Research Paper Physical Education

Different Types of Hazards in Our Sports Field: Precautionary Measures and Remedies

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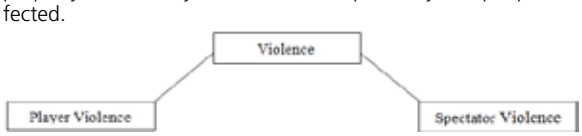
KEYWORDS

In present sport set up violence at sporting events has increased creating much concern among sports administrators, organizers, participants and public at large. Now a days sport as main source of recreation brings large number of people together from different shades of life. It is certain that sporting events excite emotions and there is always potential for violence. Apart from this we can view the violence in its sociological perspective, the roots of which lie in social strains that exist in society to certain extent.

The term violence is derived from the Latin word. Violence means "Physical Force used as to injure or damage any person or thing." The same phenomenon taking place in group situations can be termed as collective violence.

Violence is regarded as a threat to society or its sub-systems. It involves a condition of fear threat, and changing the usual pattern of relationships. More specifically, violence in sports violates the norms and rules of contests, threatens live and property and usually cannot be anticipated by the people affected.



Players Violence: Incidents as late and illegal kicks in football, intimidating physical assaults in hockey and throwing bats, etc.

Spectator Violence: Means a large aggregation of people mobilizing into a unit for indulging in violent behavior resulting in dangerous consequences. The nature of violence may vary; physical or personal harm, property damage or both depending upon the situation.

Though inter-related but presently the focus of attention will be the spectator or collective violence which is more apparent and dangerous in sociological context.

Sports Sociologist are intrigued with increasing occurrences of player and spectators violence and are developing some understanding of why and how such incidents are taking place. Neil Smelser, who has done a pioneering work in this area has proposed a theoretical framework which may explain the origins of collective violence in general and this sociological framework can also be applied to sports violence in particular.

Theoretical Construct

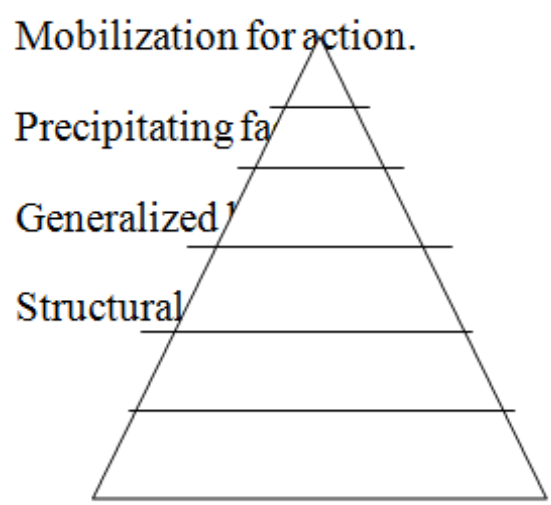
Smelser, noted that riots, panics and revolution cluster in a consistence fashion.

I. They cluster in time.
II. They cluster in certain central areas.
III. They occur with greater frequency among certain social groups.

With these constructs in mind, Smelser developed a theory of collective behavior, which helps to understand those forces which promote an aggregate of people, or a portion of that aggregate to collectively act in a hostile fashion, whether they are urban riots or violence at sporting events. According to Smelser there are six determinants of collective violence.

I. Structural conduciveness.
II. Structural strains.
III. Growth of a hostile belief.
IV. Precipitating factor.
V. Mobilization of participants for action.
VI. Operation and Social control.

Smelser emphasized the fact that each of the determinants must occur in the exact order for hostile outbursts or occurring of violence. For example, structural conduciveners must come first; then all the other determinants and their value in order. That is why; this approach is called value added theory.



Structural conduciveness
Determinants of Violence

I. **Structural Conduciveness:** The first necessary condition for hostile outbursts is structural conduciveness which is created when divergent or socially distinct groups or individual are brought together (assembled) in large number. Likewise, sports crowds consist of rich and poor, young and old, black and white, have and have not, catholic and Protestants etc.

II. **Structural Strains:** This refers to the conditions of strains which exists in the large society and hence are represented in the crowd. Normally strain is present in the form of anger, frustration, deprivation expressed by a group.

III. **Growth of a generalized hostile belief:** Belief prepares participants for action. For example, if a group or spectators believes that an official's decision is extremely unfair, and this same crowd consists of individuals who already felt that socie-

ty is unfair, thus the controversial decision can become a precipitating force for violence.

