

Promoting human rights through sport and the Olympic ideal

QUESTIONNAIRE

*This questionnaire forms part of consultations undertaken by the Human Rights Council Advisory Committee with **States Members of the United Nations, international and regional organizations, national human rights institutions, civil society organizations and other relevant stakeholders**, with a view to preparing a study on the possibilities of using sport and the Olympic ideal to promote human rights for all and to strengthen universal respect for them, pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 24/1.*

Background

In its resolution 24/1 of 26 September 2013, the Human Rights Council requested the Advisory Committee to prepare a study on the possibilities of using sport and the Olympic ideal to promote human rights for all and to strengthen universal respect for them, bearing in mind both the value of relevant principles enshrined in the Olympic Charter and the value of good sporting example, and to present a progress report thereon to the before its twenty-seventh session of the Council (September 2014).

In this context, the Advisory Committee decided, at its twelfth session held in February 2014, to designate a drafting group in charge of the preparation of this study. The drafting group will present a draft progress report to the Advisory Committee before its thirteenth session (August 2014), with a view to submit it to the Council in September 2014.

The resolution also requested the Committee, in its preparation of the study, to seek the views and inputs of States Members of the United Nations, international and regional organizations, national human rights institutions, civil society organizations and other relevant stakeholders in this regard. The drafting group therefore elaborated the hereunder questionnaire. Respondents are advised to reply only to questions that are applicable to them.

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. How is sport used in your country to promote human rights? What are the best practices being applied?

2. What are the possibilities of using sport and the Olympic ideal to strengthen respect for human rights?

3. What are the sports practised in your country and how far are they all inclusive (for women, youth, vulnerable groups etc.)?

4. In what way can sport and the Olympic ideal become a means to:
 - a. advance the cause of peace ?
 - b. promote development?
 - c. combat all forms of discrimination?

5. What kinds of challenges are faced in promoting human rights through sport and the Olympic ideal?

6. How can the media help in the promotion of human rights through sport and the Olympic ideal?

Deadline for submission of responses to the questionnaire:

In order to give the Drafting Group the opportunity to take into account the different contributions, all parties are encouraged to submit their responses as soon as possible and at the latest by **11 April 2014**.

Answers Prepared by the young adults of IARF- Human Rights Resource Centre, INDIA

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Q.1 How is sport used in your country to promote human rights? What are the best practices being applied?

The Constitution of India provides for Fundamental rights, which include freedom of religion, speech, movement and freedom to participate in Games and Sports, within the country and abroad. Sports has been an art which displays the skills and endless hard work behind any talent not only rewarding his blood sweat earned excellence but also giving him a recognition in the name of patriotism to stand high in the society.

Indian Government

India is multi cultured country having number of traditional and international sports. The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, a branch of the Indian Government, which administers Department of youth affairs and Department of Sports in India. To reach our every one equally the Government introduced many scheme on the basis of Human Rights in India. The Urban Sports Infrastructure Scheme (USIS) and The Rural Sports Program (RSP) seeks to tap hidden talents for participation in sports events at the national and international levels. The government also encourages sports and games through many national awards. The Indian Government is also tries its best to associated sport with human rights through National Service Scheme. Under national service scheme there are always some cultural and sports related activities, which is also can be linked to human rights or to promote human rights.

As far by my opinion in India the present situation reveals a much decreased state of discrimination on any basis in the field of sports. However issues regarding conferring of Bharat Ratna (Indian Nation Award) on basis of gender discrimination or favoring a candidate from time to time has been raised. Apart from this our performance in Olympics also raises serious questions in India. It has been long way in finding these answers however the current status suggests sports is still in a developing phase in India and it to support human rights; sports provide the right platform for every talent to receive respect in this country. Sports can be considered as an opportunity to step aside any favoritism because the immense support media gives to these personnel is beyond question. Time to time examples are set by the citizens of this nation of how breaking all the barriers of caste creed gender religion region, sports helped them to get a stand high identity in nation.

Challenges

Though there are many sports in India, 90 % of the Indians love cricket. If we talk about sports or games people know only cricket. The priority and importance which is given to Cricket is not given for any other sports in India. Indian traditional games like Kabbaddi, Coco etc , which are played by indigenous people in India are not given importance. Dalits and indigenous peoples (known as Scheduled Tribes or Adivasis) continue to face discrimination and exclusion in sports and games. Laws and policies adopted by the Indian government provide a strong basis for their protection, which are to be faithfully implemented by local authorities.

