



ISSN Print: 2394-7500
ISSN Online: 2394-5869
Impact Factor: 8.4
IJAR 2021; 7(9): 452-456
www.allresearchjournal.com
Received: 15-07-2021
Accepted: 25-08-2021

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Critical evaluation of everyday discourses on sports in India

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Abstract

Achievements in sports are not one-off events. Global festivals such as the Olympic Games bring to fore discussions on the winning ability of a nation and debates on the significance of various economic and cultural aspects that determine the magnitude of the achievements. The innumerable normative ideas about sport as good or as bad are problematized in relation to the academic field. This paper considers how the critical lens of sociology can enhance and mesh with research on sport achievements by looking at the various stakeholders and their perspectives on sports from a critical lens. The paper attempts to explore the lost opportunities and understandings arising out of the paucity of studies that overlap the sociology of sport and sport management. The paper closes with arguments for a critical intersectional approach to the study of sport management with recognition that 'disciplinary' practices shape the wielding of leadership power within organizations.

Keywords: Normative ideas, critical reflexivity, gender, leadership, management

Introduction

Sport is a factor or a media or an agent or a force which humanizes and socializes the individuals. A Human being becomes social by virtue of socialization and through socialization we lead an approved way of life. Sport is a common activity for the whole world. World cup, Olympic Games and other International competition exhibits and reflects the various cultures of the nations. Olympic Games and world level matches and tournaments came to review for the achievement of high standard in human relationship. They will construct, reconstruct and review the respective cultures in the world.

Sport has always been an important aspect of social life. Nowadays it forms a global industry that includes not only clubs, teams, leagues, athletes, merchandise and sporting associations, but also government departments of sport and recreation, the media, various educational organizations, researches, consultants and volunteers etc. [Smith, Stewart 2015, p. 16]

Indian Society is a mixture of various cultures. In India. As far as Indian culture is considered, we can see that sports has always. Had an important role to play. Sports has always been. An integral part of Everyday culture. The history of sports in India is believed to be as old as that of the Indus Valley Civilization. India has many traditional sports such as kabaddi, Kho Kho, wrestling etc. Historical evidences suggests the fact that the Indian civilization was by far the most advanced civilization of its times. Evidence also suggests that the people played an early form of chess, an invented dice. The existence of Seals recovered from the sites of Indus Valley and other Artefacts also proves the fact that hunting and boxing or practiced back then itself.

Around 975 BC, the love for chariot racing and wrestling was common in both India and Greece, Where Olympics was first introduced. During the Vedic India the body is defined as one of the ways to complete realization.

As far as India is concerned, it has very rich culture of traditional sports. There is mentions of various traditional sports in ancient scriptures also there are different cultural sports which suit the environment of a particular culture and it is Promoted Informally and transmitted from one generation to the other.

Apart from the traditional sports and games that was present in India, We also see that various other sports from the Western world has also entered the Indian context and has become Indianized.

Also there are sports which have been incorporated into the Indian culture due to various influences from either the mogul, rulers or the British. Many festivals in the Indian society are also associated with certain sports that becomes an integral part of the entire festivities. Celebrations such as the jalli kattu down south or kushti in the north, have all got their own important role to play. It is almost like every state has its own traditional sport. Some of the famous traditional sports like the kabbaddi, kho-kho, kushti, mallakhamb, vallankali, kalayari pattu, jallikattu, camel race etc are designed in such a way that. The physical skills of individuals are combined with the mental acumen. Man, beast and nature come together. In various ways in these festivals and the sports that is seen during these festivals. When we look at this kind of festivals. It becomes evident that Indian culture has always given importance to sports. Yet, there is an alarming change that can be noticed during the recent times.

