

A STUDY ON IMPACT OF NATIONAL COACHING SCHEME OF SPORTS AUTHORITY OF INDIA ON SPORTS PROMOTION IN UTTAR PRADESH

Deepak Singh¹, Dr. Samey Singh² and Dr. Chanchal Chawla³

¹Research Scholar, Physical Education, India

Email: deepakkuhadia@rediffmail.com

²Professor, Physical Education, TMU, Moradabad, U.P., India

Email: sforesingh@rediffmail.com

³Assistant Professor, TMIMT, TMU, Moradabad, U.P., India

Email: chanchalchawla0@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

A large number of trainees have been trained under the National Coaching Scheme for improvement of Sports Standard in the Country. However, there is a paucity of reliable information on the impact of the National Coaching Scheme of the Sports Authority of India in Promotion of the Sports Culture in the Country, so as to make an in-depth inquiry into the achievement of the scheme. The main objective of the study was to assess the impact of National Coaching Scheme in benefiting the trainees and inter alia to study the problems and constraints faced by the coaches as well as trainees for accelerating the sports culture. The study revealed that coaching encompasses many diverse skills and a broad knowledge base which further increases the need for promotion of Sports Authority.

Keywords: Trainees, National Coaching Scheme, coaches, sports authority

INTRODUCTION

One of the important factors leading to the continuous decline in India's performance in international sports arena is the total lack of sports consciousness and culture in the country at every level. Sports have come to be regarded as a burden at the grass root level and the common perception is that sports have at the cost of academics. Our national and state policies do not envisage sports as an integral part of human resource development. Sports have also not regarded as a crucial input of our educational process. The result is that teachers, as well as parents, try to discourage sports. The traditional belief would perhaps explain and clarify the position better. Games and plays ruin your career whereas education makes you a great man. This, in fact, summarizes the Indian psyche towards sports.

The educational institutions, both at the school and college level, can contribute a lot to the promotion of sports amongst the youth. Unfortunately, our educational institutions give the least priority to sports. Small children going to schools could be seen walking with bag loads of books and they are forced to involve themselves in learning through books right from their

entry into the schools. There is no time for them to go to the play-ground, if one such thing exists. Even after the school hours are over, parents discourage them from playing in the ground. There is a general lack of sports consciousness amongst the parents, teachers and heads of institutions.

Once it is known that opting for sports as a career is as good or bright as other professions like engineering, medical, etc., parents would not hesitate to encourage their children to participate in sports more and more. For this, adequate job opportunities and bright future prospects for sportsmen will have to be created. There is a need to bring professional awareness in sports to help talented children in their development, and optimum performances can be attained by bringing about a change in the parental attitude.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

To identify the problems faced by the coaches & to suggest measures for improvement of the scheme to accelerate the pace of sports event.

HYPOTHESIS

Professional and rigorous coaching provides ample and healthy means for developing sports persons.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The National Coach Accreditation Scheme (NCAS) was formed in 1980 (Australian Sports Commission, 2001). Its global vision was, and remains, 'that all Australian sporting participants, irrespective of age, gender, level of sporting ability or choice of sport, have access to highly qualified and experienced coaches' (Australian Sports Commission, 2000). In achieving this aim, over 200,000 coaches have been accredited since the inception of the NCAS (Australian Sports Commission, 2001). Currently, approximately 93,000 coaches hold accreditation across 90 national sporting organisations.

It is within the framework described in the previous section that the NCAS endeavours to develop the coaching skills of individuals. However, this is not a simple task, with the complexity of the coaching role reflected in the diversity of definitions offered to describe the coaching process. For example, Cote, Salmela, Trudel, Baria, and Russell (1995) described coaching as a process to improve athlete performance through executing specific training, competition and organisational tasks. However, this definition has been described as too general (Saury & Durand, 1998). More pointedly, Saury and Durand (1998) emphasised that coaching involves coping with ill-defined problems, uncertainty concerning available information, possible operations and existing constraints (this, they concluded, was not unlike the role of teaching). While the description offered by Saury and Durand revealed greater insight into coaching, perhaps the most succinct overview of the role was offered by Launder (1994), who stated:

[coaching] ... can be viewed as a highly complex craft in which a vast array of skills, information, knowledge and even wisdom are brought to bear on an unending array of problems which can encompass virtually all aspects of the personal, professional, academic and sporting lives of an individual or team.

When the various descriptions of coaching are combined, it is clear the task of coaching is complex and multi-faceted. With this complexity in mind, the central question to be addressed is: do coach accreditation courses prepare individuals for the demands of modern coaching? The research literature is relatively scant in this respect, with only one study (Gilbert & Trudel, 1999) directly addressing this fundamental question. Specifically, Gilbert and Trudel examined three aspects of the Canadian accreditation system. These were: was the course delivered as designed; did the coach acquire any new knowledge; and was any change found in the use of course concepts in the field? As such, the investigation provided pointers to the effectiveness of accreditation courses, and offered a research framework to facilitate further investigation.

Through the implementation of a single case study design (based on one coach), the findings of Gilbert and Trudel (1999) were sobering. With respect to course delivery, they found a large discrepancy between the recommended time and the time allocated for course delivery (21 hours and 40 minutes recommended, to 14 hours 40 minutes allocated). However, within the course delivery parameter, it was noted the course presenter followed other suggested guidelines for conducting the course (eg multiple presentation modes and resources).

With regard to the acquisition of new knowledge, the coach perceived that the course only reinforced ideas and concepts already known. Further, the completion of a theory test that accompanied the course was undertaken with candidates using course resources, therefore only providing an 'indication of how well the coach could retrieve information from a source book' (Gilbert & Trudel, 1999, p. 243).

