



Impact of the leisure, recreational and sports activities on people with disabilities

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ABSTRACT

This comprehensive article examines the dynamic realm of sports for people with disabilities (PWDs), offering a detailed exploration of the introduction, importance, and expansive scope of adaptive sports. Through a thorough investigation, we aim to unveil the transformative impact these activities can exert on the lives of individuals facing various disabilities.

The unique ability of sports to transcend linguistic, cultural, and social barriers makes it an excellent platform for strategies of inclusion and adaptation. Furthermore, the universal popularity of sport and its physical, social, and economic development benefits make it an ideal tool for fostering the inclusion and well-being of persons with disabilities.

Keywords: Sports, disabilities, PWD, well-being, discrimination, societal barrier, attitude, leisure activities, resilience, self-esteem, self-confidence.

INTRODUCTION

People with disabilities encounter unique challenges that extend beyond physical limitations, encompassing societal barriers. The introduction of adaptive sports catalyses overcoming these obstacles, fostering inclusivity, empowerment, and improved well-being. This section delves into the historical context of adaptive sports, tracing their evolution as a powerful vehicle for promoting physical activity, social integration, and personal growth among PWDs. Historically, individuals with disabilities were often marginalized, with limited opportunities for

participation in mainstream activities, including sports a vehicle for empowerment, leading to the emergence of specialized programs and events designed to cater to the unique needs of this diverse demographic.

Persons with disabilities often face societal barriers and disability evokes negative perceptions and discrimination in many societies. As a result of the stigma associated with disability, persons with disabilities are generally excluded from education, employment and community life which deprives them of opportunities essential to their social development, health and well-being. In some societies persons with disabilities are considered dependent and seen as incapable, thus fostering inactivity which often causes individuals with physical disabilities to experience restricted mobility beyond the cause of their disability.

Sports can help reduce the stigma and discrimination associated with disability because it can transform community attitudes about persons with disabilities by highlighting their skills and reducing the tendency to see the disability instead of the person. Through sport, persons without disabilities interact with persons with disabilities in a positive context forcing them to reshape assumptions about what persons with disabilities can and cannot do.

Sport changes the person with disability in an equally profound way by empowering persons with disabilities to realize their full potential and advocate for changes in society. Through sport, persons with disabilities acquire vital social skills, develop independence, and become empowered to act as agents of change. Sport teaches individuals how to communicate effectively as well as the significance of teamwork & cooperation and respect for others. Sport is also well-suited to reducing dependence and developing greater independence by helping persons with disabilities to become physically and mentally stronger. These skills can be transferred into other new arenas including employment and advocacy work further helping to build self-sufficiency.



Importance of Sports for People with Disabilities:

- Engaging in adapted sports contributes to improved mental well-being, heightened self-esteem, and the cultivation of essential life skills.
- participation in sports fosters a sense of community, resilience, and independence among individuals grappling with diverse disabilities

- The tailored nature of these activities allows individuals with disabilities to enhance their cardiovascular health, muscular strength, and overall physical fitness
- Beyond the physical realm, the positive impact on mental health is profound. Participation in sports has been linked to reduced stress, anxiety, and depression among PWDs.

Scope for People with Disabilities:

- The scope for adaptive sports among PWDs is extensive, continually evolving to accommodate a diverse range of abilities and interests.
- At the grassroots level, local organizations and community initiatives play a pivotal role in introducing individuals with disabilities to adaptive sports.
- Schools, community centres, and adaptive sports clubs contribute to building the foundation for lifelong participation and engagement.
- The emergence and growth of adaptive sports events at the national and international levels have been transformative. The Paralympic Games, for instance, stand as a testament to the remarkable achievements of athletes with disabilities on a global stage.
- Advancements in sports prosthetics, adaptive bicycles, and modified equipment have significantly broadened the possibilities, allowing individuals to engage in activities that were once considered unattainable.
- This support translates into improved infrastructure, training programs, and financial assistance for athletes with disabilities. As a result, the scope for individuals with disabilities to pursue sports as a career or recreational activity has expanded, providing them with opportunities for personal and professional growth.
- The evolving scope of adaptive sports continues to break barriers, paving the way for a future where individuals of all abilities can actively engage, excel, and redefine the boundaries of their potential.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is the first legally binding international instrument to address the rights of persons with disabilities and sports. Article 30 of the Convention addresses both mainstream and disability-specific sports and stipulates that ***“States Parties shall take appropriate measures to encourage and promote the participation, to the fullest extent possible, of persons with disabilities in mainstream sporting activities at all levels”***.

