



## Social Impact of Sports on Northeast Region of India with Special Reference to Sikkim

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### ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study is to investigate the social impact of sports on northeast with special reference to Sikkim. The investigation was built on survey method and the data were collected through the technique of questionnaire. Random samples of 1026 were selected from three categories of respondents namely male students, female students and their guardians. The responses of the questionnaire were analyzed in percentage and were also subjected to chi-square test on the basis of Likert's attitude measurement system. Results revealed similar form of opinion and even the trend of opinion of three categories of subjects were more or less similar. In Sikkim, the socio-cultural values and functions of sports are perceived as determining factors not only for the sporting success but also for the betterment of the society. This suggests that sports can be used as a medium to reach areas that traditional development agency and techniques/processes have had difficulty reaching.

### KEYWORDS

Socio-cultural aspects of sports, Social Impacts, Northeast

### Introduction

Sport nowadays is on the front pages of newspapers, it is often present at the dinner tables as a main topic of discussions, and it runs through pubs, cafes and even in the streets of cities and villages. Its presence in today's everyday life situations is hard to neglect. It is becoming more and more evident that the pursuit of sports, both actively and passively, occupies an important place in the lives of the majority of the world population. Many participate in sports to stay fit, others make a living from it. Some dedicate their time to just watching it. Some experience sport as part of their culture, while others join sports in search of better livelihood and social recognition. Many studies state that sports have become an important part of the social and cultural profiles of many societies around the world (Coakley 1998; Frey and Eitzen 1991; Guttman 1988; Hargreaves 1986, cited in Haasler & Baxell 2012). Due to the changing political and economic environments within which sports organizations operate, sport nowadays has acquired a rather universal character that is argued to bring social change across the world more than ever before. Current trends reveal an increasing recognition of what Levermore (2008) describes as "a new engine that complements development assistance in many ways, particularly in being able to reach areas that traditional development agencies and techniques/processes have had difficulty reaching". And, in this context, Sikkim is of no exception.

The socio-cultural prejudices, superstition and taboos cannot prevent sports from permeating into the society. Its radical nature has led some physical educators to believe that it should receive intensive study, particularly as it affects the behavior of human beings and institutions as they form the total social and cultural complex of society. Hence, the research scholar intends to conduct a study on social impact of sports on society with special reference to Mountainous Sikkim.

Social Impacts are the changes that occur in communities or to individuals as a result of an externally-induced change. Interorganizational Committee on Principles and Guidelines for Social Impact Assessment (IOCGPSIA, 2003) defines social impacts as "the consequences to human populations of any

public or private actions that alter the ways in which people live, work, play, relate to one another, organize to meet their needs, and generally cope as members of society. The term also includes cultural impacts involving changes to the norms, values, and beliefs that guide and rationalize their cognition of themselves and their society." Such changes may affect employment, income, production, way of life, cultural practices, community participation, political systems, environment, health and well-being. These impacts can be positive or negative or both.

According to social impact assessment, a module prepared by Anthropological Survey of India (2010) [available: [www.ansi.gov.in](http://www.ansi.gov.in)] a conventional way of conceptualizing social impacts is as changes to one or more of the following:

People's way of life – that is, how they live, works, play and interact with one another on day to day basis; Their culture – that is, their shared beliefs, customs, values and language or dialect; Their community – its cohesion, stability, character, services and facilities; Their political system; Their environment; Their health and wellbeing; Their personal and property rights and Their fears and aspirations.

On the other hand, Social Impact theorist like Latan (1981) defines social impact as any influence on individual feelings, thoughts, or behavior that is exerted by the real, implied, or imagined presence or actions of others. His theory of social impact is a metatheory that attempts to characterize how the many ways in which individuals affect each other are subject to the constraints of time and space, and specifically, how impact is moderated by the strength, immediacy, and number of other people in the social environment. In tune with the above definition and perspectives, the present study on social impact of sports was carried on.