National, State and Territory anti-discrimination laws provide legal recourse to the victims of racial hatred. The Racial Discrimination Act should be enacted to prohibit racial vilification on the basis of race, colour, to ensure right persons to shine in different fields of games and sports. The Government of India should enact law to eliminate discrimination and sexual harassment on the basis of gender and aims to promote greater equality in selecting women in sports. In our India they are conducting many games especially in athlete many disabilities are encouraged to compete or to give them a platform to expose themselves without any discrimination which promote our Human Rights. But many times it never succeeded it was created more discrimination on the basis of disability in India, which is unlawful, should be eliminated by making suitable law, to ensure equal opportunity to people with disabilities, in many aspects of public life such as sports.

The best practices applied in the field of sports to promote human rights include:

- Persons excelling in sports of both national and international importance are special recruitment schemes under Government of India.
- Relaxation in age limit of recruitment to jobs.
- Special Incentives and Increments in personal pays.
- Scheme for out of turn promotion for sportsperson
- Special Vacancy schemes for sportsperson
- Relaxation in qualifying/eligibility service required for promotion
- Special casual leave
- Treatment of period of participation/coaching as duty
- Travel concessions
- Special Weightage of marks for university students excelling in sports.
- Implementation of Rural Sports Programme by Planning Commission.
- The survey found that more than 50% of the people in the rural areas are not aware of the RSP
- More facilities in the schools and colleges
- Encourage the students to involve sports equally

Q. 2 What are the possibilities of using sport and the Olympic ideal to strengthen respect for human rights?

An insight in history speaks of a particular event pertaining to this text of questionairrrr” The 1968 Olympics Black Power salute was an act of protest by the African-American athletes Tommie Smith and John Carlos during their medal ceremony at the 1968 Summer Olympics in the Olympic Stadium in Mexico City. As they turned to face their flags and hear the American national anthem (The Star-Spangled Banner), they each raised a black-gloved fist and kept them raised until the anthem had finished. Smith, Carlos and Australian silver medalist Peter Norman all wore human rights badges on their jackets. In his autobiography, *Silent Gesture*, Tommie Smith stated that the gesture was not a "Black Power" salute, but a "human rights salute". The event is regarded as one of the most overtly political statements in the history of the modern Olympic Games.”

The Olympic also promotes human and social values like respect for human beings, unity in diversity, tolerance, understanding, acceptance and etc... This particular event reveals how vast can be the effect of such an event in protection of human rights.

Human Rights Council Advisory Committee, at its 24th session, adopted resolutions on promoting human rights through sport and the Olympic ideal. The high-level panel discussion held at the Human Rights Council, highlighted the ways how the Olympic and Paralympics Games can be used to promote awareness and understanding of the Human Rights and the application of the principles enshrined therein.

It called upon the member States to promote Sport and the Olympic ideal as a means to combat all forms of discrimination, to promote human rights and to strengthen universal respect for them.

Human dimension: Sport and Olympism to satisfy the need for competition and encourage everyone to overcome their own limitations (social, physical or psychological “handicap”).

Political dimension: Sport and Olympic Games are an international media platform, which can be used to highlight certain causes or become “alternative diplomatic tools”, which can create awareness among public, draw attention to a conflict, and serve as an example of peaceful combat.

Societal dimension: Sport and Olympics are tools for civic education which help to develop individual, strengthen respect for human rights and social competences and thus to know one another and live together better.

By promoting a philosophy of life, based on the values of excellence, respect and friendship, Sport and Olympism help to correct issues, such as violence, corruption, discrimination, which the world of Sport is regularly confronted with, and help to build a better world.

Such mega event like Olympics gives opportunity to all to perform for equality. Only thing is the ideal is to be maintained by all. It must not be so commercialized and free from drug abuses. Anybody's misuse of freedom may be the violation of somebody's rights.

Q.3 What are the sports practiced in your country and how far are they all inclusive (For women youth vulnerable groups etc.)?

Archery, Athletics (including Track and Field events) , Atya-Patya, Badminton, Ball-Badminton, Basketball ,Billiards and Snooker, Boxing ,Bridge ,Carrom ,Chess ,Cricket, Cycling, Equestrian Sports ,Football ,Golf ,Gymnastics (including Body Building) , Handball Hockey ,Ice-Skiing ,Ice-Hockey, Ice-Skating ,ludo ,Kabaddi ,Karate-DO, Kayaking and Canoeing , Kho-Kho , Polo ,Powerlifting, Rifle Shooting ,Roller Skating, Rowing ,Soft Ball, Squash , Swimming ,Taekwondo ,Table Tennis , Tenni-Koit , Tennis ,Volleyball , Weightlifting Wrestling , Yatching are the sports practiced and supported by Government of India.

There have been some academic studies that suggest the total population of a country is irrelevant when it comes to Olympic medal tallies, but that rather what counts is the part of a population that participates effectively in sports. Olympians are drawn, not from the entire population of a country, but only from the share that is effectively participating. Low medal tallies can arise both because a country has very few people and because very few of its people effectively participate.

