

Perceptual Experience of Stakeholders Regarding Role of Sports Participation in Uprooting Social Evils From Society

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Abstract

Sports and recreative activities have inherent capacities of bringing positive changes in the attitudes and behaviors of the participants. In this perspective, a study was conducted to ascertain perceptions of the stakeholders regarding role of sports in controlling and eradicating certain social immoralities from the society. The social immoralities including hostility, drug abuse, gambling, delinquency, negative sentiments and criminal offensiveness were the focal points of the study. It was observed that the stakeholders have a very encouraging and positive opinion about the benefits of sports and recreative activities, and sports are by and large considered as beneficial tool for enhancing mental and social wellbeing of the individual and the community. The stakeholders, specifically the parents and the teachers conceived sports as a very effective instrument for the eradication of certain social evils from the society. Almost all the stakeholders believed that maximum sports participation is a veracious treatment of the drug abuse among the youth. Similarly, they considered enhanced sports participation as an appropriate measure for the control over criminal offensiveness and prevalence of negative thinking. However, it was generally expressed that the effectiveness of participation in sports much relies upon the quality of the programme and the way it is offered and implemented.

Key words: Perceptual experience, stakeholders, sports participation, social evils

Introduction

Sport is the most dominant social institution along with religion and others that configure the society, help in social inclusion and social adjustment (Eccles et al., 2003), develop mental health (Forrest &

Kearns, 1999), and influence the quality and character of the individuals. Like religion, sports advocate for character development, hard work, perseverance and desirable behaviours (Bryant & McElroy, 1997). Research reveals that access to sports and recreation leaves positive impacts on the mental wellbeing of its participants and helps contain negative sentiments and pessimism (Mutrie & Biddle, 1995). The susceptibility of assuming negative attitudes among the youth increases if proper sports and recreative facilities are not provided to them. It is evident through research that youth taking part in one or the other sports avoid smoking (Janet *et al.* 2006) or using drugs and criminal offensiveness (NRPA), instead, they learn forbearance and perseverance etc. Research reports that student's ability to learn is adversely effected by delinquent attitudes (DeVoe *et al.*, 2004) whereas sports participation helps in minimizing the inclination towards crimes (Douglas & Brooks. 2006) and delinquency ((Taylor, 1999) and anti-social behaviours (Jones & Offord, 1989). It is also very significant to note that taking part in sport and associated activities positively affects the emotional welfare of dispirited youth (Biddle, 1995; Morgan, 1994), helps in the removal of anxiety (Landers & Petruzzello, 1994) and treatment of depression (Biddle, 1995; Fox, 1999), and proves to be a positive source in softening any attack of emotional problems (Wiese & Bjornstal, 1997). Sport activities not only help in preventing numerous youth crimes (Loxley *et al.*, 2002), but can also work as an effective curative force (Coalter *et al.*, 2002). Research affirms that sports can effectually help in getting rid of "criminal culture" by providing a better chance to youth for mixing up with more positive role models. It provides an alternative to "educational underachievement", "blocked aspirations" and "low self-esteem", and encourages the development of "self-discipline" (Schafer, 1969). Sports not only raise the development of healthy lifestyles and socially desirable attitudes but also provide a platform to the youth for learning social skills (Selman, 1980), ample chances of social contacts that help understand each other (Erikson, 1981) and learn and increase their social capacities (Hamilton, 1983). It is important to state that at one

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hand participation in varied sports activities helps in the Moral development whereas on the other, it assists in avoiding destructive impacts of anti-social behaviors including “Cheating”, “aggression” and “intimidation” (Gibbons *et al*, 1995; Stephens & Bredemeie, 1996).