The north eastern region of India occupies only 7% of the landmass and 2% of the Indian population yet it is obvious that in sports northeast youths have performed incredibly well representing India in international meets. In the last couples of National Games the region has displayed its sports prowess by

winning a record number of medals and Manipur emerging as the best team. Her Excellency the President of India Mrs. Pratiba Patel had also acknowledged to the people of northeast for playing crucial role in nation building through sport. Now, sports have reached to the every corner and lives of the people in northeast. In the past, leisure time activities were limited in the jungles. But the emergence of western sports brought by British soldiers and missionaries became a ladder for development in the region. When passive entertainment like Television had not reached to them, games and sports were favourite leisure time activities at local level. Today, for the people of northeast, sports have become not just a favourite past time but also an integral part of their culture and the means for earning better livelihood. And, in this regard, Sikkim cannot be ignored.

Method

In order to carry out the present study the survey method through the technique of questionnaire was used to collect the relevant data of this study.

Participants

The population of the present study consisted of male students (Age-16-24), female students (Age-16-23) and their guardians (Age-25-72) of different Government Schools and Colleges. One thousand and twenty six (1026) subjects were selected randomly from all the districts of Sikkim namely Mangan in North Sikkim, Gangtok and Pakhyong in East Sikkim, Peling, Gyalsing, Sombaria, Bariakhop, Daramdin in West Sikkim and Namchi in South Sikkim.

Instrument

The questionnaire developed by H. A. Jafrey & Ajmer Singh (1995) was adopted in this present study. The wording of the statement in the questionnaire was absolutely clear, relevant, simple and free from ambiguity to the respondent. The scholar took the verbal permission from the subjects for their willingness to participate in the present research. A random sample of 342 participants was selected from each category of respondents viz. Male students, Female students and Guardians. A questionnaire along with the consent letter inviting participants mainly Guardians to willingly participate and complete a questionnaire was sent out through students and the very next day the questionnaires were collected. Students were asked to fill up the questionnaire inside the classroom in the absence of their teachers and asked them to submit on the same day.

Data collection:

Data were generated through a survey method using Likert-type scale questionnaire for the present study.

Pilot test

In order to find out the appropriateness of the tools and techniques and also to make an attempt to point out the focus of the study, a pilot study was carried out with 120 random samples before the final survey. The result of the pilot study revealed that the respondents of each category exhibited identical or similar opinion or perception towards the positive social impact of sports. The investigator through this pilot study observed that the samples taken into consideration were easy to administer and the questionnaire was reliable and valid to assess the attitude or opinion of the respondents.

Reliability and Validity of the test

Pilot study was conducted to measure the reliability of the questionnaire. The reliability of the test was measured through Chronbach's alpha i.e. inter item reliability test. In pilot study, reliability of 0.7 or higher is required before using the main instrument or questionnaire with the main population under study. The results of pilot study showed Cronbach's Alpha value 0.763, which is higher than 0.7 Hence, it can be considered as strong inter item reliability of the scale. Regarding the validity, it is statistically valid as the sample size is large enough. Also, there are more than 80% of cells have expected cell counts larger than 5 and expected cell counts are all

larger than 1. This questionnaire is well validated in the Indian context as it has already been tested for its validity and objectivity and was used for research work in the State of Madhya Pradesh by H. A. Jafrey & Ajmer Singh (1995).

Analysis of data and results of the study

The data were analyzed using the SPSS (version 16) program for Microsoft windows. The responses of the questionnaire were analyzed in percentage and were also subjected to chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) test (Garret,) on the basis of Likert's attitude measurement system assigning five degree of opinion. The responses of subject were converted into three scale from five point scale as given in the questionnaire in which strongly agree and agree were considered as an agreement with the statement, while disagree and strongly disagree were considered as disagreement. However, undecided responses were kept as they were. Thus three point scale showing agree, undecided and disagree was evolved. The divergences of observed frequency from those expected were tested on the hypothesis of equal probability (null hypothesis). It was hypothesized that total responses on each item will be equally distributed on the scale.