The important and the position that has been accorded to sports in the Indian society has changed drastically over the years. Before the advent of the British, the importance of sports was interwoven within the Indian festivities and it was a way of life. Many kings have seen to promote sportsman and many of the kings themselves were excellent sports people. The position accorded to a sportsman was very high. Only when something is valued in a society, more and more people peak interest and pursue that particular domain. With the advent of the British, the importance that was given to traditional games was seen to gradually decrease. New forms of Western sports were encouraged. Cricket, badminton and other forms of sports that was not known to the Indian culture became prominent. Traditional sports which were played at local levels and those that were suitable traditional games in Indian society were designed in such a way that they were conducive to be played in the local conditions and was suitable for developing the skills of people in a particular region. For instance, camel racing was very popular in Rajasthan where other games would not have been suitable. In Kerala, boat racing became very popular and on the other hand, places like Tamil Nadu encouraged jallikattu. Other games that were conducive to be played in situations that were prevalent in those places.

With the advent of the British, all these changed. These games traditionally thrived because of the importance that was given to such games and sports by people in power in those regions. Once the financial support for these kind of games stopped. It became difficult for the people to take up sports and make good living for themselves. Economy has always been an important deciding factor for people to take up various professions for their living.

The British rule focused only on expanding their imperial power while exploiting the available resources in the Indian subcontinent. When the British showed no interest in promoting sports culture of the indigenous people. These sports began to die gradually. Not only did they lose their charm, but also they were gradually replaced by various Western games that were not exactly suitable for the Indian culture.

After independence again, the country was left in a very bad shape. Amidst the political and economic crisis. Sports were not given much importance by the government. Poverty was looming large in the nation. And as such, the focus of attention was on revival of the economy rather than on

shaping the sporting scenario of the nation. The five year plans and other policies that were made also focused on the revival of the economy and not much on sports.

Promotion of sports or the sporting culture was something that was not of primary importance at that point of time. Under these circumstances, only a few traditional sports that were played at local levels which were indigenous continued. Sports culture was relegated to the back seat in the post Indian independence era. And the nation could not figure anywhere in the international sporting events. There were a number of factors that were responsible for this. Some of these factors were the political influences and many of them were because of the lack of practice and lack of identification of talent and dedication and professionalism among players.

Also, when compared on a global platform, people of Indian origin are less genetically endowed when compared to their counterparts in other parts of the world. Such as Europe, Australia, etcetera. Genetically potential people and the abilities that they possess are different. Dietary habits also contribute towards healthy sport culture.

In the recent past we have seen the Indians are very enthusiastic in celebrating a victory. But when it comes to promoting the sporting culture amongst their own children or in the minds of the next generation Indians show a diametrically opposite attitude. The sporting spirit and professionalism that is very important to shape the sporting scenario has changed over the years.

One of the important factors for this dismal performance of such a huge nation with extreme potential is that the important that is given for academics is not given for sports. The teachers are appointed for academics with great care, whereas on the other hand, physical education tutors are not appointed with the same care or dedication. Many schools do not encourage students to participate in sports. Teachers who are qualified with the right training and necessary skills said are not given jobs. Also, we can see that sport is not promoted as an independent discipline. In academics it is only the classroom teaching, or the theory that finds more prominence rather than giving equal importance to sports also. The result of this is that there is absence of any mark performance in the sporting scenario of the nation.

All of us are aware that sports contribute towards the physical, mental and psychological health of people. We are aware that a healthy mind is possible only when the body is healthy. As a nation, we are moving towards the stage where more importance is given to developing the mental acumen rather than the physical abilities.

A holistic approach can be followed to address this issue of poor sporting culture. All of us need to take some sort of responsibility to ensure that the flag of the nation may be hoisted at various international sporting events. It is not enough to be a sports lover for a day or two. It is necessary to imbibe the sporting culture in our minds and in spirit rather than celebrating with euphoria over every winning spirit.

Sports is not something that can be developed overnight. It requires a lot of patience and a lot of practice and dedication that goes into training a sports person. We are all aware that the current market scenario does not let anybody pursue their dreams without enough money. So it is necessary even for the government to look into these areas. When we look at the brighter side of this, we already see that the encouragement that has been given to various local games is

also very high. Further, we need to plan for these games at a larger level. Programmes that focus on short term as well as long term goals need to be made.