Potency of the sports and recreation activities in socialization has been recognized and its development is being greatly emphasized throughout the world (Landry, 1990). It is hence quite important to promote maximum sports participation among the youth of these areas, not only for their own social uplift and enhancement, but for the overall development and promotion of the society as a cohesive and internationally appreciated social unit. In this regard it is important to note that according to the socio-cultural setup of this region, usually parents decide for the future plans of their children. Selection of a suitable career and type of activities for participation much depends upon the sweet will and approval of parents, whereas teachers also play a very significant role in this respect. Research reveals that parents, teachers and the coaches can influence the attitudes of youth and motivate them for participation in sports (Weiss & Ebbeck, 1996). Having certain interest and influence, these categories of the concerned people constitute a broader group which can very rightly be named as the 'stakeholders'. In this perspective, discernment of the viewpoint and approach of the stakeholders towards the role and importance of sports participation, in imparting adequate social training is of prime importance. A positive perception can help implement various programmes of sports activities for the development and promotion of appropriate socio-cultural traits among the participants.

Based upon the above conceptions, the prime motive behind conduct of this research was to determine the perception of stakeholders regarding role of sports participation in the development and promotion of appropriate socio-cultural traits, mostly desired by the society.

Materials and Methods

The study was conducted in the main city-districts of Pakistan's North West Frontier Province (NWFP). Prime aim of the study was to ascertain the perception of stakeholders regarding role of sports participation in elimination of certain social immoralities from the society. Focal social evils as a root cause of certain problems in our society included aggression, drug abuse, gambling, juvenile delinquency, criminal offensiveness and negative sentiments; among the youth. Discernment of the sample population regarding benefits of sports was ascertained through some basic questions, followed

by queries about the role of participation in sports for the elimination of certain societal evils.

After randomly selecting five city-districts out of twenty-two cities of the NWFP, the sample from the population was determined using convenient method of sampling. A total of (500) five hundred respondents consisting of four groups i.e. Parents, Teachers, Sports Managers and the sportsmen were selected being the stakeholders (Weiss & Ebbeck, 1996); whereas a proportional representation was given to each of the category of stakeholders. Structured questionnaire was used for gathering required ordinal data based on five point Likert scale (Likert, R. 1931) ranging from 'strongly' agree to 'strongly disagree'. The data collected for the purpose of drawing conclusions were treated statistically for which the SPSS (statistical package for social sciences) version 12 was applied. In addition to basic cross tabulations, chi square, Independent sample t-test and Pearson correlation coefficient were used for the logical analysis and drawing the conclusions. Key research queries comprised of the following:

- There is a significant correlation between stakeholders "comprehension of sports benefits" and their perception regarding role of "sports participation".
- A significant association prevails among the stakeholders' perceptions regarding role of sports participation in eliminating social evils from society.
- Parents conceive sports participation more effectual for the eradication of social evils, than the Teachers.
- Sports Managers expect more positive outcomes of sports participation than the Parents.
- Teachers do not perceive more positive outcomes of sports participation than the sports managers.

Results and Discussion

Data were collected to judge the comprehension level of stakeholders regarding common benefits of sports, and to determine their perception about the role of sports participation in the elimination of certain societal evil.

- Sports, recreation and allied physical activities are highly beneficial for the wholesome development and wellbeing of the individuals whereas sports participation ultimately improves the level of sociability. It was observed that the awareness level of the stakeholders regarding general benefits of sports is very encouraging and the upshots of sports participation are simultaneously perceived quite positively. According to Pearson coefficient of correlation,

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indicated in table-1, both comprehension of the stakeholders and their perception are convincingly interrelated and there is a

significant correlation between both the aspects, showing .541** at 0.01 level (2-tailed).