Persons with disabilities often face societal barriers and disability evokes negative perceptions and discrimination in many societies. As a result of the stigma associated with disability, persons with disabilities are generally excluded from education, employment and community life which deprives them of opportunities essential to their social development, health and well-being. In some societies persons with disabilities are considered dependent and seen as incapable, thus fostering inactivity which often causes individuals with physical disabilities to experience restricted mobility beyond the cause of their disability.

The positive impact on physical health is evident, with benefits extending to cardiovascular fitness, muscular strength, and overall well-being. Equally significant are the psychological benefits, where participation in sports becomes a catalyst for personal growth, resilience, and the challenging of societal stereotypes. The scope for adaptive sports is vast and continually expanding, offering opportunities at local, national, and international levels.

From grassroots initiatives nurturing foundational engagement to global platforms like the Paralympic Games showcasing exceptional athletic prowess, the inclusivity and variety of adaptive sports have reached unprecedented heights. The scope is not limited to specific sports; it encompasses a diverse range, ensuring that individuals with various disabilities can find activities that resonate with their interests and abilities.

Technology has played a pivotal role in expanding the scope of adaptive sports, breaking down traditional barriers with innovations in adaptive equipment and assistive technologies. This, coupled with increased support from governments, non-profit organizations, and corporate sponsors, has created an environment where individuals with disabilities can pursue sports as a viable career or recreational pursuit.

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Sport changes the person with a disability in an equally profound way by empowering persons with disabilities to realize their full potential and advocate for changes in society. Through sport, persons with disabilities acquire vital social skills, develop independence, and become empowered to act as agents of change. Sport teaches individuals how to communicate effectively as well as the significance of teamwork and cooperation and respect for others. Sport is also well-suited to reducing dependence and developing greater independence by helping persons with disabilities to become physically and mentally stronger. These skills can be transferred into other new arenas including employment and advocacy work further helping to build self-sufficiency.

CONCLUSION

In the expansive landscape of adaptive sports for people with disabilities, the journey from historical marginalization to contemporary empowerment is marked by resilience, inclusion, and limitless possibilities. This comprehensive exploration has illuminated the transformative impact of adaptive sports, weaving through the introduction, importance, and vast scope of these activities.

The historical evolution of adaptive sports signifies a paradigm shift in societal attitudes toward the capabilities of individuals with disabilities. What began as a challenge to conventional norms has evolved into a celebration of diversity, proving that sports serve as a potent vehicle for empowerment.

The introduction of adaptive sports has not only challenged preconceived notions but has actively reshaped the narrative surrounding disability, highlighting the remarkable abilities and potential of individuals facing diverse challenges. The importance of adaptive sports goes beyond physical health, delving into the realms of mental well-being, self-esteem, and the cultivation of essential life skills.

In conclusion, the journey of adaptive sports is a testament to the resilience of individuals with disabilities and the power of sports to transcend physical and societal limitations. As we celebrate the achievements and advancements in adaptive sports, it becomes evident that the future holds even greater potential for inclusivity, accessibility, and the redefinition of what is possible. The evolving landscape of adaptive sports is a beacon of hope, paving the way for a society where everyone, regardless of ability, can actively engage, excel, and contribute to a more equitable and inclusive world.

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