participate in international games. Our para athlete team participated in the Paralympic Games, 2016, and won 4 medals and ranked 43rd position and China secured first position with 239 medals in total. Though our Para Athletes are fit enough to compete with that of World Para Athletes, it has been reported that we are lacking in equivalent sporting material. Hence, the lacunae for low performance have to be identified and addressed in the right direction, so as to bring more medals to India. Educational institutions and philanthropists should join hands and have to come forward to take the differently-abled persons to greater heights by showcasing their sports skills.

CONCLUSION

India's strength lies in the youth population of the country and the health of the younger generation is a major determinant in the economic growth of the country. Physical activity is one of the important requisites to develop good health. But it has been reported by WHO that about one in four persons were physically inactive globally and about 80 percent of the world adolescent population is not sufficiently active. Effective participation in sports and games will not only help to achieve good health, stabilise the human capital, but also to reveal our sports skills to the universe. As a result, we will also be able to bring fame and pride to ourselves and to the nation

as a whole. The data on medals and achievements of Indian Athletics exhibits our stand in the international level and this justifies that we have to go miles to make our country reach greater heights in sports and games. Hence, effective implementation of the existing schemes and formulating new working models, training sessions towards achievement is the need. Each university/institution should identify the persons with sports' talent and groom them with utmost interest to develop their sporting skills by providing them with essential needs to increase the performance of the sport, so that we can gain more medals and bring more laurels in the forthcoming international competitions, thereby indirectly helping in making quality human capital. The achievements of other sportspersons will attract more and more youth to take part in sports and games and in turn will protect the health of the Human resources of the Nation. Sports, with a little resource, can make country's Human Resource more resourceful. Just a large population of humans is of no value if it does not have quality. Quality of our population is the key to growth.

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Sheila Stephen is Vice Chancellor, Tamil Nadu Physical Education and Sports University, Chennai. Earlier, she served at 'YMCA College of Physical Education' as Principal. She is a national referee in Basketball. She has more than published more than 70 research publications and international journals. The 70 research publications and international journals and many national and international research projects on 'quality physical education program'. Her overseas academic collaborations cover 14 countries including Oxford University, London, Springfield College of Physical Education, Massachusetts, USA and Institute of Sport and Exercise Science, Worcester University, London.