**Null hypothesis verified in each question was as follows:**  
"There is no association between respondent type and pattern of their responses".

**The Alternative Hypothesis in this study was as follows:**  
"There is an association between respondent type and pattern of their responses. In other words response pattern of three groups of respondents viz. Guardians, Male Students and Female Students are different".

To assess the strength of feelings of Guardians, Male Students and Female Students descriptive technique of percentage method was used, and in order to compare the pattern of responses in three selected groups, Pearson's chi-square test was applied. Level of significance was chosen at.05 in each question.

RESULTS

Responses pertaining to each of the questions were analysed and have been presented in terms of the total responses of percentage and chi-square value. The findings of the present study are presented in the following tables.

Table-1  
"SPORTS ARE NOT PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT FOR THE WELLBEING OF OUR SOCIETY"

Subjects / Responses	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Chi-Sqr. $\chi^2$
Guardians	50	37	34	5.927
Students (Male)	11	8	6	
Students (Female)	281	297	302	
% within Subjects	11.8%	2.4%	85.8%	

It is evident from the above table that the obtained chi-square value of 5.927 (at df. 4) is lesser than the table value of 9.488 and therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted at .05 levels of significance. This indicates that there was no significant difference of opinion among the three groups of respondents for the above mentioned statement.

Table-2  
"PARTICIPATION IN SPORT ENABLES THE YOUNG GENERATION TO KEEP AWAY FROM DRUGS AND ALCOHOLISM"

Subjects / Responses	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Chi-Sqr. $\chi^2$
Guardians	305	7	30	7.948
Students (Male)	293	16	33	
Students (Female)	283	14	45	
% within Subjects	85.9%	3.6%	10.5%	

The above table shows that the obtained chi-square value of 7.948 (at df. 4) is less than the table value of 9.488. Thus,

null hypothesis was accepted at 0.05 levels. This indicates that there were no significant differences in the responses among the three different groups for the statement that participation in sport enables the young generation to keep away from drugs and alcoholism.

**Table-3**  
**"THE EMPHASIS THAT SPORTS PLACES ON COMPETITION CAUSES MORE HARM THAN GOOD"**

Subjects / Responses	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Chi-Sqr.x <sup>2</sup>
Guardians	151	39	152	32.103
Students (Male)	130	36	176	
Students (Female)	201	26	115	
% within Subjects	47.0%	9.8%	43.2%	

From the above table the value of chi-square seems to be significant at .05 levels as calculated value of 32.103 (at df 4) is greater than the tabulated chi-square of 9.488 at .05 levels. Thus, null hypothesis was rejected. It can be inferred from the above calculated table value that there were divergent of opinion among three groups of respondents for the above statement.

**Table-4**  
**"SPORTS ARE VALUABLE BECAUSE THEY TEACH THE YOUNGSTERS - RESPECT FOR AUTHORITY"**

Subjects / Responses	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Chi-Sqr.x <sup>2</sup>
Guardians	316	15	12	9.213
Students (Male)	308	12	22	
Students (Female)	295	23	24	
% within Subjects	89.6%	4.8%	5.7%	

The above table indicates that the obtained chi-square value of 9.213 is less than table value of 9.488. Therefore, null hypothesis was accepted at .05 levels. This indicates that there were no significant differences among the three groups of respondents for their responses on the above mentioned statement.

**Table-5**  
**"SPORTS PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR INDIVIDUAL WHO PROGRESS AND ACHIEVE THEIR AMBITIONS IN THE SOCIETY"**

Subjects / Responses	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Chi-Sqr.x <sup>2</sup>
Guardians	317	14	11	8.248
Students (Male)	309	12	21	
Students (Female)	311	21	10	
% within Subjects	91.3%	4.6%	4.1%	

The above table indicates that the obtained chi-square value of 8.248 (at df. 4) is less than table value of 9.488. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted at .05 levels. This indicates that there were no significant differences among the three groups of respondents for their responses on the above mentioned statement.

