



PROBLEMS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF SPORTS IN SCHOOLS AND THE COMMUNITY IN

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Abstract

This paper looks at the problems in the development of sports in schools and the community in India. After briefly stating the main issues, the paper delineates that the rate of development of sports depends on education system, provision of facilities, availability of funds, provision of incentives, administration and management of sports organization, and pressures of study and work which often leaves little time for participation in sports activities. The paper also examines the influences pertaining to the school set up and community sports structure and discusses the two separate pyramids – one in schools and the other in the community.

Keywords: Leadership, Facilities, Finance, Incentives, Pyramids

INTRODUCTION

The place of sport in India varies considerably. In advanced societies, particularly where a progressive state recognize its fundamental responsibilities to provide opportunities for participation in sports activities, encouragement is made to bring sports to the people. At the other end of the scale, in some areas, organized sports activities are few and far between due perhaps to lack of expertise or deficiencies in facilities or shortage of funds being beyond the means of the people. No matter how remote or isolated these areas, sports opportunities can be found in every neighbourhood however limited the scope.

The development of sports in schools and the community in India is a complex topic and so the issues mentioned in this paper include only some of the common problems.

Sports Programme

Most Indians view sport as a recreation activity and they hardly intend to pursue it as a career. As a result sports

remain a neglected field. In India, academics are considered as the sole bread-earning activities. It is a widely realized fact that people in India easily get diplomas and degrees but rarely get a job.

In fact, the education systems play an important role in the development of sports. In some instances where pressure is extremely great on the students to achieve good academic grades for admission into universities, the physical education programme and sports set up are usually given less recognition in schools. It is important to note that not all Indian states have sufficient universities and other institutions of higher learning to meet the demands for higher education, and physical education and sport being a non-examination subject has always been given low priority by parents and even by education authorities.

It is at school that a well planned physical education programme must be accepted as a basic part of the development of sports activities, and every effort should be made to consider seriously

the interaction and relationships between physical education, recreation and competitive sport in the planning of the programme.

While most sports associations and clubs are keeping with the practice of the country to fulfill the needs of the people for sport there is still plenty of room for improvement in the operation of the structure and administration for a more effective and significant role in the world of sport.

The exploitation of school talents by sports clubs is causing great anxiety and concern to school authorities. On the excuse of encouraging and developing young athletes these clubs take advantage of the talented youngsters in sporting activities and expose them without proper grooming and preparation to demands of adult sports. These young athletes should be protected from pressures of adult world of sports and every effort should be made to discourage exploitation of school talents.

Another matter concerning outstanding sports talents in schools is the selection of players. In most cases the same athletes participate in nearly all the sports involved in the competition. The problem is greater in girls' schools where there are fewer outstanding athletes.

Leadership

Fortunately State governments are aware of the increasing demand for participation in sports activities and are making provisions to meet such needs. Thus we encounter various attempts in bringing sports to the people not only for the sake of mere participation and enjoyment but also as a means of social contact to break down class and racial barriers and the promotion of better understanding among people.

In many areas, election of office bearers in sports organizations requires a revamping of its policies, structure, and administration. We often see the same people elected to office year after year due not to inspire leadership but for selfish

reasons. These officials organize their selective group of members to hold office thus making it extremely difficult for others to be elected into the set up. In such a situation where most officials have been holding on to their office for too long, numerous problems arise such as complacency or apathy and insensitivity resulting in poor rapport between the officials and participants. Such organized 'secret societies' remain stagnant in the development of technical knowledge and the raising of standards of performance, organization, administration and competition. New blood must be recruited to inject some life into sports officialdom so that fresh organizational talent with rich ideas and a fresh outlook being guided by a few experienced hands may lead to an improved organization and an end to this vicious circle.

In schools the responsibility in organizing sports activities (from training sessions to competitions, etc.) lies with the sports teacher in-charge assisted in some cases by an assistant or by other teachers who act as convenors in their interest sport. The duties and commitments of the school sports teacher in-charge are heavy and in nearly all cases the sports teacher in-charge carries a teaching load in addition to his sports duties. Under such circumstances it is not difficult to realize why the development of sports for all in schools move at a slow pace and in some instances not moving at all. The education authorities should seriously consider the important function of the sports teacher in-charge and lessen his teaching load so that he is able to perform his duties effectively for the benefit of the school and students.