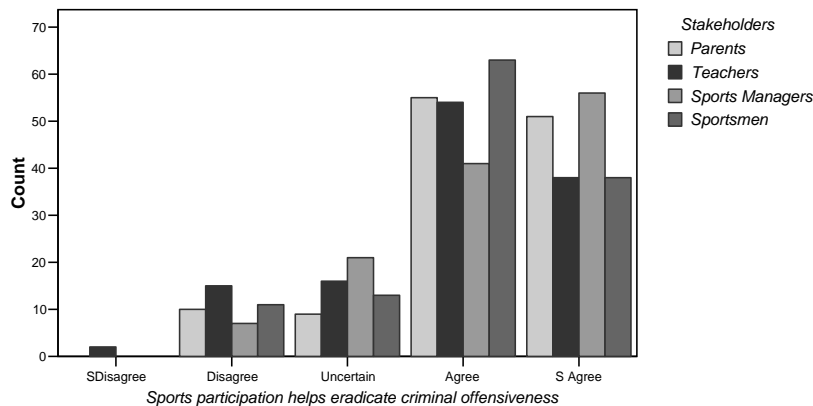
Table 1: Correlation among comprehension and perception of stakeholders regarding role of sports in eradicating social evils

		Comprehe nsion	Eradication
Comprehension	Pearson Correlation	1	.541**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	500	500
Eradication	Pearson Correlation	.541**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	500	500

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

- A comparable approach persists among the stakeholders regarding benefits of sports, and belief in its potentialities for the eradication of certain social evils. It was inferred on the basis of data analysis that a substantial association prevails among the perceptual approach of all the four categories of stakeholders. Most of the respondents have corresponding faith in the potentiality of sports participation in eliminating many evils from the society. Symmetrical nature of the data (see appendix-A) reveals a great deal of agreement upon the benefits of sports for the society, whereas almost alike opinion is evident (see appendix-B) among all the categories of the sample respondents regarding positive role that participation in sports can play for the eradication of evils.
- Two very pertinent points of concern for the society are criminal offensiveness and prevalence of negative sentiments among the youth. Unrest, varied type of violence, extremism or terrorism etc are ultimate results of this sort of mental approach that certainly need to be addressed. Sports activities do have the potentials of helping in control of the above mentioned states. Table-2 reveals an obvious tilt (79.2%) towards agreement on the effectiveness of sports participation in ending criminal offensiveness among the youth. With 11.8% not reaching on a definite conclusion, only 9.0% consider that sports is not a solution to the issue.

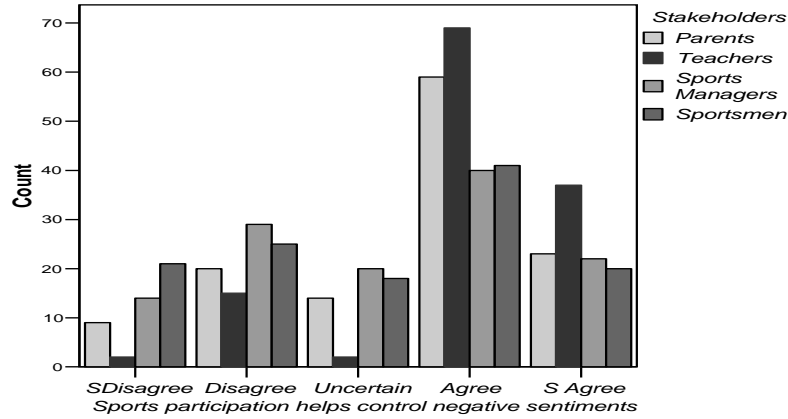
Table 2. Perception of stakeholders regarding control on criminal offensiveness through sports participation



- Majority of the stakeholders (62.2%) believe that sports participation can effectually help in controlling negative sentiments among the youth, as shown in Table-3. Whereas, considerable

portion of the stakeholders (27.0%) do not believe in that, while 10.8% remain uncertain in this regard.

Table 3. Perceived stance of stakeholders regarding check on negative sentiments through sports participation



It was observed that the target population perceives a positive role of sports participation in controlling aggression among the youth, as (77.6%) of the respondents agreed, while 16.2% disagreed. Majority (89.2%) of the sample population affirmed that the sports participation can effectually help in ending drug abuse, while on the other hand (6.4%) remained indecisive and mere (4.4 %) disagreed. Results reveal that gambling, being a social evil can be controlled through sports participation, as (69.4%) of the respondents voted in affirmation; however a considerable portion (20.6%) of the population did not agree, similarly (10.0%) remained uncertain.

