

Sports should be made as a compulsory subject in Schools and Colleges: Vice President
Vice President's Secretariat

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Coordinated efforts needed to encourage children to take up sports as a regular profession;

Look into the option of Public Private Partnerships for building sports infrastructure and its maintenance;

Lays foundation stones for Multipurpose Indoor Hall, Swimming Pool and SAI Girls Hostel

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The Vice President of India, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu has said that sports should be made as a compulsory subject in Schools and Colleges and extra marks should be given in Examinations and there should also be a quota for employment for Sport Persons. He was addressing the gathering after laying foundation stones for Multipurpose Indoor Hall, Swimming Pool and SAI Girls Hostel, in Puducherry today. The Lt. Governor of Puducherry, Dr. Kiran Bedi, the Chief Minister of Puducherry, Shri V. Narayanasamy, the Sports Minister, Puducherry, Shri Malladi Krishna Rao and other dignitaries were present on the occasion.

The Vice President said that children and youth as well all human beings have a right to physical education and sport. He further said that this has to be recognized and action has to be taken to realize this vital requirement for a good quality life. Sports and games are an important part of our lives and they improve our physical fitness, improve our cognitive abilities and in the case of team games, enhance our social skills, he added.

The Vice President said that participating in games and various sports will improve the concentration levels of an individual, promote the concept of team work and help in developing an attitude of stoicism, which is essential to accept defeat without any sense of bitterness, ill-will or grudge.

The Vice President expressed concern over lack of emphasis on physical activity in schools and said that it is quite worrisome that there has been a mushrooming of a significantly large number of schools and colleges without playgrounds.

Saying that country of 130 crores should not fall short of talent in major sporting events, the Vice President called for coordinated efforts of society, schools and governments to encourage children to take up sports as a regular profession. Conduct of regular sports festivals and tournaments at all levels must be encouraged to recognise and reward the young talent, he added.

Underlining the lack of sports infrastructure in the country, Vice President highlighted on the need

to build or develop state of the art sports infrastructure in India. He further said that may be it is time for entering into Public Private Partnerships for building sports infrastructure and its maintenance. Wherever possible, the sports infrastructure can be used for exhibitions, seminars and conferences, he added.

Following is the text of Vice President's address:

"I am delighted to be with all of you for the three events connected with the development of sports in Puducherry.

Sports and games are an important part of our lives. They improve our physical fitness, improve our cognitive abilities and in the case of team games, enhance our social skills.

We learn how to work in teams, how to focus and improve our competence and how to enjoy a game for sheer pleasure as well as sometimes play to win. Participating in games and various sports will improve the concentration levels of an individual, promote the concept of team work and help in developing an attitude of stoicism, which is essential to accept defeat without any sense of bitterness, ill-will or grudge.

It improves the general quality of life. It also assists in developing the habit of obedience, discipline, the determination to win and enhance willpower. Regular participation in games or sports will also enable a person to develop a sense of determination. Eventually, a good sports person can become a good leader too as sports also inculcates leadership qualities.

I would like to recall the ancient saying: "A sound mind in a sound body", underscoring the link between physical exercise and mental equilibrium.

It is evident that a healthy and strong body is not possible without sports and physical activities and we cannot aspire to become a wealthy nation without being a healthy nation.

Sisters and brothers,

The most worrying trend in current education system is the neglect of this important aspect of child's development. There is hardly any emphasis on physical activity and, in many cases, there is no time allocated to sports and games. It is quite worrisome that there has been a mushrooming of a significantly large number of schools and colleges without playgrounds. Any number of schools and colleges are operated without any place for children and students to play sports. This unhealthy trend has to be stopped and the States must not allow the mushrooming of such institutions.

UNESCO had initially come out with the - International Charter of Physical Education and Sports, 1978 and revised it in 2015 amending in tune with modern day requirements and changing lifestyles.

