

Development and Challenges in Sports: A Case Study of the Indian Cricket

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Abstract

Cricket is the most popular game at present not only in India but also in the Indian Subcontinent. The controversies and the ups and downs of the willow game have been the subject of discussion by the cricket chroniclers and the lovers of the game in times gone by. The present study aims at examining the level of motivation among players, nature and role of cooperation from academic institutions such as the college or the university, from the family, need for a different academic course structure for players and fairness in the selection process. Using the information through a sample of 320 student cricketers, the role of the University of Delhi in nurturing the talent and producing some outstanding cricketers of national and international levels has been probed. Absence of trainers along with commensurate infrastructure seems to be the bane in developing top cricketers in the Colleges and the Universities. Forced to give major part of their time to the sport, it is tough for the sportspersons to focus on academics. Continuous training and travel with consequent missed classes makes it tough to secure good credits in class attendance and internal assessment which results in adverse performance in semester examinations. The sports centric curriculum and sufficient credit for performance in sports with adequate, flexible teaching schedules, improved training and sports infrastructure in colleges and the universities in India can only raise the standard of cricket and other sports.

Keywords: Teaching schedule, Sports infrastructure, internal assessment

Introduction

University education in India actively promotes physical activity and sports and values the participation by students in improving the university ranking both nationally and internationally. Historically, it is mainly the public funded colleges and the universities in higher education in India that support development of sports infrastructure and individual sports persons. Social, economic and demographic factors such as age, sex, income play a significant role in determining the physical activity and participation in sports. National interest in promoting sports extends beyond promotion of sports in terms of medals at the national and international competitions to achieving larger societal goals such as reducing obesity, deterring crime and promoting integration and social harmony. National sports policy is the need of the hour to promote sports holistically at the education institutions, leading to develop sports culture. Sports persons in the age group of twenty to twenty five years pursuing higher education in general encounter many hurdles in achieving the twin objectives of acquiring graduate degree and staying fit in individual centric sports like athletics or team games such as cricket or hockey. Firstly, game specific coaching in the colleges for long term health and physical fitness training in competitive sports is not available. Secondly, training with substandard sports goods and equipment often proves counterproductive. Thirdly, non-availability of sports medicine and lack of nutrition, sports psychologists at the formative stage results in sub optimal performance of the players. Fourthly, higher education is linearly teacher focused and not student focused. Process of learning is controlled by the teacher just as process of award of degree is controlled by the university. Fifthly, contemporary teaching learning process in higher education is expensive both in terms of time and money for sportspersons as their training and competitions schedules overlap and clash with pre scheduled linear classroom requirements. Sixthly, even though some sports students enter the higher education with preferential treatment of five percent quota for sports and extracurricular activities in some universities, there is no provision in terms of providing credits for awarding degree for their subsequent performance in sports. Cricket is the most commonly followed sport not only in India but also in the major part of South Asia. The Popularity of the game has left its metropolitan niche to make forays into smaller townships and even into the rural areas. The mass following of the game, its history, close correlation with environment, mystery and mythology, sociology, peace and international understanding compels one to undertake a research work that is likely to unfold some interesting facets of this noble game.

OBJECTIVES

There is a dearth of research exploring the role and contribution of University of Delhi and some other universities in nurturing the talent and producing cricketers of national and international levels who in addition to having established themselves as professional cricketers brought name and fame to the university and the

country.

PROCEDURE & METHODOLOGY

Research Methodology

A questionnaire was constructed in consultation with the investigator and other experts in the field. The questionnaire was finalized by trial run method and 16 objective type questions were framed to collect the views of players. For statistical analysis, the descriptive statistics were used for discovering the current state of sports and unveil the various problems faced by players.

Collection and Administration of Data

The data was collected from a wide catchment area on total number of 275 subjects which were selected randomly. The Survey method was used to collect the data which was compiled not only from the students of the University of Delhi's different colleges but also from the Jamia Milia Islamia University, Delhi, four colleges (including girls), Gujarat University, Ahmedabad; Amravati University, Maharashtra; Pt. Ravi Shankar Shukla University, Raipur, Chhattisgarh and Chhatrapati Sahu Ji Maharaj University, Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh. The data includes cricketers both boys and girls, from different strata of society and from both urban and rural areas.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

After analyzing the data, the major findings have been presented as follows:

Table 1 Cooperation from Institutions

RESPONSE	GWALIOR	DELHI	CHHATTISGARH	RANCHI	AHMEDABAD
VERY GOOD	27.78%	28.8%	46.34%	26.98%	58.62%
GOOD	44.44%	36%	24.40%	14.29%	34.48%
AVERAGE	27.78%	28%	17.07%	34.92%	6.90%
POOR	0	4.8%	9.76%	22.22%	0
VERY POOR	0	2.4%	2.44%	1.59%	0

Cooperation in terms of sports equipment such as timely arrangement of playing kit, dress, promptness in attending the sports injury and counseling enhances the field performance of players. The current system with complete absence of sports scholarships is hurting higher education both financially and academically. Therefore, cooperation from a player's college or institution in particular and from university in general is significant in optimizing a player's performance and contribution to game. Results in Table 1 indicate that this cooperation is found to be highly commendable in regions of Ahmedabad, Chhattisgarh and Ranchi. But in colleges of University of Delhi and Gwalior, poor response received from respondents is hurting the game at large and performance in particular.

