

**SIGNIFICANCE OF SPORTS EDUCATION AT ELEMENTARY LEVEL**

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**Introduction**

The basis of sports education or physical education starts in school. Sports' training is an educational programs and guideline display intended to give physical instruction programs at the upper rudimentary, center and secondary school level. It intends to give youngsters and youth real and agreeable games involvement. Sports training dependably supplements scholastic learning as it builds up the general identity of the understudies incredibly. A decent sportsman is the person who figures out how to comply with the principles of the diversion. Sports instill qualities like initiative, teach, sharing, collaboration, trustworthiness, camaraderie, resilience and numerous more among the understudies. With the progression of time, we see the greater part of the schools know that instruction is not simply scholastics, but rather stretches out to an all encompassing advancement of a kid, and games assumes a fundamental part in it. Steps are taken to utilize proficient mentors in schools. Particular time is allocated to games instruction and guardians have likewise begun getting included by empowering their youngsters dismantle up games from studies.

**Promoting sports in schools**

Schools in India are gradually beginning to realize the importance of sports in the overall development of children, and how vital it is to encourage them to take up sports. The growing awareness of how sports contribute to the growth of children in terms of life skills, has led parents and school authorities to encourage children to take up sports, whereas previously the focus was entirely on academics. The realization that sports help in the development of team work, trust, sharing responsibilities and working together towards a common goal has led to a spurt in the sports activities in schools.

As per **Kavita C. Das**, Principal, St John's High School, Chandigarh, "Earlier, sports were only encouraged in the private schools. However, sports are now being encouraged in a big way, especially since the advent of "big bucks" into the sports arena. The government too is now providing opportunities to

children to develop their potential. They are taking up the initiative in providing sports infrastructure, coaches and financial help needed for the same. Schools have come up with initiatives to provide the best sports infrastructure to encourage sports education.”

Good infrastructure is the basic component to encourage sports education among the students.

As per to **A P Sharma**, Principal, Apeejay School, Sheikh Sarai, “We have taken the initiative to provide good infrastructure in our school which includes football ground, cricket field, basketball courts, skating rink, volleyball, short tennis courts, swimming pool, badminton court, athletic track, splash pool, sandpit and table tennis. Other than that we have introduced few innovative sports for preprimary kids like: mini basketball, funnel game, spiral table, splash pool, sandpit, balanced beam, trampoline and many more. It is always seen that children who participate in sports and co-curricular activities are the ones who top in academics.”

***“Children who come from smaller places and belong to background which is slightly backward, if given opportunities they will shine out. But nothing is being done on it”***

#### **India’s new-genre sports educationalist**

Many companies have come up to provide the best infrastructure for children to develop their sporting talents. Considering different kind of requirements of the schools like geographical areas, basic infrastructure and the budget of the schools, these industries have come forward to provide and recommend the best sports facilities and infrastructure the schools are in need of. Sports Education Development India Limited (SEDIL) is committed to provide sports education programs in schools across India. In view of **Arun Khaitan**, CEO, SEDIL, “Sports has a broader mandate with a focus on educational outcomes, as well as talent development. It helps in the overall development of the child. With this aim and objective we are trying to come in partnership with the schools and impart and encourage sports education among the young generation of the country”. Currently based in Mumbai, it aims to expand its operations throughout the country. Talking about bringing change in the sports education system in schools Arun Khaitan said “There are millions of schools in India and definitely a single organisation cannot handle it all alone. Definitely a lot more people need to come into this area of change. Schools need to take a call on this, which is not happening. It is not only the principals but the school owners, parents, students themselves and the government as well who are responsible to bring change in sports education”.

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***“Schools should invest in some basic level of infrastructure, not necessary a big ground but at least healthy play pockets. On a single field, many sports can be played by dividing the time, along with intelligent planning”***

Bangalore-based Silver Strings Sports is another sports organisation which started by offering tennis courses as a part of the curriculum in some of the city’s schools. “We are concentrating on providing programs on Olympic sports so that we lay a solid foundation for the children who want to get into serious sports. The fact is, there is a requirement for such type of programs in India because there is nobody else who is offering it currently” said **Mukesh Chetan**, founder, Silver Strings Sports. They also are trying to offer sports programs to colleges where children can specialize in sports. There are also diploma courses available in sports. Talks are on with the colleges to adopt such programs. Expressing concern over the lack of qualified coaches, Mukesh further added, “We are bringing coach training programmes in India which means all the coaches that we supply to the schools will be trained by coaches who will come from Britain and will be certified by the International Coaches Institute. This is an initiative taken by us to solve the problem right from the grass root level”. Schools in India should be equipped with latest infrastructures so that students are encouraged to take up sports and make the best out of it. There is a huge requirement for sports infrastructure service providers in India.