**Table-6**  
**"SPORTS ARE VALUABLE BECAUSE THEY TEACH SELF DISCIPLINE"**

Subjects / Responses	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Chi-Sqr.x <sup>2</sup>
Guardians	315	11	16	4.013
Students (Male)	326	8	8	
Students (Female)	324	7	11	
% within Subjects	94.1%	2.5%	3.4%	

In the above table the value of calculated chi-square of 4.013 is lesser than the tabulated chi-square value of 9.488 and therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted at .05 levels. This reveals that there were no significant difference among the three groups of respondents for the responses that sports builds personality (character).

**Table-7**  
**"SPORTS BUILD PERSONALITY (CHARACTER)"**

Subjects / Responses	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Chi-Sqr.x <sup>2</sup>
Guardians	310	20	12	9.228
Students (Male)	320	9	13	
Students (Female)	303	16	23	
% within Subjects	90.9%	4.4%	4.7%	

It is apparent from the above table that the obtained chi-square value of 9.228 (at df 4) is less than the table value of 9.488 and thus, the null hypothesis was accepted at .05 levels. This indicates that there were no significant differences among the three groups of respondents for the statement that sports teach self discipline.

**Table-8**  
**"PARTICIPATION IN SPORT RELEASES PENT UP EMOTIONS AND TENSIONS"**

Subjects / Responses	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Chi-Sqr.x <sup>2</sup>
Guardians	221	56	65	5.951
Students (Male)	248	45	49	
Students (Female)	225	58	59	
% within Subjects	67.6%	15.5%	16.9%	

The above table indicates that the obtained chi-square value of is 5.951 lesser than table value of 9.488. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted at .05 levels. This indicates that there were no significant differences among the three groups of respondents for their responses on the above mentioned statement.

**Table-09**  
**"SPORT HELPS PARTICIPANTS TO MAINTAIN CORDIAL AND FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH THE PEOPLE OF THE WORLD"**

Subjects / Responses	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Chi-Sqr.x <sup>2</sup>
Guardians	316	16	10	5.276
Students (Male)	320	12	10	
Students (Female)	329	9	4	
% within Subjects	94.1%	3.6%	2.3%	

In the above table the value of calculated chi-square of 5.276 is lesser than the tabulated chi-square value of 9.488 and therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted at .05 levels. This reveals that there was no significant difference among the three groups of respondents for the above statement.

**Table-10**  
**"SPORTS CHANNALISES THE ENERGY OF STUDENTS TOWARDS THE CONSTRUCTIVE PURPOSE AND SOCIALLY USEFUL WORK"**

Subjects / Responses	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Chi-Sqr.x <sup>2</sup>
Guardians	311	15	16	7.122
Students (Male)	307	22	13	
Students (Female)	295	32	15	
% within Subjects	89.0%	6.7%	4.3%	

The above table indicates that the obtained chi-square value of 7.122 is lesser than table value of 9.488. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted at .05 levels. This indicates that there were no significant differences among the three groups of respondents.

**Table-11**  
**"THE SOCIO-CULTURAL PREJUDICES, SUPERSTITION AND TABOOS RESTRICT WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN GAMES AND SPORTS"**

Subjects / Responses	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Chi-Sqr.x <sup>2</sup>
Guardians	194	52	96	3.272
Students (Male)	191	46	105	
Students (Female)	176	50	116	
% within Subjects	54.7%	14.4%	30.9%	

The above table indicates that the obtained chi-square value of 3.272 is lesser than table value of 9.488. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted at .05 levels. This indicates that there were no significant differences among the three groups of respondents for their responses on the above mentioned statement.