It states that "**Every human being has a fundamental right of access to physical education and sport, which are essential for the full development of his personality. The freedom to develop physical, intellectual and moral powers through physical education and sport must be guaranteed both within the educational system and in other aspects of social life**"

Along with the right to education, children and youth as well all human beings have a right to physical education and sport. This has to be recognized and action has to be taken to realize this vital requirement for a good quality life.

Changing lifestyles, food habits and lack of physical activity will have an adverse impact on youngsters and make them susceptible to various ailments. Lack of physical activity can increase the risk of obesity and health-related problems in adolescents.

Already we are seeing the trend of increasing BMI among many children, which is a worrisome

aspect.

Our present education system must undergo a systematic review and physical education and sports should be given the importance they deserve.

Sports should be made as a compulsory subject in Schools and Colleges and extra marks should be given in Examinations. There should also be a quota for employment for Sport Persons.

Every school must have a dedicated time for students to play. Wherever there are no grounds, a ground pooling mechanism must be adopted to utilise the space available in different schools, colleges or institutions. The curriculum should include sports, games and physical health education for the all-round development of the students.

I recall the ancient Indian saying that said that taking care of the body, staying fit and maintaining good health is the first step towards achievement of all other goals. This is more relevant today than ever.

With changes in lifestyle that provide very little opportunities for physical activities, there is a big need to spread awareness about outdoor sports and games. Not only awareness but we have to have adequate and affordable access to these facilities.

This is what the Government of Puducherry has done through the three projects being launched today. I compliment the Chief Minister and his team for taking up these activities with the help from Government of India. They are going to be valuable additions to the sports infrastructure in this union territory and give the necessary boost to sports in the years to come.

I am glad that the Government has launched the Khelo India programme to revive the sports culture and make India a leading sporting nation. It can be achieved if all stakeholders - from institutions to authorities and sportspersons work with dedication and missionary zeal.

Apart from facilitating the setting up of Sports Academies and ensuring nutritious food to sportspersons, both the centre and states must earmark higher funds to sports.

The society must recognise the importance of sports and encourage children to take up sports as a regular profession. Conduct of regular sports festivals and tournaments at all levels must be encouraged to recognise and reward the young talent. A country of 130 crores should not fall short of talent in major sporting events. Sachin Tendulkar, P. V. Sindhu, Saina Nehwal, Mary Kom, Dipa Karmakar and Sania Mirza to name a few have brought laurels to the country and inspired lakhs of youth. We need to provide adequate opportunities to the youth and facilitate identification and nurturing of their talents.

We need to do more than what we are doing right now to increase our stature at world events.

It is very interesting to note what the Swami Vivekananda, the iconic saint-philosopher and the greatest exponent of Advaita philosophy had to say about the importance of sports and physical well being. He had said, **“First of all, our young men must be strong. Religion will come afterwards. Be strong, my young friends; that is my advice to you. You will be nearer to Heaven through football than through the study of the Gita. These are bold words; but I have to say them, for I love you”**.

There is clearly an imperative need to ensure action on this basic building block of national development.

There is a need to build or develop state of the art sports infrastructure in India. In this aspect, states have a crucial role to play as allocating land for building sports infrastructure is in their domain.

May be it is time for entering into Public Private Partnerships for building sports infrastructure and its maintenance. Wherever possible, the sports infrastructure can be used for exhibitions, seminars and conferences.

We need to take advantage of the emerging business model of the sports industry in the world and develop a workable revenue model.

According to a report by Forbes magazine, world sports industry is set to reach \$73.5 billion by 2019.

Various sporting events have proved that there is an opportunity for private players to make good investments to encourage traditional and modern sports.

A time-bound, outcome oriented approach on sports development with the Government, Industry and people's participation can give rich dividends. It can also create employment opportunities for players, coaches, managers and allied businesses. We need to develop good human capital to promote sports in a big way and make India a sporting superpower in the years to come. I do hope the Khelo India programme of Government of India as well as the excellent initiatives taken by states and union territories like Puducherry will be implemented expeditiously and sincerely so that the citizens derive timely benefits.

I wish the Government of Puducherry all the very best in its efforts to give the necessary fillip to sports in the union territory.

Jai Hind!"

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