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**SPORTS FOR THE SOCIETY—FROM VISION TO ULTIMATE REALITY****Naseem Ahmed Khan**

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**ABSTRACT**

*Sports and physical activities must become a culture for this ultra modern. society; an almost involuntary movement, as the heart has to beat, it beats, irrespective one's desires or constraints. Similarly, sports and physical activities in this social set-up have to become to way of life, which just happens, everywhere, every-time and for everyone.*

**KEYWORDS:** *sports and physical activities , society.*

**INTRODUCTION :**

Nature has not made any two individuals similar in this world. No two persons have the same abilities, some have more others have less, and some have all the facilities for developing their avilities whereas some struggle to maintain whatever they have. This is our society. We have a lot to offer to those who already have, but what about have noes. The nature discriminated with them and we, the members of present day society are, directly or indirectly, voluntarily or involuntarily perpetrating this discrimination by not making any concrete and concerted effort in the . direction where help is needed the most, In this complex .and mind boggling present day scenario, the biggest challenge before physical educationists today is to gear up to spread the sphere of these activities so as to cover all in the society. . The obvious question is whether we have aimed and planned our programmes to reach each and everyone in the society? . The present day sports and physical activity programmes:, have been designed to serve the common man in general, but there seems to be no persistent and sincere effort in the direction of those who need these activities more than anyone, else in the present society. Who needs improvement in physical functions and development of self more than a differently abled child? Who needs social development more than the youngster who because of his inadequacies has withdrawn from or has been rejected by his social group?

Today in the world there are about 500 million persons who are afflicted with disability of one from or the other. Out of these 500 million disabled people, more than 80% are without access to any kind of preventive or rehabilitative services. These statistics clearly show that about 400 million disabled persons are still deprived of any assistance of preventive and rehabilitative programme. In India alone, there about 100 million such disabled persons. It shows that as per the global estimate about one fifth of such persons are living in India. These figures indicate the magnitude of the problem and also reminds us that we, the physical educationists have a long distance to travel, a challenge to meet. It is indeed time to ponder as to how much attention we are paying to this large segment of our society. Such persons are often deprived of opportunity to explore safely the real world, their own emotions, and the ideas that come by and through play, recreation, sports, and physical education. Marusak (1952) studied the effects of 'mere i se on psychiatric patients and found that physical exercises were of great value in channelising aggression, k.

increasing socialization, and improving the fitness level of these people. Solomon et. al. (1967) administered AAHPER ' Youth Fitness Test to a group of mentally retarded boys and observed definite increase in their level of social interaction 17 as well as in their level of fitness. Such studies indeed reflect the rays of optimism for us. 'Optimism is the faith that leads to achievement' this saying of Helen Keller is the moving spirit behind all the initiative taken in the disability sector. The differently abled children need to be provided opportunities to achieve their full potential and to become an active partner in the development of our society.

In United States of America and European countries, adapted physical education for disabled has taken long "strides and has made tremendous progress. An ever growing number of schools, institutions and hospitals are seeking the services of adapted physical education teachers and instructors more and more. Universities and colleges are researching for new and effective teaching methods and fresh approaches for teaching these special children. Research has confirmed it by adopting innovative methods and techniques we can encourage and motivate the participation of disabled in school activities as nearly possible as normal students do. Whereas in India, adapted physical education programmes are still in the stage of infancy as compared to these countries. Although efforts to rehabilitate these special people started in is country a long time back, and a number of organization have come up to lend a helping hand, but the physical .educationists are lacking in their contribution. A survey of institutions for these special children in Chandigarh has shown that none of them have a properly trained adapted physical education instructor or teacher, and even the facilities 'available for providing them physical activities and sports were almost negligible as compared to those available for 'normal children. If this is the situation in a modern city like Chandigarh which boasts of having highest literacy rate, we QM well imagine the plight of such children in other parts of the country. There is hardly any literature to highlight their problems and hardly any research to upgrade whatever is available.

In America and European countries, all out efforts are also being made to integrate these special people in the normal social life style but in India we are still persisting in the system of segregation. It is high time that we direct our efforts to achieve the aim of integration of these special persons in our social mainstream. The wall of segregation must be torn down. The concept of exclusion must be replaced with the policy of inclusion. Only recently our parliament has passed a very comprehensive law. The Persons With Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full 'Participation) Act, 1995 where in it has been provided that efforts should be made to promote the integration of children faith disabilities in the normal educational system. This law has cast a legal as well as a moral obligation upon us to prepare ourselves to come upto the expectations of not only our law makers but also our society by fully preparing and „gearing ourselves in this particular direction.

For transforming the vision of 'Sports for All into a reality, its is imperative to look at the abilities and qualities that an adapted physical education teacher must possess. the onerous duty, of not only introducing physical activities and sports to these children but also of motivating them to adopt these activities as a life long habit, lies on his shoulders. A disadvantaged child is a paradox to many who teach. There is no dearth of literature that describes his language deficiencies, his health, social, and emotional needs, his rebellious or remorse behavior, and even about the teaching methods and procedures , but the area where a lot needs to be done is: translating all this into action. and this is more true in the field of physical education and sports. We have to understand that disadvantaged children are basically no different from normal children in that they too want acceptance, to feel good about themselves to have success and praise, and to like and be liked. The key that unlocks the doors is: understanding of the child and his world, activity acceptance of him and his attitudes. The challenge for physical education teachers working with disadvantaged children is quite formidable. At present there is only a modest number of technically competent, trained personnel who can provide programmes of physical education for the disabled.