**Table-12**  
**"SPORT ASSISTS INDIVIDUAL'S PREPARATION FOR LIFE THROUGH PARTICIPATION AND ADJUSTMENT IN SOCIETY"**

Subjects / Responses	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Chi-Sqr. x <sup>2</sup>
Guardians	300	17	25	8.664
Students (Male)	301	21	20	
Students (Female)	288	35	19	
% within Subjects	86.6%	7.1%	6.2%	

The above table indicates that the obtained chi-square value of 8.664 is lesser than table value of 9.488. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted at .05 levels. This indicates that there were no significant differences among the three groups of respondents for their responses on the above mentioned statement.

**Table-13**  
**"MALE DOMINATION SOCIETY UNDERMINES WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN SPORTS"**

Subjects / Responses	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Chi-Sqr.x <sup>2</sup>
Guardians	156	65	121	27.853
Students (Male)	173	24	145	
Students (Female)	190	43	109	
% within Subjects	50.6%	12.9%	36.5%	

The above table indicates that the obtained chi-square value 27.853 is higher than table value of 9.488. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected at .05 levels. This indicates that there were significant differences among the three groups of respondents for their responses on the above mentioned statement.

**Table-14**  
**"SPORTS MOVEMENT CANNOT BE MAINTAINED AND PROMOTED WITHOUT MASS MEDIA PROPAGANDA"**

Subjects /Responses	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Chi-Sqr.x <sup>2</sup>
Guardians	233	23	86	7.666
Students (Male)	222	28	92	
Students (Female)	226	41	75	
% within Subjects	66.4%	9.0%	24.7%	

The above table indicates that the obtained chi-square value of 7.666 is lesser than table value of 9.488. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted at .05 levels. This indicates that there were no significant differences among the three groups of respondents for their responses on the above mentioned statement. It can be concluded that all the three groups of respondents agreed to the above mentioned statement.

**DISCUSSIONS**

Chi-square and percentage analysis significantly revealed almost similar form of opinion and even the trend of opinion of three categories of subjects were more or less similar.

Regarding Socio-Cultural aspects of sports, the respondents comprising Guardians, Students (Male) and Students (Female) expressed positive opinion in agreement with the views that sports are beneficial for the wellbeing of our society. They strongly believed that participation in sport enables youngsters to keep away from drugs and alcoholism. In this backdrop, Kirkcaldy (2002), Jones-Palm & Palm, (2004) argued that young individuals who participate in organized sports demonstrate lower rates of anti-social behavior and teenage pregnancy. They suggested that there is a strong association between sports participation and resistance to drug and alcohol addiction. The data from the present study also supports the proposed arguments.

Majority of respondents mainly guardians and male students viewed sports more from competitive and professionalism perspective than amateurism. It seems that the concept of "must win at any cost" seems to be more prominent among male youths and their guardians as compared to female students. Thus, the present finding suggests that the existing culture of gambling among youths and local sports enthusiast may also emerge in sports. But, it is also cleared that youth both male and female take part in sports professionally. This is, perhaps, because of the belief amongst youths that sport provides an opportunity for individual who progress and achieve their ambition in the society.

Respondents expressed positive opinion regarding the educational role of sports that teach the youngsters respect for authority. Majority of respondents explicitly opined that sports are valuable because they teach self-discipline and builds personality (character). Fauzee, M.S, Nazarudin M.N.,Saputra Y.M. and etal. (2012) have similar opinion with the above notion.

The notion that sports integrate people and place by inculcating strong and friendly relation among the participants was strongly accepted by the majority of the respondents. Light, R.L. (2010) provides useful insight into the significant part that long term participation in sports can play ongoing human development of children and young people appeared to be confirmed by the data in this present study.

