



## Development of University Sports in 21st Century India: Opportunities. Issues, Challenges and Measures

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The basic components of the fitness – such as desirable health habits, good postures and mental, emotional and social well – being – are necessary for all. Sports activity is integral to the all round development of the human personality. Achievements in sports have a considerable bearing on the national prestige and morale. The ideal sports meet the standards of approved sports principles and serve the educational needs of the community. The sports education curriculum functions mainly in developing the fundamentals of various sports and knowledge and of appreciations and desires in connection with them. The physical and mental fitness of students improve through participation in sports.

Unlike in the past, modern sports are highly competitive. The nurturing of talent from a very tender age, use of modern and highly sophisticated equipments, introduction of modern infrastructure, stress on hard and physical training along scientific lines have changed the very complexion of modern sports. The importance of sports and games for health and physical fitness with a view to increasing individual productivity cannot be ignored. The National Policy on Education (NPE), 1992 states, "sports and physical education are an integral part of the learning process and will be included in the evaluation of performance. A nation – wide infrastructure for physical education, sports and games will be built into the educational edifice."

University sports events have become a show case of national pride and power. Considering the importance of sports and games, most of the universities have taken a number of initiatives despite resource constraint to improve the standard of sports in the country. In order to bring about a radical change in the country's efforts to achieve excellence in sports, the Government has evolved a new National Sports Policy. The new policy envisages broad basing of sports, achievement of excellence in international sports events, provisioning of modern sports infrastructure, upgrading skills of our coaching fraternity, more efficient functioning of national sports federations and active involvement of business and industry in promotion of sports. Adequate sports infrastructure is being created in most of the universities in India.

### Opportunities of Sports in Universities

Participation in sports activities is positively associated with academic achievement and aspirations only when it somehow alters important relationships in a student's life. Improved academic performance could come out of relationship that the sportsperson develop with a coach who takes the role of an academic supporter. It is the primary objectives of the university to promote the personal development of student and attend to the full range of their physical and mental well – being. Sports are seen as a motivator; having to keep their work, It is believed, sports hold some students in universities who otherwise would not attend regularly or would drop out.

Participation in sports activities produce physical fitness, build stamina, create mental toughness, build administrators and put students through university providing adequate facilities and equipments represent a tremendous opportunity for the students. Sports add excitement to the lives of both students

and faculty members in the universities. Inter – university sports build spirit and loyalty through its promotion of sports activities and facilities. The Ministry of Sports provides financial assistance to the universities for construction of indoor stadium and development of play ground facilities in the ratio of 75 : 25 in the case of Special Category States and in the ratio of 50 : 50 to all other States subject to a certain ceiling. Objective and opportunities of sports in universities are:

To formulate and implement policies and programs aimed at facilitating the all round development of the personality of students through sports activities; To formulate sports policies aimed at development of sports; To popularize indigenous sports, designed to achieve excellence in competitive sports; To formulate and implement policies for broad basing sports activities in the universities; To established universities as centre of excellence in sports; To promote Students' participation in various sports activities; and To create sports infrastructure, including synthetic playing surface.

### Issues for Sports

A set of policies reveals the objectives of the sports facilities in the university. A review of a set of policies brings to light the philosophy of the sports activities as expressed in operational terms of the university. University is a playing field where, for better or worse, vital personal issues are resolved – resolutions that not only have a major impact on the students' life in the present but also can have a significant impact on the resolutions of the issues coming up like personal happiness, connections to the society, work culture, career opportunities, etc.

### Emerging issues relating to sports development in universities are:

Are adequate provisions made for individual development through sports activities?  
Are the sports persons able to apply previous learning and to develop new ones?

Does each sport – person have opportunities to compete with others?

Do sport persons participate fully in the process of learning games?

Are sports activities clearly related to the accomplishment for exploration and experimentation?

Are sports persons given adequate guidance in evaluating their achievements?

Whether the students are taking advantage of the sports program throughout the year or only participating sporadically?

### Challenges to sports in universities

Many of the problems in the administration of inter university sports competition stem from the need for financial support. Problems of facilities and equipments clearly indicate the inter relationship of instruction, administration and supervision, emphasizing the need for mutual understanding and respect between those professional groups in the total responsibilities of the department to insure appropriate tools with which to work. It is difficult for students to comprehend their personal needs for strength, speed, agility or endurance. Sports related scientific research and development in Indian universities

has not been able to keep pace with international standards in the fields of philosophy, psychology and biomechanics, etc. major challenges to sports in universities are:

Lack of effective planning may inhibit sports initiatives in universities.