There are certain factors that limit effective participation. Those factors, they say, are health, education, public information and what they call 'physical connectedness' i.e. a population's ability to travel. In other words, an unhealthy individual is unlikely to participate in sport; an educated individual is likely to be more ambitious and school attendance increases the chance that talent will be spotted and developed; in terms of public information, an individual can only aspire to be an Olympic athlete if he or she has heard about the Olympics via the media; and where there is little 'physical connectedness' in remote, isolated villages, many sporting jewels may go undiscovered. In rural India, where life expectancy and primary school enrolment are below the world average and where there is more limited access to the outside world both physically and communication-wise, much of the effective participating population is lost.

Sport has always taken a back seat to studies for young Indians, or in any case the parents of young Indians.

Parents here have the authority to take the decisions in their child's life. India was not a sports nation. Especially post-independence, Indian parents gave a lot of importance to academics and sport was considered as a "time pass" activity or just for recreational purpose. Sport was never a priority for a majority of parents and their kids. In fact we have a saying in Hindi – India's National language – "Kheloge kudoge to honge kharab, padhoge likhoge to banoge nawab" which means that your life will be a waste if you play but if you study or do well in academics you will be a king."

With the emphasis on academic rather than physical education the best of the academic schools and universities, do not have good sports facilities and good sports academics. They do not have well maintained playgrounds; equipment was not available and if it was, then it was not in good condition, no proper support staff, no athlete-friendly sports policies. Corruption, favouritism, apathy and bad management among sports' governing bodies act as turn-off to young Indian sportspeople.

We are still in the developing phase. Young Indians are given opportunity but the facilities and opportunities are not enough, we still have to improve a lot. Things are definitely changing now and are changing for the better.

An inclusive society is a society that over-rides differences of race, gender, class, generation, and geography, and ensures inclusion, equality of opportunity as well as capability of all members of the society, including women, youth and vulnerable group, to determine an agreed set of social institutions that govern social interaction.

Though the Governments and several Sports Agencies encourage women, which constitute nearly 50% of Indian population, to participate in the Sports, the response is not good. Even then, the Indian women in the field of Sports and Games shine in National and International level of competitions.

Though India has very big youth force, most of them do not prefer Sports and Games as their career. Governments should envisage their policies so as to attract the youths towards Sports and Games and make them shine in National and International level of Olympics.

Our administrators should make use of the force of vulnerable groups in the Sports fields so as to divert their attention towards something useful.

Q. 4 In what way can sport and the Olympic become a means to: a) Advance the cause of peace? b) Promote development? c) Combat all forms of discrimination?

(a) Advance the cause of peace?

Yes. Sport works primarily by bridging relationships across social, economic and cultural divides within society, and by building a sense of shared identity and fellowship among groups that might otherwise be inclined to treat each other with distrust, hostility or violence.

Countries which are on war from a very long time or have tensions arising due to some militant groups (e.g.: India & Pakistan) generally stop all types of interactions ranging from trade to culture, now since most of the sports are under internationally governed bodies sports can act as a juncture for both countries to carry forward the message and a start to interactions and exchanges and put an end to the deadlock, rather it also adds to the encouragement of competitive talent.

One peace researcher views 'relationship-building' as the central component of 'peace-building' and highlights the importance of interventions that explicitly focus on strategic networking to build relationships. When properly supported, Sport Programs can play a contributing role in this process, creating more opportunities for social contact.

Establishing Community Sport Organizations and the participation of community sport volunteers can - generate social ties and community infrastructure that help to build peace and stability and provide shared experiences between people that "re-humanize" opposing groups in the eyes of their enemies.

Regular Sport activities can also help to address war-related trauma and promote healing by providing safe spaces for activities that enable victims of war to regain a sense of security and normalcy.

(b) Promote development?

Sports eradicate extreme poverty and hunger. It achieves universal primary education. It promotes gender equality and empowers women. It reduces child mortality. It improves maternal health. It develops a global partnership for development.

This also as said opens all roads of development via trade culture foreign exchange etc. with sports acting as an initiator in inception stage and as a catalyst in further stages of peace development

(c) Combat all forms of discrimination?

There are combating of all forms of discrimination by encouraging sports between nations and thereby promoting more and more talent through both main events and friendly events.

Q. 5 What kind of challenges are faced in promoting human rights through sports and the Olympic ideal?

There many challenges people have been facing to sustain those ideals. South Africa did not compete at Olympic Games from 1964 to 1988, as a part of the sporting boycott of South Africa during the Apartheid era. The South African National Olympic Committee (NOC) was expelled from the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in 1970. In 1991, as part of the transition to multiracial equality, a new NOC was formed and admitted to the IOC, and the country competed at the 1992 Summer Olympics.