IV. **Precipitating Factor:** Refers to a specific event or action that confirms the generalized belief, dramatizes its importance, and initiates and collective action. Precipitating events/ actions often include violent action by a player and unpopular decisions by the official.

V. **Mobilization for action:** Refers to the availability of people at the spot (scene) of the precipitating event for action. This mobilization would include the present of crown leaders and pre-disposed followers, the composition of the crowd, and physical surroundings.

VI. **Social Control:** Refers to the relative absence or presence of means of restraint.

Several filed studies have identified the conditions which are conducive to violence at athletic events. The data suggests that the likelihood of collective violence increases with the addition of each of the following conditions.

I. High expectations of team victory.
II. Strong attachment with team/individuals.
III. High levels of tension and excitement due to the importance of competition.
IV. Hostile acts between opposing teams and individuals.
V. Games officials are perceived to be lax, blased and inefficient.
VI. Law enforcement official seem, hesitant, and ineffective.

Sociological Perspectives on Violence

The study of violence and collective behavior attached the attention of social philosophers, sociologist, psychologists alike and only psychological explanation of crowd behaviors was accepted in earlier days. Gradually there developed recognition that dynamic social processes within specific social settings could more fully
athletic contests. As a result four sociological perspectives on violence have been proposed. Each has a different emphasis, but each helps in explaining the origin of collective behavior and violence.

(1) **Contagion Perspective:** This perspective proposes that with increased excitement, emotion and reciprocal stimulation, people are more likely to act impulsively under the influence of common mood. If intensified it results in social contagion, herding behavior, which induces participators for hostile outbursts.
(2) **Convergence Perspective:** This perspective holds that if people with the same beliefs and feelings come together in some setting, they can be easily stimulated to act by some precipitately event. This view is often combined with frustration – aggression hypothesis, which predicts that similar identifying frustration among individuals will lead to aggressive behavior in a crowd setting.
(3) **Emergent Norm Perspective:** Most often a crowd is a diverse group of individuals. Within a heterogeneous crowd, it has been argued that a shared understanding of expected behavior emerges to stimulate certain types of behavior and to impose sanctions on those who oppose (deviate) from norms. This view has been called the emergent norm perspective of collective behavior. Thus collective behavior develops through social interaction and emergence of social norms that apply to situation at hand.
(4) **Value –Added Perspective:** Another approach to studying sport and collective behavior is value added of collective violence by Smelser (1962). He argued that a number of determinates in the social settings must be present before a specific collective violence occurs.

In his theory, the likelihood of violence increases when several determinants come together and add its value to the preceding state, i.e. a certain sequence of events is necessary for hostile outbursts to occur. For example, structural conduciveness must come first, followed by structural strains, hostile belief, precipitating factors mobilization and social control in a serial manner.

The world renowned sports sociologists and psychologists have identified certain common traits or the people, who indulge in violence.

1. Low degree of education and intelligence.
2. High suggestibility.
3. Irresponsibility.
4. Sense of power.
5. Strong identification and affiliation.
6. Emotionalism.

The ancient Indian history is replete with the evidence of collective violence that used to occur during the ancient events. Traditionally the communities, races, ethnic groups etc. used to support their individual performers in wrestling, fencing, tug of war, archery, etc., resulting in collective violence either due to defeat of their participants or official judgments. However, it seems that despite these reasons, the main reason might have been their own long existing rivalries which used to find expressions in such violent acts. The marked difference between the ancient and the modern violence is the area of operation and involvement of people.

In modern timessports in Indian context is not taken as professionally as in other countries. For Indians sports appears to be mainly a source of recreation and the people seldom analyze the performances with personal concern, hence reducing the chances of heavy collective violence as compared to other countries. Nevertheless collective violence in sports in India does take place in one form or the other.

The ethnic groups in the modern India have been diversified and scattered all over the country due to an overall development of India society. Even when the audience identification and affiliation with teams is analyzed comparatively a less concern is noticed in people. Organized and hostile audience in India is found only in few disciplines i.e. Football in West Bengal; Hockey in Northern India; Cricket, Kho-Kho, Kabaddi in Western India. Indian audiences are basically unorganized and they cherish fair competition without any particular bent of mind. The spectators are normally mobilized towards collective violence due to their lack of education in respect to the techniques, rules and regulations of the game. On many occasions, some frustrated opportunists may arouse the emotions of the audience by misguiding them on the said rules.