Sports activities challenge the attention of both trained architects and educational experts:

A set of contradictory policies may lead to inconsistency in solutions which might occur if problems were not solved with regard to past performances:

Much of the sports plan is lost if conditions under which the sports plan is to be implemented have significantly changed; Sportsmen (boy students) are usually anxious to become star athletes but not anxious to exert themselves in the process; and Sportswomen (girl students) students are not easily motivated in direction of sports activity, for their interest center more on feminine fancies than on physical feats.

### Measures to Develop Sports in Universities

Universities should provide opportunities for developing the personality of the students so that they may achieve their full potential and involving them in various nation – building activities on the one side, and broad basing of sports and achieving excellence at national and international levels on the other. It is believed that universities should attempt to foster the establishment of sound principles of sports physiology and medicine with the requisite quality of facilities relevant to the training needs of the sportspersons and provide more scientific facilities for excellence in sports. In administering the financial affairs of the university sports programs, sound business methods are a must. The universities should formulate a model code of conduct as well as set of guidelines.

Educating students for sports fitness and wellness is a most important but difficult task. How students achieve physical fitness varies with each individual, for fitness itself varies in relation to the individual's personal requirements. Students must be made aware of their need for physical fitness and led toward achievements of this goal. This should be done through both the instructional and non – instructional phase of the total physical education program. Sports disciplines should be prioritized on the basis of proven potential, popularity and performance. The working of Sports Board in universities has to be more democratic, professional, transparent and accountable. The inter – university sports event\ competitions should be made more attractive in order to encourage students to participate in various competitions at the university levels. Measures to develop and promote sports in universities could be:

Sports and physical education should be integrated in the education curriculum of the universities;

A policy needs to be evolved for promoting the participation of maximum number of students in sports activities and competition in the universities;

Provisions should be made within the framework of the strength – endurance sports activity for other important developments, including skill, agility, flexibility, coordination, grace, poise and so forth;

The mass media should be mobilized for fostering a sports culture in the universities;

An annual sports calendar of national championships – inter – university and zone – wise at various levels should be prepared;

Participation in international inter – universities and zone – wise at various levels should be prepared;

All universities should earmark spaces for playgrounds whenever new sports facilities are being developed;

A tie – up with state – level training centers may be worked out to ensure better utilization of sports facilities in the universities;

Central and state governments should provide funds for broad basis of sports in the universities;

Universities should organize competitions for all the sports disciplines, particularly those which are popular at the state and local level;

Laws, rules and regulations framed by respective university should not merely provide for sports \ play fields and games in new areas at the planning stage but should actively protect and maintain the existing sports infrastructure from political interference;

The universities should review the status of the physical education and take appropriate measures to improve the curriculum, the quality of teaching staff and the infrastructure; and Sports universities could be set up in states in collaboration with the private sector by providing them attractive incentives;

### Concluding Remark

The value of sports as a means of promoting disciplines and social harmony is well recognized the world over. The Government of India has launched a number of sports promotion schemes under various universities on different aspects. It is hoped that initiatives taken in universities will help India grow into a sports power to reckon with. Their commitment is to process the sports proposals received expeditiously and efficiently. The Government is trying to promote sports education in universities through provision of necessary physical facilities, infrastructure, sport aids and equipment, training, orientation, etc.

There is need for creation of a sports climate in the universities and generating a consciousness in every student of the need to be physically fit and to participate in sports activities. Sports facilities should be selected for promotion keeping in mind the facilities available, particularly for rural students. Universities in India require setting up of sports infrastructure in a planned manner and more efficient use of available infrastructure and coaching facilities with promotional activities.

There is need to create a network of basis sports infrastructure throughout the universities in India. Universities may encourage the sportsmen, athletes and coaches to excel in their fields by offering various awards and incentives to the outstanding sportsmen and athletes in their respective fields. If universities were to excel in sports at the national and international level, more attention would need to be given to research and development in sports science during 2010 – 11. In the 21st century, universities should be committed to provide excellent services to the students in matters related to sports.

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