

SOCIETAL APPROACH TOWARDS SPORTING EVENTS FOR SPECIALLY ABLED

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ABSTRACT

In spite of all the developments happening in the world of sports, still there are many grey areas to be covered in terms of promoting participation of physically and mentally challenged people. The purpose of this study was to examine the approach of society towards the participation of specially challenged people in sports. This study is an honest effort made by the researcher in finding out the behaviour of Pune Society towards participation of persons with physical or mental disabilities in sporting events. To go ahead with the current investigation, a district level swimming competition was being organized in association with the Pune District Amateur Aquatics Federation (PDAAF). The events were conducted in various age categories, open category and for specially abled. The special event was organized for specially abled people in the categories Deaf, Mentally Challenged and Physically Challenged. The tournament was promoted all over the district covering 60-70 swimming pools. The primary data was collected in the form of survey conducted on 55 sports enthusiasts using structured questionnaire which was filled-in through direct face-to-face interaction and also through google forms. The subjects were delimited to non-students in the age group above 21 years who were associated to sports in one or the other way. The results revealed that one-third of the society are not yet aware about such sporting events and 90% of the people have never been associated with such events but are willing to volunteer or sponsor such events. This research helps us to conclude that conducting more events for physically and mentally challenged, starting from grass-root level, is the only way forward to promote participation of specially abled people in sporting events. In a nutshell, it is highly essential to conduct counselling sessions to nurture such talents.

Keyword: Physically Challenged: -Societal, Specially Abled, Sporting Events, Physically Challenged, Mentally Challenged

1. INTRODUCTION

Sport has always been an integral part of life. Since the inception of Ancient Olympics in 776 B.C there has been tremendous change happening in this field (Peers, 2009). It has always been a part of Indian culture. People have been becoming more and more aware about the benefits of the same. Sport is not restricted to any specific kind of people but is for all. Society and its approach towards sports play an integral role in promoting it. This research is an honest effort made towards understanding the approach of Pune city people towards specially abled and their participation in sports. This research will give us an insight about the challenges faced by physically challenged people to be recognized and reap the benefits of sports.

1.1 Sports for all

Sport or Sports is any form of physical activity or game performed on competitive basis under controlled rules and regulations. It has great significance in developing overall fitness aspects of the individual, a form of satisfaction and enjoyment for the participant, and in many cases entertainment for the spectators as well. Sport has now become a multi-billion dollar industry with fan followers all over the world. There are different kinds of sports participation like individual events, played with partner, team sports etc. Moreover, there are events for children of various age groups, youth, adults, elderly people and specially challenged category. There are all sorts of people involved in sports – youth participation, gender participation, disabled participation and spectator involvement (Smith, 2009).

1.2 Sports for Physically Challenged

Just like Summer Olympics, there is specific event called as Special Olympics conducted for children and adults with intellectual disabilities and physical disabilities. These kinds of sports are often termed as Disabled Sports, Adapted Sports, Sports for Challenged or Parasports. People with a disability, including physical and intellectual disabilities can participate in such events (Berger, 2009). There are certain sports created for persons with a disability and have no equivalent with non-disability sports. Such disability exists in four categories: physical, mental, permanent and temporary. They are again divided into three broad groups i.e. the deaf, people with physical disabilities and people with intellectual disabilities. Each of these groups has a distinct history, association, competitions and specific approach towards sports as a whole. Since 1911 sports competitions for physically disabled had existed, when the “Cripples Olympiad” was held in U.S.A (Disabled Sports, 2016).

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

There are uniqueness to every place and sport. Certain sports are highly followed in specific parts of the world. For E.g. Latin America is highly known for its Soccer, India is famous for Cricket, Kabaddi and Hockey in past, Indonesia for Badminton. It can be noted that the society is what that promotes or demotes a sport. It is highly essential to understand the psychology of a place towards a particular game to promote it at that place. Thereby to overcome the challenges faced by Physically Challenged sportspersons, it is very important that we introspect the mind set of people first.

2.1 Participants and Sampling Design

For the current study, 55 sports enthusiasts were randomly chosen from Pune City who were directly or indirectly associated with some sort of sports – either in the form of self-participation or as a parent or guardian or administrator. Convenient Random Sampling had been used to avoid any sort of biasness or categorization.

2.2 Procedure

The whole study had been associated with an upcoming swimming event for specially challenged people organized by a group of MBA Sports Management students in association with Pune District Amateur Aquatic Association. Primary data related to the research has been collected through questionnaire, direct interviews and also through interviewing the respondents through google forms.