Table 2 Expectation of Academic Support from College & University

SUPPORT VARIABLES	GWALIOR	DELHI	CHHATTISGARH	RANCHI	AHMEDABAD
Attendance	11.10%	31.81%	28.60%	28%	10.34%
Internal Assessment	5.60%	11.33%	3.60%	4%	13.79%
Different Course Structure	5%	15.91%	14.30%	6%	0
More than one	77.80%	40.91%	53.60%	62%	75.86%

Academic support from the college is studied by using three variables namely attendance, different course structure and internal assessment. Results in Table 2 show most of the respondents expect to receive the support from their respective college or university in all support alternatives. A large percentage of respondents in Delhi, Chhattisgarh and Ranchi expect support in Attendance from their respective institutions. Players have also appreciated the idea of a different sports-oriented course structure. In University of Delhi around 41 percent of the student cricketers expect the colleges to accommodate them in terms of attendance and different evaluation dates and different course structure as compared to 62 percent, 76 percent and 78 percent cricket players in universities of Ranchi, Ahmedabad and Gwalior.

Table 3 Participation in Open Tournament conducted by their College and University

RESPONSE	GWALIOR	DELHI	CHHATTISGARH	RANCHI	AHMEDABAD
YES	94.40%	84.30%	75.61%	67%	86.21%
NO	5.60%	15.70%	24.39%	33%	13.79%

The results of table 3 show that most of the respondents were referred by their college or university to participate in open tournaments conducted either by their college, university or any other institution. Results confirm that consistently throughout the cricket playing universities, students are exposed to open tournaments and competitions which significantly improve the confidence of the players. Universities and colleges in Gwalior, Ahmedabad and Delhi appear to be organizing these tournaments more than the other Universities. Student cricketers were also of the opinion that the longer version of the game such as three day or five day matches proves more useful in skill enhancement of the game as compared to limited over matches.

Table 4 Formal Training from Coaches

RESPONSE	GWALIOR	DELHI	CHHATTISGARH	RANCHI	AHMEDABAD
YES	38.89%	81.30%	63.41%	35.48%	68.97%
NO	61.11%	18.70%	36.59%	64.52%	31.03%

Sport coaches provide the necessary training for a specific game and also impart the necessary skills required in that game. Formal training from coaches is necessary no matter how talented a player is to hone his skills further. We found a mixed response from the respondents of various regions. While around 81% of the respondents in Delhi have received formal training, only around 35% of the respondents in Ranchi and only around 39% of the respondents in Gwalior have received formal training. More than two third of the cricket playing students in Gwalior and Ranchi appear to have not undergone any intensive training. This explains the lack of sports infrastructure and training facilities in the University system.

CONCLUSIONS

1. The most significant outcome of the investigation is that despite cricket being the most popular sport, the cricketers are lamenting the lack of suitable infrastructure, both personnel and material, in developing top cricketers in the Colleges and the Universities.
2. The data gathered points out that there is an urgent need to strengthen the present composition of the level of competition both at Inter-College and the inter-University level by adopting longer version of the format rather the present shorter version of the game. It is widely accepted that the longer format of the game helps the budding cricketer evolve basic skills of the game. These basic skills are later sharpened and nurtured by coaches when these cricketers climb up the ladder.
3. It was concluded that availability of technical expert like sports psychologists, physiotherapists, nutritionists and coaches in university and in college helps the players to enhance the performance.
4. The campus placements and other employment avenues should be available so that the players can grow in career and sports simultaneously.
5. The indifference of college/University administration towards their internal assessment and attendance is a major drawback in churning out top cricketers. The present system does not allow any flexibility in terms of time and place for academic assessment for obtaining the degree which is so imperative for securing the jobs. In fact, both (internal assessment and attendance) is the major source of worry for a cricketer. Consequently they are not able to concentrate fully on their performance on the field. Remedial measures are to be adopted to undo this malaise.
6. There is an urgent need to develop an alternate curriculum for sportspersons to take away the burden of internal assessment and attendance. At present the students are always under pressure to obtain higher percentage in their academic results. The discussion with the present and past cricketers, sports administrators and umpires have overwhelmingly suggested that the level of performance of the player on the field could constitute about 50% of the total marks. Secondly the curriculum for a cricketer should be more cricket-oriented with sprinkling of academic subjects sparingly.

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