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REVIEW ARTICLE

Challenges of Persons with Disability in Participating in Sports in India

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ABSTRACT

Participation in sports offers numerous physical, psychological, and social benefits for individuals with disabilities. However, in India, persons with disabilities (PwDs) face significant challenges in accessing and engaging in sports. This paper explores the key barriers, including inadequate infrastructure, societal stigma, lack of policy implementation, financial constraints, and limited opportunities for training and competition. Additionally, the role of government initiatives, non-governmental organizations, and inclusive sports policies is examined. The study highlights the urgent need for accessible sports facilities, greater awareness, and policy reforms to foster an inclusive sporting culture in India. Addressing these challenges can enhance the participation of PwDs in sports, promoting equality, empowerment, and overall well-being.

Keywords: Disability sports; Adaptive sports; Accessible infrastructure

1 INTRODUCTION

Sports education refers to the process of teaching and learning sports-related knowledge, skills, and values. It encompasses various aspects, including physical fitness, technical skills, tactical understanding, sportsmanship, teamwork, and personal development. Sports education emphasizes the importance of physical fitness and encourages individuals to engage in regular physical activity. It promotes the development of motor skills, coordination, strength, endurance, and flexibility. Sports education focuses on teaching individuals the technical skills required for specific sports or activities. It involves teaching proper techniques, drills, and strategies to improve performance and enhance overall proficiency. In addition to technical skills, sports education also emphasizes tactical understanding. It involves teaching individuals how to analyze game situations, make strategic decisions, and apply appropriate tactics to achieve success in sports. Sports education instils values such as sportsmanship, fair play, and respect for opponents, officials, and rules. It emphasizes the importance of ethical behavior, integrity, and playing within the spirit of the game. Sports education promotes teamwork and collaboration. It teaches individuals how to work together, communicate effectively, and support each other towards a common goal. It helps develop skills such as leadership, cooperation, and

conflict resolution. Sports education goes beyond physical skills and also focuses on personal development. It helps individuals develop self-discipline, perseverance, resilience, goal-setting, time management, and self-confidence. It can contribute to the overall well-being and character development of individuals. Sports education encourages a healthy and active lifestyle. Regular participation in sports and physical activity has numerous health benefits, including improved cardiovascular fitness, reduced risk of chronic diseases, enhanced mental well-being, and stress reduction. Sports education should strive to be inclusive and accessible to individuals of all abilities, genders, ages, and backgrounds. It promotes diversity, equality, and the inclusion of individuals with disabilities in sports and physical activities. Sports education includes teaching proper techniques, warm-up exercises, and injury prevention strategies. It emphasizes the importance of safety precautions, such as using appropriate protective gear and following rules and regulations to minimize the risk of injuries. Sports education aims to foster a lifelong engagement in physical activity and sports. It promotes the enjoyment and appreciation of sports, encouraging individuals to continue participating in sports and maintaining an active lifestyle throughout their lives. Sports education can take place in various settings, including schools, community centers, sports clubs, and recreational

programs. Qualified coaches, physical education teachers, and sports educators play a crucial role in delivering effective sports education programs.

2 NEP 2020 AND SPORTS EDUCATION: AN ANALYSIS

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 in India recognizes the importance of sports education and its role in the holistic development of students. The NEP 2020 emphasizes the integration of sports and physical education into the mainstream curriculum. Here are some key points regarding sports education in the NEP 2020:

