

Sports as an Inspirational Subject for Learning and Teaching

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Abstract

Physical Education courses or Sports as a subject is a professional, skill-based course that encompasses moral values, Humanitarian grounds, Consistency, determination, hard work, and grit, etc. that add meaning and gravity to both the subject as well as to our entire education system. This course helps Universities to transform students into independent, responsible citizens of our country and turn them into a qualitatively good human resources by inculcating in them a true Sportsmanship or true sportsman spirit. But more so ever, it transforms a student into a professional player. This course also helps in the overall development of students. The Subject on account of its multidisciplinary nature has managed to allure students from all walks of life. It serves as an inspiration to learn many things in life. The Fit India Movement has also galvanized people to remain fit through Yoga and Exercise. People's yearn to look beautiful and to stay healthy, is also one of the driving forces to take up physical exercises and sports' activity and follow them on a regular basis with a strict regime. It is one of the primary reasons for anyone to take sports and Physical Education as a subject at graduation level.

Keywords

Physical Education, Sports, skill, Course, Graduation, Education, human resource, Subject, multidisciplinary.

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Sports has remained as a vibrant, versatile subject for many years. A Brief History of the subject reveals that sports were popular in ancient times in the pre-historic era, as revealed in Cave paintings of the Paleolithic period. (Crowther, N.,2007). It was largely used comprehensively as a traditional recreational form of performing arts like Sumo Wrestling or as a ritual or as a military activity largely kept for army men to be fit and fine like in Rome (Italy) where the traditional Colosseum was established as the traditional ancient stadium to witness the valor and grandeur of great Wrestlers of Roman Empire and thereby exhibiting their excellent skills of fight and game of hunting. In order to honor Goddess Olympia, the Goddess of health (in Greek Mythology,) a stadium was built in Delphi, Greece (Wendy J.Raschke,1998) called The Olympia Stadium. It is from this point that the History of the Olympics started. Thus Sports has remained as an inevitable part of life for many even in ancient times.

It's true that Sports is engraved with many seeds of Inspiration, Valour, Grit, Honour, Respect, and Recognition, Determination, Hard Work, Sincerity, etc., and many other values' additions and adjectives. It is clear from the various case studies that have been followed. One such inspiring story is of Jesse Owens, the unmatched Sprinter, and Olympian who still remains as an icon and has been a source of inspiration for many. Even today, (after his death), he continues to remain in the hearts of millions and is revered for being the first black American who won four Gold medals at the 1936 Berlin Olympics (particularly remembered for 100 meters sprint). Jesse Owens, the legendary Olympian was victimized by Americans for Apartheid. In his protest against Apartheid and Racial Discrimination followed in America, he took the bold step of throwing away his Gold medal in the river. (Streissguth, T. 2005). This exhibited the heights of resentment and dishonor that he had received at the hands of his own countrymen. This one act of his, revolutionized the Anti- Apartheid Movement and gave pace and momentum to it, later, only to see America free from racial discrimination. In order to honor Jesse Owen's love and respect for his Country that this short story was incorporated into the syllabus of the English textbooks of Maharashtra by the State Government in 1995-1997. Such inspiring stories must be a part of the syllabus and Curriculum design, which has also been mentioned in the National Education Policy 2020.

The 1936 Berlin Olympics was a complete "Nazi show" whereby only the 'Aryan Race' was allowed to compete and the 'Non-Aryans' like the Jews were excluded from participation. This Olympics was highly criticized for violation of Human Rights and for denial of the entire humans as one and equal. On a similar ground, the 1972 Summer Olympics held in Munich, Germany was condemned for

the Munich massacre, an attack on the Israeli team by the Palestinian Olympic team. It was criticized for not accepting the other Religions and thereby spreading hatred and disrespect which goes against the laws of Humanity. This is how Sports has managed to address the Contemporary, Social Issues on various occasions.

Similarly, another equally important is the case study of the American swimmer Michael Phelps who has won all eight Gold medals in all the categories of Swimming in the 2008 Beijing Olympics. He is one of the most celebrated personalities in Sports and continues to break his own Swimming records. He is a record holder with overall 28 Olympic medals earned in four successful Olympics of Athens, Beijing, London, and Rio de Janeiro. He is an inspirational figure for many and embodies hard work, determination, and a strong will to win. For his Beijing Olympics, the swimmer is known to continue his practices daily without a break for four years. (Phelps, M.,2008). Despite all odds, the swimmer practiced uninterrupted, regularly for four years to achieve his goals of being a winner in the Olympics, the ultimate event of Sports. This shows his consistency in performance and proved that 'Practice makes a man perfect. It is for this reason, he has been awarded the Sportsman of the Year 2008. (Shipnuck, A.,2008).