Facilities

The implementation of sporting activities depends on the availability of sports facilities. It is a well known fact that in many States, sports facilities are inadequate for promotion of sports participation. The provision of playing fields and sports installations should be an important target and these should be

spread over the country, well-equipped, and adequately supervised.

With regard to facilities in schools, many schools do not have adequate space for playing fields or sports hall. Therefore most schools share facilities or make use of public facilities with the programme of activities planned according to the allocation of time and availability of facilities. Such programmes generally result in poor relationship between areas of physical education and sport. Also due to this deficiency of facilities, standard of performance and achievement vary considerably in schools.

The problem in obtaining land and funds for the construction of sports facilities makes it difficult to keep pace with demands for such provision. Therefore arrangements should be made for assistance to use school sports facilities to be made available to sports clubs and the community when such facilities are not in use after school hours. It is appreciated that such arrangements are not without problems but these can be overcome with plenty of goodwill by all concerned and with proper management. The provision of sports facilities must be given top priority in the development plans. To meet deficiencies in facilities it is recommended to spread such development over a period of time. Such action will help to consolidate the sports promotion programme towards a wider participation in all sports activities. Also the monitoring of provision of sports facilities among the various agencies will avoid duplication of provision and help keep abreast with developing trends to meet changes and needs of the people.

Finance

Our sports sector is handicapped with many an anomaly, lack of funds being the prime one. No sports organization can expect to be fully effective without adequate financing and this applies to schools too. Although schools have some sort of budget for sports the amount allocated do not

adequately cover the requirements for the programme. Some schools charge a nominal sports fee while others try to manage with whatever amount allocated to them. If school authorities are really sincere in the support for the promotion of sports from grassroots to top level sports every effort should be made to seek a larger allocation of funds. To support such a move it is necessary to put forth a plan for the promotion of sports showing extent and various phases in the developmental plan and also the expected results in numbers participating, usage of facilities, and relationship between physical education and sport including schemes for top level competitions. Of course other sources of income should be considered in supplementing the present meagre sport budget.

Sports clubs and other organizations depending entirely on subscriptions cannot be effectively administered without additional financing. Other sources of income should be explored according to the nature and popularity of the sport. This does not mean the advocacy of commercialization of sports. At the same time there is no reason why well-controlled sponsorships and other programmes of assistance should not be introduced so long as they comply to the regulations and are intended to provide the means for the improvement of sports programme. The intelligent exploitation of such financial assistance together with sensible application of the funds will satisfy the growing expectations for sports organizations to play a more positive role in the promotion of sports competitions in district, region, and international events.

Incentive

Besides, the country and the different states are vying with one another in giving attractive incentives to our international stars. This is, of course, laudable. At the same time, unless we extend this incentive to the grassroots and give due reward and recognition to the winners at intra school, district and state

levels, they are bound to fade away and burn out without even a whimper. The electronic media has brought sports and entertainment to our drawing rooms. Mega sports events across the globe are telecast live. Little wonder then that local sport meets are conducted with hardly any fanfare. Spectators are glued to their television sets and are so mesmerized by the superb standards of performance of the very best that the local heroes fail to get the necessary encouragement and inspiration. The thinning attendance at the galleries of the local stadia and the shrinking playgrounds are crude remainders of the persistent neglect of sports at school and community levels.