Regarding socially constructive work of sports, the respondents opined that educational level of parents is a determining factor for participation of their children in sports activities. This shows that the improved literacy rate of Sikkim has its contribution in the promotion of sports and its social values. The soundness of healthy attitude largely depends upon the socio-cultural, economic and educational level of people in a society (H. A. Jafri, 1995). Both male and female students strongly agreed that sports assist individual's preparation for life through participation and adjustment in the society. This indicates that youths are influenced from the local sports persons who are highly honoured in their society because of their sports excellence.

Moreover, the respondents believe that sport channelizes the energy of students towards the constructive purpose and socially useful work. Evidencing from Arizona Sports Summit accord, (1999) declaration, it was resolved that student athletes who participate in sports and extracurricular activities have better attendance in school, lower drop-out rates, fewer discipline problems, and less drug use. The sports and physical activity setting provides opportunities to athletes to learn skills, strategies, sportsmanship, commitment, respect and disciplines. Thus, with proper strategies it is in line with the six pillars of character; trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and good citizenship.

Drawing on the opinions of Guardians, Students (Male) and Students (Female) provide a reasonably persuasive perspective on the notion that participation in sport releases pent up emotion and tension. As Bhattacharyya, Debnath and Bhowmick, (2009) suggest that people can reduce stress by participation in exercises, sports and games and recreation, which play a very important role to relieve stress. Valeria Kunz and Ramon Spaaij (2012) are more explicit about the sport and play as innovative instrument to support a psychosocial rehabilitation process in post-disaster and post-conflict situation.

Concerning the role of Media in Promoting, majority of the respondents agreed that without Mass Media propaganda promotion of sports and sports persons would be difficult. Here, it can be assumed that the socio-cultural values of sports in contemporary society cannot be made without considering the enormous influence which the media have on it.

**CONCLUSIONS**

Bases on the result of the study, the following conclusions may be drawn:

The observed findings empirically showed that the majority of respondents perceive sports as having relatively greater positive influence on society in respect of socio-cultural aspects. The respondents comprising Guardians, Students (Male) and Students (Female) have the knowledge regarding beneficial contribution of sports for the wellbeing of our society. They also believed that participation in sport enables youngsters to keep away from drugs and alcoholism. This shows that in a small Border State like Sikkim, social values and functions of sports have positively influenced the well being of the people.

In Sikkim, youths and the adults viewed sports more from competitive and professionalism perspective than amateurism.

Guardians in particular have expressed their view in favour of educational role of sports that teach the youngsters respect for authority. Respondents also opined that sport provides an opportunity for individual who progress and achieve their ambition in the society. They are of the view that sports are valuable because they teach self-discipline and builds personality (character).

The belief that sports integrate people and place by inculcating strong and friendly relation among the participants is perceived to be important social function of sports by the respondents. Also, the respondents opined that sports help participants to maintain cordial and friendly relation with the people of the world.

The respondents have also opined that educational level of parents is a determining factor for participation of their children in sports activities.

The respondents have opined that participation in sports assists individual's preparation for life through participation and adjustment in the society

The respondents have favoured the view that sport channelizes the energy of students towards the constructive purpose and socially useful work.

The opinions of Guardians, Students (Male) and Students (Female) provide a reasonably persuasive perspective on the notion that participation in sport releases pent up emotion and tension.

Respondents have opined that sports are gendered activities grounded primarily in the values and experiences of men with power and influence that always undermines women's participation in sports. They also opined that socio-cultural prejudices, superstitions and beliefs regarding social conventions and taboos restrict women's participation in sports.

In Sikkim, it is believed that without Mass Media propaganda promotion of sports and sports persons would be difficult. They believed that Mass Media like TV. Radio, News Papers, Magazines, Journals, Internet etc. are performing active role in promoting sports than politicizing it.

It can be further concluded that the data of this present study revealed that in northeast region of India with special reference to Sikkim the socio-cultural values and functions of sports are perceived as determining factors not only for the sporting success of the state and her sports persons but also for the betterment of the society. Hence, sports can be used as a medium to reach areas that traditional development agency and techniques/processes have had difficulty reaching.

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