Secondary data were collected by viewing related literature and published research in the form of articles and annual reports

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Data Analysis

It was revealed that 75.4% of the respondents followed Sports of Specially Challenged people and 24.6% did not follow. We could interpret that majority of them followed Sports of Special people.

Do you follow Sports of Specially Challenged People?

57 responses

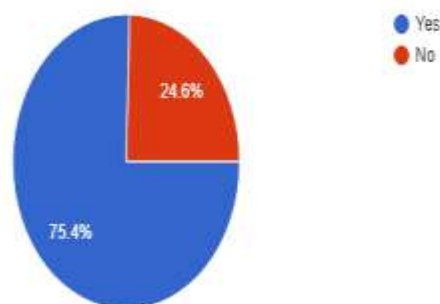


Fig - 1: Percentage of people following Sports of Specially Abled People

All those who followed sports for mentally and physically challenged people were further interviewed to understand about which sport they have been following. It was revealed that 33.3% of the respondents have seen athletics, 28.1% have seen swimming and 19.3% of the respondents have seen basketball. We can interpret that one-third of the respondents have seen athletics for specially abled people followed by swimming and basketball.

If yes, which sport have you seen before?

57 responses

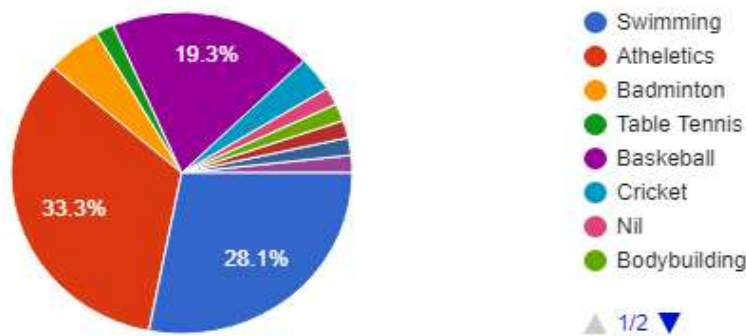


Fig - 2: Percentage of different sport seen

The respondents were asked if they have ever sponsored a Specially Challenged athlete or a sporting event. The data revealed that 91.2% have never sponsored for any such sporting event or a specially challenged athlete. Although it is positive to understand that 8.8% respondents out of 55 i.e. 16 of them have sponsored such athlete or event, but it is very saddening that 91.2% i.e. 39 of them have never done that.

Have you sponsored a Specially Challenged athlete or a sports event?

57 responses

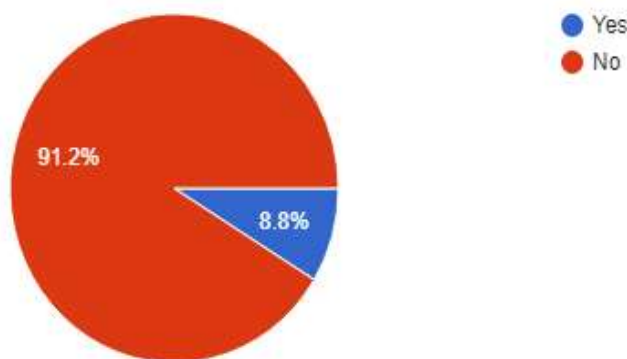


Fig - 3: Percentage of people sponsoring such people or event

When the respondents were intervned about the future prospects of sports for mentally and physically challenged, the data revealed that 84.2% of them believed that the future prospects are very bright and gave 4 star and above for the same. This allows us to interpret that most of the sports enthusiasts of Pune City are of the belief that the future of sporting events for specially abled are very bright.

How do you look at the prospects of such Sports in the future?