The ace Tennis player Roger Federer has ruled the Tennis Court as King, for ages. His 'Never say die attitude has won millions of hearts. His passion for Tennis has turned him into a perfectionist, so much so that he went on to win twenty Grand Slams, a record of its own kind, difficult to surpass. He is also known for the fastest ATP shots too! People can learn that age is just a number and that learning is still possible at any age. The same message has been conveyed by another Tennis Player, Martina Navratilova. Despite her age, she refused to lay down her racket and continues to play till today. Her love for Tennis has taught us all to follow our hearts, follow our hobbies so that we do not feel burdened and bored while pursuing them. Rather, it serves as a recreational activity or just any other exercise to practice. Other such similar case histories in Tennis would include Steffi Graf, Serena Williams, Billie Jean King, Maria Sharapova, etc.

Sportswear or athletics apparel forms an appreciable 18-41% of the Fashion Industry. (Knight, P.;2016). Sportspersons like Maria Sharapova, Anna Kournikova, Indian Cricketers like Mahendra Singh Dhoni, Virat Kohli, etc. have have proved their might not only in sports but also in Sports Fashion wear. They have been bold enough to expand the boundaries of Sports to Fashion and Glamourous Lifestyle that allures the youth today. Most of these personalities have served as Fashion Icons and have earned billions through their endorsements and extracurricular Activities. They have also been exhibiting their duties towards the Nations across

the World in their Appeal to the Youth to say no to drugs. Their requests to young ones to show their anger and excitement in sports or any physical activity rather than consuming drugs is highly appreciated and is commendable. These sportsmen have reflected responsible, dutiful citizenship as well as Social, Corporate responsibility through their Philanthropic activities and donations. We can learn lessons from their generous nature and dutiful attitude and behavior towards the society.

Similarly, the Indian Scenario is not behind. The Indian Shooter Abhinav Bindra, the Olympian who won Gold in Shooting 10 meters air rifle event in Beijing Olympics, 2008 (Srikanth, R., 2008) has rightly said that "Practice is a talent. Perseverance is a talent. Hard work is the talent." (Bindra, A. and Brijnath, R; 2011). Bindra is the only Indian sportsman who has earned a gold medal in Olympics. He achieved this honor through Discipline, Perseverance, and continuity in Practice. Here, we, as students learn that a strict regime of daily practice sessions has made Abhinav Bindra, the modern, present-day Arjuna of Mahabharata. "Arise, awake and stop not till the goal is achieved" as said by Swami Vivekananda was rightly exemplified here in the case study of ace shooter, Abhinav Bindra. He was perfection personified.

The Winter Olympics as well as the Paralympics serve as a base for Motivation and Inspiration beyond doubt. Sports here, clearly offers its interdisciplinary nature as Motivation, Emotions, etc. are part of Modern day Psychology. Freezing temperatures and bitter cold can no longer hamper or dampen the spirits in Players who are ready to sacrifice everything for the love and honor in the name of Sports. The Paralympics similarly celebrates the victory of true sportsman spirit and the will and desire to win (sense of achievement) over the physical handicappedness or physical abnormality. It is indeed a splendid victory of Humanity. Hence Paralympics is not just a sport. In fact, it has a grandeur meaning added to it.

Some other Principles learned from Sports would include adjustment, tolerance, humanism, nationalism, etc. when one is a part of a team. 'One for all and all for one' is learned through team spirit. Sportsman spirit is also learned from many players who hold out a helping hand to their opponents when hurt in fields during a play. Personality development is also a part of any player, especially during his training and when playing as a team for the country. Overwhelming emotions are seen on the Victory stand and patriotism, Joy, etc. reflected is universal in nature.

A serious social stigma addressed by Sports and Physical Education is the 'Drug Abuse'. It is a bad phase of society which practiced by sportsmen to desperately win the game or a match is a reflection or exhibition of his depressive behavior.

Boxer Mike Tyson was one such personality who was accused of doping and was found true and this ended his career in World Boxing Championships. So, as students, we learn that ‘as you sow so shall you reap’. It is better to lose than to bring disgrace to your family and nation by consuming Drugs.

In this way, Sports also serves as a platform for case studies, research, analysis, introspection, etc. as we can draw parallels between Sports and our Common everyday life experiences. We can Study ‘Sachin Tendulkar’ or ‘Sania Nehwal’ as cases of Personality development.

Sports also teach us both ‘Time Management and Money Management. These basic themes serve to study Business, Economics, and Ethics.

In this way, Sports can be incorporated as a Minor Subject in graduation for students of various disciplines. Besides this, Physical Education can also be taken up to establish a career in Sports. For those who wish to remain healthy and happy, Sports is a must for them. Sports as a chapter can be included in Home Science keeping in mind the Nutrition and diet that a sportsperson needs to have, to remain fit and fine. At an early stage of schooling, Swimming classes or any single sports activity of your choice must be mandatory. To equip ourselves with the ancient Indian Cultural Sports, Yoga and Vedic Science should be mandatory at a primary level. It is only through these efforts that sports shall be glorified and shall receive social acceptance and shall be free from negligence.

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