Self-identity

Social constructionists believe 'that all knowledge, and therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context' (Crotty, 1998, p. 42). This socially constructed view of knowledge and reality brings forward the next tenet, which is that self-identity is theorized as the product of individual, social and cultural discourses, which interact to create particular meanings and associated behaviours related to identities (McGannon & Spence, 2010, 2012; Wetherell, 2008). Stated differently, self-identity is a discursive accomplishment because it is in discourse that people acquire the resources with which to render their sense of self visible, understood and 'real' (McGannon & Mauws, 2000).

Role of government

Today sport emerges as an important component of socio-economic development of a country. The active participation in sports improves community health and productivity, reduces medical expenses, imbues discipline in character and enhances social cohesion. The execution of a mega sporting event helps in developing infrastructure, generating employment, securing inflow of foreign capital and thus contributes significantly to the economic development of a country. Therefore, it can be said that the impact of sports on society is multi-dimensional.

The government plays a crucial role in promoting sports in a country. The government and governmental organizations constitute the public sector of the sports industry, which is responsible for making sports policies, allocating grants for developing infrastructure, nurturing talents and designing specialized programmes for overall development of sports. The objective of this article is to critically discuss the role of the government in promoting sports in India.

The year 1982 was significant in the history of sports in India. In that year, India organized the Asian Games for the first time. Prior to that, not much emphasis had been given to sports in public policies. The following table represents the gradual increase in fund allocation for sports since the sixth Five Year Plan:

Duration	Allocation for Sports	(INR million)
6th	1980-1985	270
7th	1985-1989	2,070
8th	1992-1997	2,100
9th	1997-2002	4,730
10th	2002-2007	11,450
11th	2007-2012	46,360

Despite a significant increase in the fund allocation, it is pertinent to mention that not more than 1% of budgetary allocation has been directed to sports in India.

The Panchayat Yuva Krida Aur Khel Abhiyan (PYKKA) had been introduced to inculcate sports culture at the grass-root level by encouraging the youth of village and district levels to participate in sports. To achieve this objective, Rs. 1500 crore had been approved by the Planning Commission of India in the eleventh Five Year Plan and Rs. 92 crore and

Rs. 160 crore had already been allocated for 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 respectively.

Conclusion

The research found that this was the time to rethink and take a relook at the entire scenario of our academic Positioning. A holistic approach is necessary to ensure that sports gets equal importance along with the academic performance of a student. Achievement need not necessarily be excelling in studies alone. The kind of euphoria and the celebration that follows a global sporting event should not gradually die down. Badminton was a very popular game. Many parents aspire that their children to perform well and achieve in this particular sport. Today because of the achievements in Javelin throw, maybe parents will aspire their children to take up this game in the future. What is necessary today is not to follow some facts, but rather to go back and look at the Indian tradition and why certain games were promoted in particular places and why some we're not. A lot of thought has gone into Promoting a particular game in a particular place. This takes into consideration the dietary habits of the region, the climatic conditions, the body build, and the ability of the particular people in that region to take up a certain sport. This research does not propose that we blindly follow what the traditional Sports. What we're suggesting today is to look at those games, take insights from them, and then try to make the relevant for the particular times for the current times. To ensure that India can compete at various levels by encashing upon its rich cultural heritage. No other country in the world has this kind of an in depth cultural heritage or this kind of knowledge base.

Despite these efforts, the performance of Indian athletes at the international level is not very convincing. Therefore, a few steps may be recommended to make these initiatives more comprehensive. First, the allocation of funds, as the percentage of budget, should be increased to broad-base sports in the country. Second, sports should be made an integral part of the education system to inculcate sports culture from the school level. Third, the effectiveness of the developmental projects should be evaluated periodically. Fourth, uniformity should be maintained in sports specific activities of various states of India to provide equal participation opportunity to its citizens. Finally, a structure of good governance should be incorporated to make the system transparent and accountable.

To revive sports culture, the government should revisit the sporting framework of India. Otherwise, the immense potential of the country in sports can never be realized. It can be expected that the government will play a proactive role in promoting sports in India to establish the country as a sporting nation.

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