

Promotion of Sport and Sport Culture

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Sports have been part and parcel of human lives since times immemorial. Back in the Stone Age days, man used to run, hunt, and lift bow and arrows or spears for survival. As time progressed and society became more and more civilized, sports and games became means of merriment and recreation. As a child, one is seldom taught or forced to play. One starts playing various sports and games out of natural instinct and inspiration.

Sports promise several benefits like they help building personality and character and help in attaining self-esteem and confidence. They provide a healthy physique and sportsman spirit. They teach the values of healthy competition and persuade all to abide by norms and rules. Sports foster values like companionship, amity and fraternity. Realizing the worth of sports in making a nation healthy, today highly professional sports events are organized at district/state/national and international levels for promoting and establishing peace and friendship.

Sports activities help people in various parts of the world to come into contact with one another and as a result develop social amiability, fraternity, feeling of nationalism and brotherhood. They foster psychological and sociological development and teach forbearance and respect for others. Sportsmen develop an attitude of finding a way out from tough situations. They do not let the feelings of disappointment and distress overpower their minds. Sports teach them how to maintain mental balance in the midst of hopes and despair and tackle the toughest situation. So sports improve mental abilities. Simple and easy exercises and games provide pure entertainment by which the mental abilities of children develop.

But what is Sports Culture? Why has the need come to establishing a sports culture today? Why does one need to promote sports?

Post World War 2, Industrialization made societies across the world materialistic and money oriented. When sports are taken as a profiteering profession it ruins the players and they develop attitudes inclining towards momentary gains. They make use of synthetic and harmful drugs and harm their temple-somebody bestowed by God. Such attitudes lead both the players

and the society towards deterioration. In order to develop positive attitude and steer clear from such evils, it is imperative to understand how sports inculcates spiritual outlook in masses. And the need of talking about and promoting true sports culture arises.

The second most immediate problem that we are witnessing today in India is the continuous deterioration of health and fitness standards of masses. India is proclaimed as a young country with the average age of population touted to be 25 by 2022. But given the sedentary life style of the majority of youth, addiction with smart phones, applications and outlets like Netflix and other social media and decreasing physical activities, one needs to ponder over novel ways and strategies to promote sports and establish a sports culture across India.

As Thomas Fuller once said:-

“Health is not valued until sickness comes.”

Unfortunately, there is a general belief amidst majority of Indian parents that sports and games are meant for and suitable until a certain age and their wards must focus on studies and academics after their mid-teens. They make all possible efforts to encourage their children to stop playing. More so is the case with girls, especially for people living in rural and suburban areas. Socio cultural taboos stop the growth path with reference to sports and games. Another belief attached to the mindset of the majority is reflected in the saying that is gradually being altered-***“khelege kudoge toh banoge karab, padhoge likhoge toh banoge nawab”***. This phrase explains the belief that people think there are no career options available in the stream of sports. This again explains the need for promotion of sports culture in our country.

Important steps that will promote positive Sports Culture in India and sustain spirituality and ethical values in Sports:

- Creating a just, strong and healthy atmosphere.
- Imparting scientific and systematic training.
- Developing socially accepted & just training methods for honing skills in children.
- Use of only natural strength and prohibition of the use of harmful drugs.
- Achieving excellence in sports not at the cost of physical fitness.

•Administering strict and refined rules for sports and games and its emulation by coaches and teams.

•Learning to respect others.

•Developing and maintaining an attitude of achieving excellence not by violence but by competencies.

•Perseverance of self-esteem, social prestige and respect.

•Achievements of the players are transitory. Therefore instead of having the egotism that a particular player is the only one who can perform the best, one should think that one's achievements are the result of specific circumstances and specific time. One must realize that there are others who are equally talented. These virtues of considering others to be better or equal should be taught to one during training.

•Modest efforts should be made towards nourishing moral and spiritual values in sports. Special policies should be made for bringing about the same.

•Within us is an element of the Almighty i.e. our soul, and so is true with respect to all human beings around us. Therefore we should respect our companions as well as our opponents or competitors. We should have faith in ourselves as well as in others. The players should have faith in the teacher or mentor and respect him/her, the guide who leads towards the right path. Such values make one's progress towards morality & spirituality easier.

•When a sportsperson searches the immortal soul residing in the mortal body through the medium of sports, and through sports, such an atmosphere is created that the players enjoy heavenly happiness and relish not in egotism but self-esteem, then and then only the afore said philosophy can be materialized.

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