The special children are reserved and have a feeling of isolation, may be due to the disability itself, or due to the opinion of the general public about them. Therefore, warmth and a sense of humour is the first and most essential quality for the teacher who opts to work with disadvantaged children. These two basic

qualities will enable the teacher to build a rapport with these children which will go a long way in helping the teacher to effectively deal with the problems of these children. Understanding and empathy are two other essential qualities of such teacher. These children, quite often, may be unresponsive or belligerent. It takes a mature person to stand up to a sudden outburst of "I don't like you" or even "I hate you" from an emotionally upset child. Confidence in his own abilities and a sense of personal maturity can help a teacher to effectively handle such a situation. We have to realize that an inflexible teacher who cannot improvise or cope with the unexpected, and is rather ever ready to hand out corporal punishment, will certainly be a misfit among these children.

No one is at a more disadvantaged position than the beginner or the new teacher in an institution for disabled. In our present day teacher preparation system, specially in the field of physical education and sports, preparation of teachers for such schools or institutions is quite lacking. They hardly get an opportunity to have interaction with such children while pursuing their professional courses. The more they know about these students, the better able they will be to understand and handle their problems. If one believes in the importance of providing worthwhile physical activities and sports programmes for disabled children, one has to accept the hard, but true fact, that such children have, in the past, been provided much inadequate experiences, be it physical, social, emotional, educational or rehabilitational that sports and physical activities have to offer.

The physical educators and other specialists in psycho-motor development should accept this as an obligation to provide special programmes, develop achievable objectives, and formulate and use assessment tools that not only do their jobs, but also afford clear insights, both for the physical educationists and parents, as to what is, and what is not possible to achieve through programs of special physical education. Some studies have been carried out in this direction. Phatak (1983) administered Sinha and Singh Adjustment Inventory on orthopaedically disabled children and found that the disabled children were slightly reserved. Similarly, Shiff and Hoffman (1985) while observing children with hearing disability found that such children displayed greater self-isolation tendencies. Sarita and Sharma (1987) also conducted study among visually handicapped and normal children and found that children of former group were poorly adjusted in emotional, social, educational and total adjustment. Such studies suggest that we, the physical educationists have a great role to play. Suitably adapted and modified physical activities and sports programmes can help them to open up emotionally as well as socially for their effective involvement in the society.

We the teachers, parents, and other members of the society must accept the onerous responsibility to contribute to the fullest possible in the development of the potentialities of each and every disabled child. We should not only prepare broad and general frame work of physical activities and sports programme for these people as a group, but time ahs come when we should start thinking at specific individual level. And why not. Each disabled child has his Own peculiar difficulties and problems. Applying general physical education and sports programmes to all the disabled may not serve the objective and, therefore, we must very clearly understand few basic tenants very appropriately summarized by Crowe et.al. (1981): (i) there is need for common understanding regarding the nature of adapted physical education, (ii) there is need for adapted physical education in almost all educational institutions, (iii) adapted physical education has much to offer to the individual who is seeking education as well as seeking to live most effectively with his handicap, (iv) other related services essential for proper conduct of adapted physical education programme (adequate health services, guidance, counseling etc.) should also be available, and (v) as adapted physical education teachers have great responsibility, they should have appropriate and adequate professional qualification and experience to deal with unusual situations.

It is imperative for physical educationists to develop a humanistic philosophy, humanistic approach and humanistic involvement, which allows for one's individual development of talents and- his total fulfillments. Our-Aini should 'be to enhance the capacity to optimize the ability, and to overcome the disability. The real task before us is, "going beyond the maximum survival of the fittest and making the weakest the fittest". Emanating from the above discussion, there are few issues and suggestions that need our immediate attention:

1. We should change our outlook and develop an attitude of empathy and not of sympathy for these special people.
2. Adapted physical education as a subject has not been given due importance in the curricula of even physical education courses. In most of the universities it is being offered as an optional subject. It should however, be taught as a compulsory subject both at graduate and post graduate levels.
3. Due to the lack of knowledge and awareness regarding adapted physical education, most of the physical education teachers are: unable to make contribution in field of rehabilitation of these special people. Therefore, regular orientation programmes and intensive, specialized training should be organized for them.
4. There is dearth of trained. professionals to undertake extensive rehabilitation and physical education programs to these people. Students should be encouraged to opt for specialization in these areas.
5. Special facilities, modified architectural designs, and improvised equipments etc. should be provided in all educational institutions, sports complexes, stadiums and more so in recreational and amusement parks, enabling disabled children to fully avail these facilities.
6. At present separate sports, meets and other physical activity programs are being organized for disabled. Efforts should be made for organizing integrated programs, whenever possible.
7. We should create awareness amongst teachers, parents and community at large to make concerted efforts for making these people self-sufficient, self-reliant and for mainstreaming them so that they can become effective members of our society.

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