Great Sports Infra is a sport Infrastructure Company which installs sports facilities in schools. **Anil Kumar**, MD, Great Sports Infra says, “A significant part of our program is to offer appropriate solutions to schools. Our most popular range for schools have been our maintenance free artificial turf (FieldTurf) and interlocking, modular sports flooring – SnapSports – which are ideal for schools as they provide a multi-sport surface and which can also serve non-sports use” With greater recognition for the need of sports for all round development of the children, there is a tremendous upsurge in schools adopting new-generation sports facilities and providing the best infrastructure which are long lasting, safe and suited for use in limited space and in a limited budget

### **Problems**

Generally in India, sports are not considered as profession, and hence investment by schools as well as by parents for excellence in sports is limited. Though today’s education system has made sports education a compulsory subject, in practice it is yet to get the seriousness and importance. Most schools lack sports facilities and inclination to provide them, while a few schools believe that even academics can be strengthened through sports. Physical education not only contributes to create healthy individual but also

a healthy society. Sports culture can best contribute in the nation building process. Compared to other countries, India still has a long way to go in sports, even though it is producing world-class players in cricket, badminton, tennis etc. However, until provisions are made to give budding athletes and sportspersons the requisite infrastructure as well as the financial aid, nutritional, physical, and emotional support they require, right from the grass root level, we will continue to lag. Countries like China and Japan excel in sports because they have exclusive training institutes for games and sports, and sports is a compulsory part of their academic curriculum right from primary level to higher education level. The hurdle in the progress of sports education in most schools in India includes:

**Lack of modern facilities in schools** – Many schools are still not equipped with facilities like playground, equipments, techniques, strategies, qualified coaches etc. Scientific approach towards the development of physical education and sports education also needs to be taken care of. India, despite being the youngest country in the world, with the largest population below the age of 25, has not made significant presence in the world of sports. Though hockey is the national game, India has not done well in it at the global level. In other sports as well, our condition is rather pathetic.

**Lack of Investment by schools as well as by parents for excellence in sports-** Generally in India, sports are not considered as profession and so school authorities and parents step back when it comes to investment in sports for the children.

**Talents need to be nurtured and encouraged-** India is a land of talent where one sees many budding sport stars in the narrow lanes of small towns. These talents need to be enhanced and guided by showing the way out to excel in their sporting skills.

**Lack of qualified coaches-** Coach training programmes are not encouraged in India, as a result schools lack trained coaches.

**Academics is given importance-** Student's daily routine is embedded with maximum number of hours being spent in studies, in coaching / tuition centres in higher classes which does not permit students at the high school level to participate in sports.

**Functioning of the sports bodies-** Government official who heads the various sports committees and associations needs to function effectively to overcome the challenges faced in imparting sports education in the country.

**Inappropriate allocation and use of budget-** The budgetary allocation for sports, which comes under the Union Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs, is not as much as compared to the countries that excel in the Olympics and other international sports events.

“Sports to a great extent are often neglected in India. Many schools and colleges do not seem to realize the value of physical education in the curriculum. One main challenge is changing the mindset of the curriculum developers, changing the mindset of the education department that equal importance should be given to sports”, said **Dr Vandana Lulla**, Principal, Podar International School.

***“There is a general acceptance from the school authorities to install the latest infrastructure in schools. But the investment has always been a concern for them. Infact big investment is always good in terms of quality and long term return”***

### **Suggestions**

Some suggestions to improve sports education in India Sports education should be made an important subject as part of the curriculum in schools as well as colleges.

There is a need for uniform curriculum in schools. One reason might also be that educational institutions in India do not have a uniform curriculum and it varies from institution to institution. It would be beneficial only if a uniform curriculum is ensured for the schools in India with equal importance to sports, for the all-around development of children.

- Apart from schools, universities should also encourage sports education and they should also provide exclusive courses on sports.
- Qualified coaches should be appointed in the education institutes and more programs on coach training should be promoted.
- Latest infrastructure and clear cut plans should be introduced in schools to popularise sports among children.
- A scientific approach should also be given to sports education in India.
- The government needs to play an important role by allocating appropriate budget for sports education in India and proper implementation of it.

- A monitoring council is required consisting of sports education professionals to monitor the physical education of every school.
- Children belonging to the backward areas and rural schools should also be encouraged and provided facilities to enhance their talents on sports.
- The mindsets of the people also needs to change, so that sports is not considered as a burden on children but rather a way out to perform well in the academics and an important component for the overall development of children. Sports culture can best contribute in the nation building process. That is how we can create better sportspeople and a happier and more productive generation.