- **Holistic Development:** The NEP 2020 recognizes that sports and physical education are essential for the holistic development of students. It emphasizes the importance of physical fitness, mental well-being, and character-building through sports.
- **Universal Access:** The NEP 2020 aims to ensure universal access to sports and physical education for all students. It emphasizes the need for inclusive and equitable opportunities, regardless of gender, socio-economic background, or disability.
- **Curriculum Integration:** The NEP 2020 promotes the integration of sports and physical education into the mainstream curriculum. It suggests that physical education should be treated at par with other subjects, with equal importance given to both cognitive and physical development.
- **Multi-sport Approach:** The NEP 2020 encourages a multi-sport approach, where students have the opportunity to engage in various sports and physical activities. It recommends the provision of a wide range of sports options to cater to the diverse interests and abilities of students.
- **Infrastructure and Resources:** The NEP 2020 emphasizes the need for adequate infrastructure and resources for sports education. It suggests the development of sports facilities, provision of sports equipment, and training of teachers to ensure quality sports education.
- **Professional Development:** The NEP 2020 recognizes the importance of trained and qualified physical education teachers. It emphasizes the need for their professional development through specialized training programs and continuous learning opportunities.
- **Sports for All:** The NEP 2020 promotes the concept of "Sports for All" and encourages the participation of students in intra-school, inter-school, and district-level sports competitions. It aims to foster a culture of sports in schools and communities.
- **Collaboration and Partnerships:** The NEP 2020 encourages collaboration between educational institutions, sports organizations, and community

stakeholders to promote sports education. It suggests partnerships with sports federations, clubs, and organizations to provide expertise, mentorship, and opportunities for students.

- **Research and Innovation:** The NEP 2020 emphasizes the need for research and innovation in sports education. It encourages the development of new teaching methodologies, assessment techniques, and sports-related research to enhance the quality of sports education.
- **Recognition and Support:** The NEP 2020 acknowledges and appreciates the achievements of students in sports and provides support for their further development. It suggests the provision of scholarships, incentives, and opportunities for talented athletes to pursue higher education and professional careers in sports.

The NEP 2020 envisions a comprehensive and inclusive approach to sports education, aiming to nurture physical fitness, sportsmanship, teamwork, and overall well-being among students. It recognizes the significant role that sports play in the overall development and success of individuals.

3 NEED OF SPORTS FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Sports can have numerous benefits for people with disabilities. Here are some ways in which sports can help individuals with disabilities:

- **Physical Fitness and Health:** Engaging in sports and physical activities can improve cardiovascular fitness, muscular strength, flexibility, and overall physical health for individuals with disabilities. Regular physical activity can help manage weight, improve motor skills, enhance coordination, and increase energy levels.
- **Rehabilitation and Therapy:** Sports can be used as a form of rehabilitation and therapy for individuals with disabilities. Sports activities and exercises can aid in improving motor function, balance, and coordination. They can also contribute to the development of sensory integration and proprioceptive skills.
- **Psychological Well-being:** Participating in sports can have positive effects on mental health and emotional well-being. It can boost self-esteem, self-confidence, and body image for individuals with disabilities. Sports provide opportunities for social interaction, building friendships, and a sense of belonging, which can reduce feelings of isolation and improve overall psychological well-being.
- **Skill Development:** Sports provide opportunities for individuals with disabilities to develop and improve various skills. They can enhance gross motor skills, fine motor skills, hand-eye coordination, and spatial awareness. Learning and practicing specific sports

skills can lead to a sense of accomplishment and personal growth.

- **Inclusion and Social Integration:** Sports can promote inclusion and social integration for individuals with disabilities. Participating in sports activities allows individuals to interact with peers, teammates, and coaches, fostering a sense of belonging and acceptance. It can help break down barriers and challenge stereotypes surrounding disabilities.
- **Goal Setting and Achievement:** Engaging in sports allows individuals with disabilities to set goals and work towards achieving them. Whether it's improving personal bests, learning new skills, or participating in competitive events, sports provide opportunities for individuals to experience success, build resilience, and develop a growth mindset.
- **Advocacy and Empowerment:** Sports can be a platform for advocacy and empowerment for individuals with disabilities. By actively participating in sports, individuals can challenge societal norms, raise awareness about disability rights, and inspire others. They become role models and advocates for inclusion and accessibility in sports and society.
- **Adaptive Sports Opportunities:** Adaptive sports, specifically designed for individuals with disabilities, provide tailored and inclusive opportunities for participation. These sports modify rules, equipment, and techniques to accommodate different abilities, ensuring that individuals with disabilities can engage in sports activities at their own pace and level.
- **Independence and Life Skills:** Sports can help individuals with disabilities develop important life skills such as teamwork, communication, problem-solving, and decision-making. These skills can be transferred to other areas of life, including education, employment, and daily living activities, promoting independence and self-reliance.
- **Quality of Life:** Ultimately, sports can significantly improve the overall quality of life for individuals with disabilities. It enhances physical health, mental well-being, social connections, and personal growth. Engaging in sports and physical activities allows individuals with disabilities to lead active, fulfilling, and empowered lives.