Socio-economic status in India many a times proves to be a factor which leads to violence. When the departmental teams belonging to a public or private sector, play against the local clubs with weaker financial resources, the supporters of such clubs become violent against the departmental teams. They identify themselves with the teams having low socio-economic status, because they have the notion that the teams belonging to high social order avail more facilities and are favorites of the officials.

Regionalism can also be taken as one of the reasons for violence in Indian sports. Strong feelings of the audience with their own team and antagonism with the outside teams, sometimes also leads to violence. Proficiency in sports in different regions has given a regional touch to the audience. Bengal audience cannot tolerate their own team loosing in Football, Cricket in Bombay, Hockey in Punjab and similar is the case of Haryana and Delhi in Wrestling. The audience in such cases without evaluating the performance is psychologically premoulded to appreciate or reprimand the teams from their own region.

In some cases religion also plays an important role in creating violence. Instances have been noted during the inter-University competitions, when the matches were played between religion based institutional teams. Some incidents of violence

were reported during Cricket matches between India and Pakistan and even at Hockey finals during Asiad'82. Though, religious identification is not so intensified in Indian sports world but it is a common fact that people with vested interests always try to manipulate the situation.

The post independence era in Indian sports denotes some progressive trends as far as sports awakening and consciousness are concerned. On the other side the violence on sport-events has also drawn the attention of sports community so that challenging situation can be treated with care. A review of the past happenings in this direction depicts following reasons for the violence in Indian sports settings.

1. Personal rivalries of the team individual players:
In this situation players from opposite teams have their own personal grudges, may be due to their ego or exhibition of dominance over other by fair or foul means. This leads to rivalries between teams and player, ultimately affecting the audience to be involved in a great volume. Such examples are very frequent during football league matches in Calcutta, Hockey matches in Punjab, Wrestling in Haryana and Delhi etc.

2. Ineffiecent umpiring / officiating:
Many a times the organizers appoint such officials to supervise the matches/bouts who have not acquired/achieved know – how as per the level of competition. Such situations cause embarrassment to the players and in turn the sentiments of the spectators also resulting in violence.

3. Player and Officials relations:
It is surprising to note that in Indian sports set up, there is no platform on which the officials and the players can have the chance to develop their mutual understanding. Most of the time, the relations of the players with officials are strained which ultimately lead to undesirable consequences.

4. Organizational Inability:
This aspect needs special care because the organizers are unable to predict the proper performances of the participants and such predications influence spectator's ambitions. The over ambitious cowed, when fails to satisfy their expectations, the situation becomes emotionally explosive. Secondly the organizers fail to treat the audience as per their social status and according to their level of expenditure incurred for watching the event. Cases have also been brought into light where the organizers fail to provide any substitute source of recreation when they are unable to organize the main competition due to one reason or the other. It is worth mentioning that sports organizers fail to anticipate the violence and they react only after the incidence has occurred. This may be the reason that adequate security arrangements are not made in advance.

Remedies: There can be little doubt that violence both among crowd and players is increasing at an alarming rate and strict measures are to be taken control this phenomenon to maintain the dignity o sports in its true sense.

1. **Co-ordination between Officials and Players:** The understanding between officials and players should not only be to implement the rules and regulations but a confidence must be developed in the integrity of each other. Fair play and better performance must be the common goal of both sides.

2. **Proper education of the audience:** The rules and regulations of the competition and games must be publicized in advance so that the spectators appreciate the correct technique and right judgment. Ignorant audience is more dangerous because of their poor capacity to evaluate the intricate sports situations.

3. **Proper Organization:** The administration and organizers must feel their responsibility for the proper conduct of the competition by providing proper facilities both to the players and audience.

4. **Sanctions:** Strict sanctions may be levied on the deviators, i.e. may be players, officials, organizers, spectators alike. No leniency should be used and all should be treated on similar lines, irrespective of their background. Someone has to cut the ice, by enforcing discipline both on and off the field.

To sum up, it can be concluded from the past incidents that violence in Indian sports is normally a transient phase which occurs on the spot and subsides by its own. The basic structure of Indian society and the nature of Indian people who believe in the philosophy of "Forgive and Forget" playan important role to operate control on this growing problem in Indian sports.

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