Relationship between school and community sports structure

Numerous problems exist in nearly all areas concerning relationship in promotion of sports between school set up and sports bodies in the community. Perhaps it is time to examine some of these problems and hope that each group would evaluate its own structure of administration and effect changes for better team work and an improved structure in its organization. In the promotion of sports from grassroots level to top level competition most Indian states subscribe to the pyramid approach (*Fig. 1*) where efforts are channeled into building a broad base of participation by the masses to producing of outstanding athletes. This

CONCLUSION

The issues presented in this paper have been the result of widespread consultation with numerous sports leaders from a diversity of systems. It is appreciated that changes for the better would take much effort and hard work before an effective structure can be attained. There must be a firm acceptance of change with the retention of all that is good in the present set up and make full use of new techniques

structure seems to be the most acceptable way to encourage sports participation unless one adopts the system established in Russia, China and the Easter-bloc countries where children with outstanding talents are selected to develop into elite sportsmen and sportswomen in sports schools. However in this pyramid system the main problem lies in development of not one but two separate pyramids – one in schools and the other in the community – with a wide gap between the two sections. In some areas attempts are being made to close the gap whilst in many instances the two separate pyramids are left to survive on their own without any or very little co-ordination between them. A possible working solution in the attempt to zip up is to have a sports council (preferably a government sponsored national sports body) to accept total responsibility within its territory and to co-ordinate both the school and the community set ups covering all sports. Of course effective leadership is required for such a council. In setting up such a structure it is possible for close collaboration among all who profess to have interest of sport at heart and know what they want and where they are going in keeping with the practices of the country to fulfill the needs of the people for sports participation and achievement.

and imaginative programmes in a collective initiative by sports leaders to reach and serve the masses in schools and in the community. It is high time that a policy-change accords sports a priority status. Besides, a social, cultural and political renaissance is needed to catapult sports to greater heights.

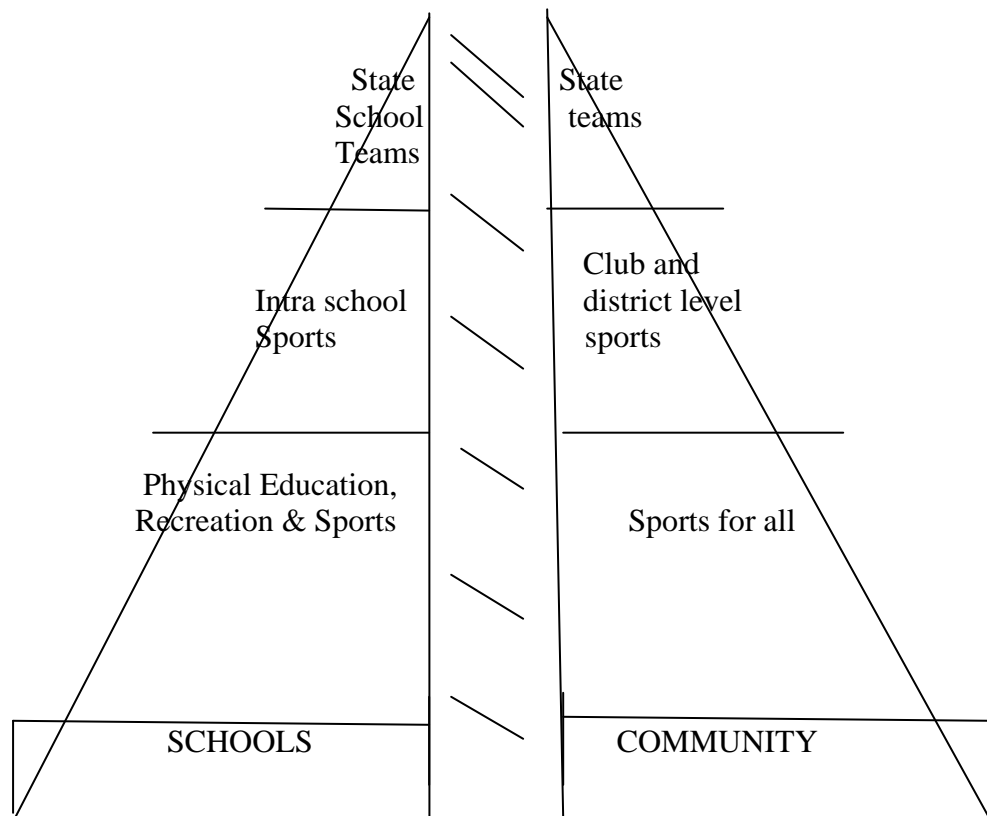


Fig. 1: Showing gap in the relationship between schools and community

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