57 responses

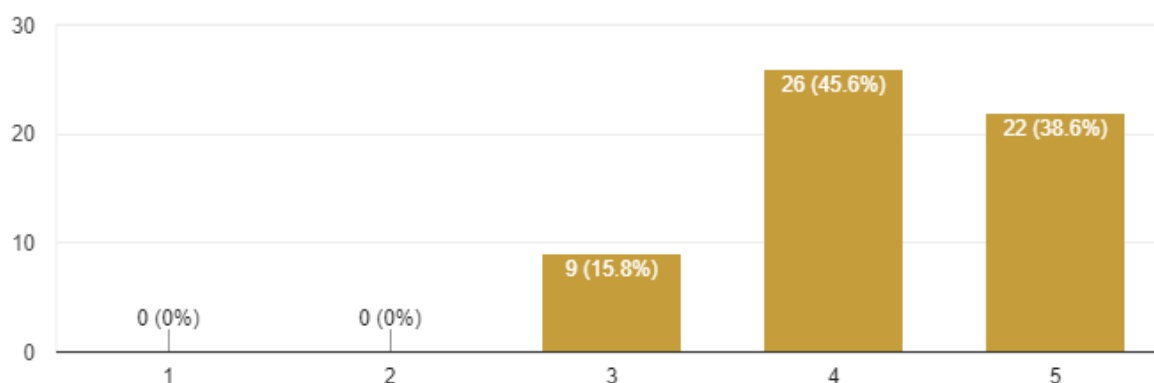


Fig - 4: Respondent ratings about future of such events

All the respondents were also asked if given as opportunity, would they be willing to sponsor or volunteer in such sporting events. It was really encouraging to see that the data revealed 93% respondents willing to sponsor or volunteer in sporting events for specially abled people. This allows us to understand that most of them are positive about encouraging sporting events for physically and mentally challenged people.

Given a chance would you sponsor or volunteer in such sporting events?

57 responses

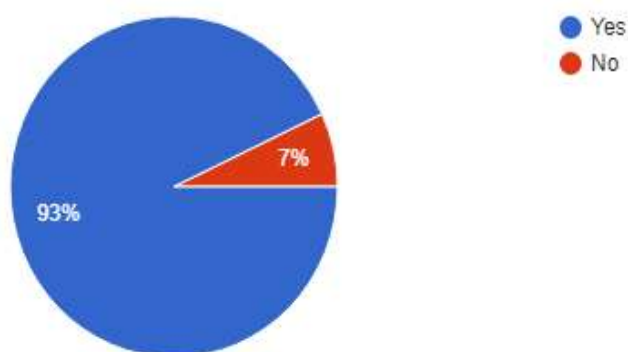


Fig - 5: Response about willingness to sponsor or volunteer such events

Finally, the respondents' suggestions were also taken to comprehend about the growth of sporting events for mentally and physically challenged. The data helps us to understand that 35.1% believed in giving more exposure, 31.6% think that these athletes should be provided with better facilities for training, 26.3% are of the belief that spreading awareness would help in the growth of such sporting events and 7% conceive that people should come forward in volunteering and sponsoring such events to promote it.

How should people help in growing this sector in Sports?

57 responses

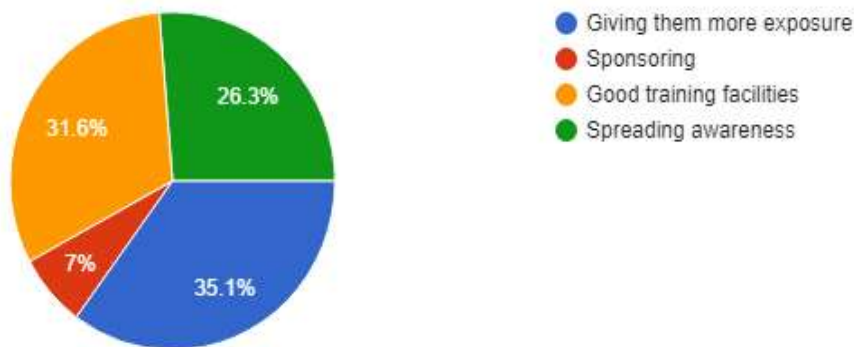


Fig - 6: Percentage showing various suggestions for growth

Thus, the data collection helps us to understand the societal approach of Pune City towards sporting events for mentally and physically challenged people. We can perceive that it is lack of awareness and publicity of such sporting events that is hindering its growth. If given an opportunity majority of the people are showing their willingness to volunteer or sponsor such sporting events.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Within the limits and limitations of the study, the data was collected according to the purpose of the study. The main objective of the study was to understand the general perception of Pune City towards sporting events for mentally and physically challenged people. The data interpretation helps us to come to the following conclusion:

- Many of them are still unaware about such sporting events, but if given a chance more than 90% are willing to either sponsor or volunteer in such sporting events.
- Promotion and spreading awareness about such sporting events for physically and mentally challenged people would help to promote them.

5. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

It gives me immense pleasure in thanking the MBA Sports Management students of MIT World Peace University, Pune who had been the key people involved in collecting the relevant data related to the study. Due credit also goes with the Pune District Amateur Aquatics Federation who had agreed to collaborate in conducting the swimming event.



Fig - 7: The author along with one of the winners

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