It is important to ensure that sports programs and facilities are inclusive and accessible to individuals with disabilities. Adaptive equipment, trained coaches, and appropriate support systems can contribute to creating a safe and inclusive environment for individuals with disabilities to participate in sports.

4 CHALLENGES OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN PARTICIPATING IN SPORT IN INDIA

Persons with disabilities face several challenges when it comes to participating in sports in India. Here are some common challenges they may encounter:

- **Lack of Accessible Infrastructure:** Many sports facilities and venues in India lack proper accessibility features for individuals with disabilities. The absence of ramps, accessible changing rooms, and adapted equipment can make it difficult for them to participate in sports activities.
- **Limited Awareness and Opportunities:** There is often a lack of awareness and understanding about the capabilities and potential of persons with disabilities in sports. This can result in limited opportunities for them to participate in sports programs and competitions, both at the grassroots and professional levels.
- **Attitudinal Barriers:** Negative attitudes and stereotypes towards persons with disabilities can act as barriers to their participation in sports. Discrimination, stigma, and misconceptions about their abilities can discourage them from pursuing sports or make it challenging for them to access proper training and support.
- **Financial Constraints:** Accessing sports equipment, adaptive devices, and specialized training can be expensive. Persons with disabilities may face financial constraints that limit their ability to afford these resources, hindering their participation in sports.
- **Lack of Trained Coaches and Inclusive Programs:** There is a shortage of trained coaches and instructors who have expertise in working with persons with disabilities. The lack of inclusive sports programs and specialized coaching can make it difficult for individuals with disabilities to receive appropriate guidance and support to develop their skills.
- **Limited Integration in Mainstream Sports:** Persons with disabilities often face challenges in integrating and participating in mainstream sports activities. The absence of adapted rules, equipment, and training can create barriers to their inclusion in mainstream sports events and competitions.
- **Inadequate Policy Support:** While there have been efforts to promote disability-inclusive sports policies in India, there is still a need for stronger policy support to address the specific needs and challenges faced by persons with disabilities in sports. Policies related to accessibility, inclusion, funding, and training need to be strengthened and implemented effectively.
- **Lack of Media Coverage and Recognition:** Persons with disabilities in sports often struggle to receive adequate media coverage and recognition for their achievements. This lack of visibility can limit their

opportunities for sponsorship, endorsements, and career advancement in sports.

Addressing these challenges requires a multi-faceted approach involving collaboration between government bodies, sports organizations, educational institutions, and civil society. Efforts should focus on creating accessible infrastructure, raising awareness, providing inclusive coaching and training, promoting inclusive policies, and fostering a culture of inclusion and acceptance in sports. By addressing these challenges, individuals with disabilities can be empowered to fully participate in sports and benefit from its physical, psychological, and social advantages.

5 STRATEGIES TO ENSURING PARTICIPATION OF PWDS IN SPORTS IN INDIA

Ensuring the participation of persons with disabilities in sports in India requires a comprehensive and inclusive approach. Here are some strategies that can help promote their participation:

1. **Accessibility:** Ensure that sports facilities, venues, and equipment are accessible and inclusive for individuals with disabilities. This includes providing ramps, accessible changing rooms, adapted sports equipment, and accessible seating areas.
2. **Awareness and Sensitization:** Conduct awareness campaigns and sensitization programs to promote understanding and acceptance of persons with disabilities in sports. Educate coaches, teachers, and students about the capabilities and potential of individuals with disabilities in sports.
3. **Inclusive Sports Programs:** Develop and implement inclusive sports programs that cater to the diverse needs and abilities of persons with disabilities. This involves adapting rules, equipment, and training methods to ensure their full and meaningful participation.
4. **Training and Capacity Building:** Provide training and capacity-building programs for coaches, instructors, and sports administrators to equip them with the knowledge and skills needed to work effectively with persons with disabilities. This includes training on disability awareness, inclusive coaching techniques, and adaptive sports strategies.
5. **Collaboration and Partnerships:** Foster collaboration between government bodies, sports organizations, educational institutions, and disability organizations to promote the participation of persons with disabilities in sports. Create partnerships to share resources, expertise, and best practices in inclusive sports.
6. **Policy Support:** Advocate for the development and implementation of disability-inclusive sports policies at the national, state, and local levels. Policies should address issues such as accessibility, funding, training,

and inclusion in mainstream sports events and competitions.

7. **Talent Identification and Development:** Implement talent identification programs to identify and nurture sporting talent among persons with disabilities. Provide opportunities for specialized training, coaching, and mentorship to help them develop their skills and reach their full potential.
8. **Media Coverage and Recognition:** Increase media coverage and recognition of persons with disabilities in sports. Highlight their achievements, share their stories, and promote their participation to inspire others and create positive role models.
9. **Financial Support:** Provide financial support, scholarships, and grants to individuals with disabilities to help them overcome financial barriers and access sports equipment, training, and participation in competitions.
10. **Inclusive Sports Events:** Organize inclusive sports events and competitions that bring together individuals with and without disabilities. This promotes integration, fosters a sense of belonging, and provides opportunities for networking and skill development.

By implementing these strategies, we can create an inclusive sports environment in India that ensures equal opportunities and participation for persons with disabilities. This will not only benefit their physical and mental well-being but also contribute to building an inclusive and accepting society.

6 CONCLUSION

Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) have the right to participate in sports on an equal basis with others. This right is supported by various international and national frameworks. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) recognizes the right of PwDs to participate in sports and recreational activities without discrimination. It emphasizes the importance of inclusion, accessibility, and equal opportunities in sports for PwDs. The International Paralympic Committee (IPC) is the global governing body for Paralympic sports. It works to promote and protect the rights of PwDs in sports, ensuring their participation, inclusion, and fair competition. Many countries have enacted legislation and formulated policies to protect the rights of PwDs to participate in sports. These laws and policies aim to eliminate discrimination, promote accessibility, and provide equal opportunities for PwDs in sports and recreational activities. Inclusion in sports organizations and programs is a fundamental right for PwDs. Inclusive sports organizations and programs provide adapted sports activities, coaching, and competitions that cater to the specific needs and abilities of PwDs. Further, the PwDs have the right to access sports facilities that are designed and equipped to meet their specific requirements. Accessible facilities include ramps, elevators, accessible

changing rooms, and adapted sports equipment to ensure equal participation. To add more, the PwDs have the right to reasonable accommodation to ensure their full and effective participation in sports. Reasonable accommodation may include modifying rules, providing assistive devices, or making adjustments to training or competition environments. Additionally, the PwDs have the right to participate in sports without facing discrimination based on their disability. They should have equal opportunities to access sports activities, training, competitions, and representation in sports organizations. They have the right to participate in sports in a safe and healthy environment. Measures should be taken to ensure their safety during training and competitions, including appropriate supervision and risk assessment. The PwDs have the right to be recognized and supported in their pursuit of sports. This includes opportunities for talent identification, funding, scholarships, and career development in sports. Moreover, the PwDs have the right to enjoy sports and its associated benefits, including improved physical fitness, mental well-being, and social inclusion. They should have access to sports and recreational opportunities that contribute to their overall health and well-being. So, it is vital to promote and protect the rights of PwDs in sports to ensure their full and equal participation, fostering inclusivity, and creating opportunities for personal growth and achievement.

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