- As described in table -4 the difference in the means of 3.76 and 3.73 with the standard deviations of .70 and .69 for the parents and Teachers respectively on the perception for eradication of evils is not significant. The calculated t value .315 given in the table is lesser than the tabulated t value 1.960, hence H_0 hypothesis has been affirmed, which means that parents give a bit more value to sports in the eradication of certain societal evils than the teachers.

Table 4. Independent sample t-Test results showing Comparative approach of parents and teachers on role of sports

Test variable	Grouping variables	Definition of groups	Mean	Std. Deviation	Calculated t. value	Sign. (2-tailed)
Perception regarding role of sports in Eradication of social evils	Stakeholders	Parents	3.7627	.70656	.315	.753
		Teaches	3.7347	.69821		

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- As given in the table below, the difference in the means of 3.76 and 4.01 with the standard deviations of .70 and .51 for the Male and Female respectively on the perception for eradication of evils through sports is not significant. The calculated t value -3.239 given

in the table-5 is smaller than the tabulated t value 1.960, hence H_0 hypothesis has been accepted, which means that the perception of Sports Managers' regarding role of sports participation in the eradication of certain societal evils is comparatively better than the Parents.

Table 5. Independent sample t-Test results showing Relative perception of sports Managers and parents on role of sports

Test variable	Grouping variables	Definition of groups	Mean	Std. Deviation	Calculated t. value	Sign. (2-tailed)
Perception regarding role of sports in Eradication of social evils	Stakeholders	Parents	3.7627	.70656	-3.239	.001
		Sports Managers	4.0160	.51519		

- As may be seen, the difference in the means of 3.73 and 4.01 with the standard deviations of .69 and .51 for the Male and Female respectively on the perception for eradication of evils through sports is not significant. The calculated t value .049 given in the table-6 is smaller than the

tabulated t value 1.960, hence H_0 hypothesis has been sustained, which means that the perception of Sports Managers' regarding role of sports participation in the eradication of certain societal evils is comparatively better than the Teachers.

Tables 6. Independent sample t-Test results showing: Impact of sports conceived by Sports Managers and Teachers

Test variable	Grouping variables	Definition of groups	Mean	Std. Deviation	Calculated t. value	Sign. (2-tailed)
Perception regarding role of sports in Eradication of social evils	Stakeholders	Teachers	3.7347	.69821	-3.625	.001
		Sports Managers	4.0160	.51519		

Conclusions

It was concluded that the stakeholders consider sport and recreation as very useful activity and effectual means of mental and social wellbeing. The study reveals that sports and recreative activities are conceived as quite capable of bringing positive changes in the attitudes and behaviours of the participants. It was also concluded that most of the Parents, Teachers and the sports managers believe participation in sports and recreative activities help control hostility among the youth. The stakeholders believed that drug abuse being a menace for the society can very effectively be controlled through enhancement in sports participation among youth. Gambling being another social evil was also believed to be controlled through the promotion of sports. Similarly a very important social problem of juveniles

delinquency was also considered to be positively addressed through maximum sports participation among the youth. The stakeholders believed that the negative thinking and instigating opposition to established societal norms and standards can also be controlled through sports participation, whereas criminal offensiveness being a very alarming threat to the society was also believed to be controlled through maximum sports participation.

Prevention and control over certain societal immoralities for a prosperous and fraternal world is quite important nowadays. One of the significant measures in this direction is conversion of young peoples' energies into constructive social powers and sports can very effectively become one of the platforms for the purpose. Keeping in view the potentialities of sports in inevitably teaching values

and forming desirable social structures, the development and promotion of sports and recreative activities has gained great importance and emphasis, and special attention is being given to sports and recreative activities all over the world (Landray, 1990).

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