

HUMAN RIGHTS IN SPORTS

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ABSTRACT

Sports men, women and children have human rights. They are entitled to enjoy the full range of human rights recognised by international law. In fact, there are some provisions that specifically recognise a right to sport and others that have direct relevance to participation in sport. Athletes and sports can play a vital role in the effort to bring about full human rights for all people. As role models in many societies, they have a unique platform to deliver socially relevant messages to the public, especially children. Sport gives enjoyment to hundreds of millions of people every week. It is an intricate part of culture and of life. Human rights activists and sports people must work together so that the broader human rights leadership role of sports people can be developed. Academics, journalists and commentators are needed to help us understand better the relationship of human rights and sport and how to develop that relationship positively.

INTRODUCTION:-

Sports men, women and children have human rights. They are entitled to enjoy the full range of human rights recognised by international law. In fact, there are some provisions that specifically recognise a right to sport and others that have direct relevance to participation in sport. Major international sporting events are supposed to foster a sense of friendly competition between nations as well as global unity in gathering citizens from all over the world to be spectators and players. The Olympic Charter clearly states that the International Olympic Committee must strive “to place sport at the service of humanity and thereby to promote peace.” These events can bring many different people together and unite them in their love of sports and their respective countries. According to *Patricia Stirbys*, “Sport is more than playing the game. It involves the development and refinement of a multitude of skills, both mental and physical. It encourages the elimination of barriers and enhances the building of relationships among races and between cultures and genders. It is the foundation for lifelong learning and development. When coaches, parents and communities begin to understand the true value of sport and its potential impact on the development of children in all cultures, races and across genders then they can endeavour to promote the rights of the child within the context of sport. Sport is more than winning the

game. To eliminate a child from sport because of a lack of skill development or gender related issues is in direct contradiction to the Principles of the Declaration and the essence of sport. A child can only rise to his/her potential if given the opportunity to do so. The rights and dignity of the child must prevail”.

Safeguard of human rights

Sport can advance the human rights of particular individuals and groups because it can be a vehicle to lift people out of poverty and human rights abuse. Respect of human rights by sports authorities could reinforce the positive values repeatedly put forward by the sports communities and help it to enhance its own traditional arguments like sports discrimination, sports provide opportunities to compete with different type of people. Sports can also model a human rights observant culture and society through both competitors and attendees. The participation of people across racial, ethnic, gender, age and other social groupings can be a model of inclusion and acceptance. A sport decreases the violation in children as well as in youth. It gives opportunities to play with their own courage and own strength. The practice of sport is seen to be important to the development of young people as it fosters their physical and emotional health and builds valuable social connections. Sports play positive modelling roles when they are seen to address human rights issues that arise. There is a need for child’s rights to be protected in organised sports as abuses can take place. Abuses in youth sport can happen for numerous reasons. Abuses can occur because children feel a sense of dependency. Children find themselves in unique situations where they often train with those who are older or with an adult coach therefore the environment they are in creates a pseudo family within which there are certain expectations and pressures placed on them which can create strong emotions and they form a dependency to the adults in charge. Individual sports people and sports generally can provide societies with models for good human rights practice.

Physical Education and sports promote human rights

The Olympics have not only succeeded in bringing together athletes from all continents to participate in regular festivals of sport and culture, they have also played an important symbolic role in promoting human rights. Many historical, sociological, political and other frameworks for analysing sport have been organised around case studies of particular sports or clubs themselves. Some of the most superficial questions about a

particular sport can lead to further investigations and enquiries about gender relations, social inequality, nationhood, the distribution of economic, cultural, and social resources, social change, human rights, the environment, the role of the state, poverty, the urban and the rural, the global and the local, freedom and dependence, insiders and outsiders, and many other areas of investigation which fall within the remit and duty of the socially committed student, academic or politician to explore. Within educational institutes physical education is a vital component of quality education as it promotes physical activity, can help improve academic performance and teach the moral duties. Sport is a physical activity which is most readily identified with youth as there has been an increase in youth involvement in high performance sports due to early identification of athletic talent and early specialisation. It protects the children's future and avoids any type of drug addiction or discrimination. The sports governing bodies can play an active role in advancing respect for human rights. According to *Richard Lapchick*, "Athletes and sports can play a vital role in the effort to bring about full human rights for all people. As role models in many societies, they have a unique platform to deliver socially relevant messages to the public, especially children".

Globalisation and sports

The relationship between sport and capitalism was a common theme within much of the critical socialist literature on sport produced towards the end of the twentieth century, the notion of global sport and the accompanying language of globalisation have increasingly and uncritically dominated social, cultural and political debates about the nature of sport in the early part of the twenty-first century. Globalisation theories in relation to sport have tended to focus upon the spread of sport across the globe in economic, cultural and political terms. A particular strand of this process has been to argue that the nation-state and the national are no longer as important as the global. The IOC is support women's participation in sport because two of the IOC's Olympic values that it must uphold are ensuring the lack of discrimination in sports and promoting women's involvement in sport. Athletes have fought for the right to compete on a level playing field through the promotion of drug-free sport.

Sport gives enjoyment to hundreds of millions of people every week. It is an intricate part of culture and of life. Human rights activists and sports people must work together so that the broader human rights leadership role of sports people can be developed. Academics, journalists and commentators are needed to help us understand better the relationship of human rights and sport and how to develop that relationship positively.

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