The case of Jesse Owens and Adolf Hitler of treating him as subhuman at 1936 Berlin Olympics.

The Munich massacre was an attack during the 1972 Summer Olympics in Munich, West Germany on 11 members of the Israeli Olympic team, who were taken hostage and eventually killed, along with a German police officer, by the Palestinian group Black September.

Israel responded to the killers' release with Operation "Spring of Youth" and Operation "Wrath of God", during which Israeli intelligence agency Mossad and special forces systematically tracked down and killed Palestinians suspected of involvement in the massacre.

In India too favoritism (based on regionalism and casteism especially) and gender discrimination find a place not only in conferring honorary titles to sports person but also in their selection to the national team where the talent is being crippled.

And numerous such incidents indicate the level of challenges faced in promoting human rights through sport and the Olympic ideal .

For many centuries the potential role of Sport and Olympic ideal in promoting human rights, a culture of peace and understanding has been of topical interest.

The earliest attempt of Sport being used to achieve this goal could be traced to the ancient Olympic Games, which started in 776 BC, in which the Olympic Challenges was observed before, during and immediately after the Games.

However, according to the United Nations (UN), peace should not be misconceived as only referring to the absence of war or violence. Peace should also be defined in the context of absence of oppression or discrimination, racism, poverty, disease and gender-related inequalities, inequality among nations, and respect for human rights and democratic principles.

Strategies should be developed that would translate the symbolic role of sport in the promotion of human rights, peace and understanding to that in which it addresses more sustainable issues such as its role in easing or preventing political conflicts and improving quality of lives, as well as preventing racism and inequality, protecting human rights, alleviating poverty and enhancing the principles of democracy.

Politics and modern economic era brought about new challenges for host nations relating to role of the media and human rights protests. Boycotts had become unpopular, having more negative effects on the athletes than the host nations. As a result, promoting human rights through the Olympic Games found different avenues in more recent Games.

The Challenges are also to be faced while promoting human rights through sports as there is always hierarchy given to the western countries or the white men or the developed countries. So if equal opportunities are given concerned authorities or the developed countries may come up aggressively or war indications may also be projected. It may also happen that a greater subjugation might also be projected.

In short

- Corruption at all levels
- Discriminations at all levels
- Biased rules and regulations
- Promotion of values

Q. 6 How can the media help in the promotion of human rights through sport and the Olympic ideal?

Media is the best way to promote Human Rights through sport and the Olympic ideal. Media also play an active role by bringing out the truth and encoring the Government of India (GOI) to impose more transparency in sports system. Also efforts are made to legalize all kind of sports via the full effect of GOI rather than not only the governing board/council rules. Talent Appreciation is other roadway to be taken by media on a daily basis to bring in light the new budding talent. A proper check on sportsperson should be enforced to filter out the mal-practicing (drug intakes etc.) candidates pre event in-order to keep intact the just talented population in sports in the country in which media should play a larger role.

The media also expose human rights violations and offer an arena for different voices to be heard in public discourse. Not without reason, media have been called the Fourth Estate—an essential addition to the powers of the executive, the legislature and the judiciary.

Media offer a significant opportunity to promote peace through the Sports and Olympics, for instance through varied promotional activities and campaigns and reinforce international solidarity among people.

Believing that Fair Play and Sportsmanship in Sports, as well as tolerance and non-violent behavior in societies are important facets of the quality of life, and that the Sports-Media has a vital role in affecting people's behaviour, so, it is proposed that:

The sports media should do its utmost - to promote, inform and propagate the concept and understanding of Fair Play and Olympic education in the society and should take a stand against violence, attacks and the attitude behind “winning at all costs”.

We call upon the members of the Media – to be objective in promoting human rights and be impartial, to avoid being involved in the interest conflicts, concerning the organization of Sports Events.

Indian Bollywood has promoted human rights with utmost encouragement to equality and unity. Movies like “Chak De India” has given to dimension to Indian girls hockey. “Lagan” one of the Oscar nominations from Bollywood has also proved unity can overcome all caste discriminations.

Journalists TV and Mass Media to play a vital role, using the full potential of Sport to create a more humane society and a peaceful world, by focusing the positive aspects of Sport, by showcasing examples of fair play, by not using highly emotive language (War-like & hate speech) and by highlighting the dangers of indifference towards the rise of prejudice, bias, fanaticism and ideologies.

An Olympic Games leaves a large stamp on a host city and this impact has increased since 1984, as the Games have become larger involving more Athletes and Sports, and a greater Media and Sponsor presence.

Especially in India is the only country having such a fan following it just because of this media we may promote HR through them also and Facebook twitters are some social network plays major role in it. We can use their face to convey some message whatever may be the way but the message will be conveyed the audience.