The final question in the study of Gilbert and Trudel is related to arguably the most important outcome of accreditation courses (i.e., changes in coaching practice). This was determined by assessing the coach's decision-making factors, instructional behaviours, and a content analysis of discussions with the coach concerning his coaching behaviours and attitudes. The findings showed that, as a result of the accreditation course, decision-making factors altered only slightly, instructional behaviors did not change, and only some new concepts learnt during the course were used in the field.

In general, the findings presented by Gilbert and Trudel (1999) paint a less-than-encouraging picture of the effect of accreditation courses. However, the findings should be viewed in the context in which they were determined. Primarily, the study focused on one coach, in one sport, who attended one accreditation course. Clearly, the generalisation of findings based on such a narrow focus is spurious.

However, the research design used by Gilbert and Trudel (1999) highlighted concerns in evaluating large scale educational programs, especially those programs which attempt to accredit large numbers of coaches. To provide a context for this issue, Campbell (1993) noted that inconsistency in course delivery is common, and inconsistency will continue to occur despite program design specifying time and content guidelines. Programs become so large that presentation consistency is compromised through the volume and diversity of people employed to present courses. Although presenter training (as happens in Australia) is designed to minimise this problem, it is argued that this provision does not guarantee 'that any two groups of coaches graduating from the same program will have been exposed to the same material' (Gilbert & Trudel, 1999, p. 235). Put simply, it is almost impossible to assess

the effectiveness of accreditation programs through the assessment of coaching quality when the presentation of a 'standardised' accreditation programs is variable.

Similarly, the context of a coach's working environment will make the generalized assessment of coaching effectiveness difficult. Saury and Durand (1998) contended that 'the activity of an individual in any real work situation must be analyzed [sic] by accounting for the constraints defining the task at hand.' Factors such as the level of competition, the age and gender of athletes, the type of sport (individual or team), the socio-economic environment, and the coach's previous experience and knowledge will conspire to determine coaching quality (Gilbert & Trudel, 1999). Interestingly, it was a combination of these factors that led to the subject of Gilbert's and Trudel's study not applying all newly acquired knowledge in his sporting environment. Apparently, as the coach was operating within an amateur sporting environment, the implementation of *all* new concepts learnt from the accreditation course was not applicable. Such contextualisation of coaching is important, and promotes caution to researchers seeking to judge coaching effectiveness (and, by implication, course effectiveness) using across-the-board criteria.

While the juxtaposition of standardised course syllabi and contextual coaching environments seem to impact most on coaching competence, the influence of a coach's playing experience and/or professional background should also be considered (specifically, the relationship between these factors and accreditation courses in improving coaching standards). To place the first of these issues more firmly in the context of coach accreditation, many coaches come to accreditation courses after extensive playing careers. Accordingly, it would be logical to assume they have a deeper understanding of the technical aspects of the game than a non-player.

However, debate concerning the impact of playing experience is inconclusive. In the affirmative, Rutt Leas and Chi (1993) cited research which showed that elite national level sport contained a significant proportion of coaches who have competed in the sports they coach. Moreover, 48% of the coaches had competed in an international team. Rutt Leas and Chi concluded that personal experience in a sport 'seems to be in some way associated with achieving coaching expertise and with providing the coaching with additional insight into technical elements of performance' (p. 77). Alternatively, Abraham and Collins (1998), when discussing the cognitive development of coaches, noted expertise in one domain 'does not normally transfer well to another' (p. 62). They offered this phenomena as a reason to explain why expert performers do not necessarily become expert coaches (it is notable that sporting history is littered with anecdotal evidence to support the statement of Abraham and Collins). Clearly, more research is needed in this area before unambiguous conclusions can be made.

The link between coaching skills and those of other professions (principally teaching) is more consensual. Many studies have compared the pedagogy of coaching with teaching pedagogy (and physical education specifically). This comparison is probably due to two inter-related factors; the first being the relatively small literature base researchers have had to draw upon for theoretical and methodological studies, and the second being the *prima facie* similarities between coaching and physical education teaching. As such, the comparisons are common. For example, in a study investigating the effectiveness of coach self-analysis, Alexander, Davis, Kidman and Douge (1994) drew heavily on teacher-education and teacher

effectiveness literature to provide a context for their research. More pointedly, Jones, Housner and Kornspan (1995) cited research related to expert physical educators to ground their study into an analysis of expert and novice basketball coaches. Not surprisingly, the skills emphasised by Jones et al (such as organised and sophisticated knowledge about subject matter, methods of conveying subject matter, curricular models, and the nature of students) are seen to be highly desirable for coaches, and as such, coaching courses attempt to develop similar qualities in their coaches.

In summary, it is evident that coaching encompasses many diverse skills and a broad knowledge base. Accordingly, many factors will interact to determine coaching quality. As a consequence, the role of accreditation courses *per se*, in developing coaching competence, is unclear. Therefore, as coaches continue to undertake formalised accreditation, questions will persist concerning the effectiveness of accreditation courses and the additional benefit these courses bring to coaches.

METHODOLOGY

The SAI coaches are deployed in the State Training Centres, National Schools, Special Area Games, Army Boys Sports Companies, Academics, Stadies at Delhi, State Coaching Centres, District Coaching Centre, Kendriya Vidyalayas, Navadyoya Vidyalaya, Akharas and others.

Universe of the Study: Uttar Pradesh

Sampling Unit: 100 coaches

DATA COLLECTION

Primary Data: The Primary level data was collected by field investigation by contacting the coaches by use of structured questionnaire. Discussions with sports official was carried out, personal interviews with the coaches and sports experts and professionals were carried out.

Secondary Data: Relevant information from various records, documents, annual reports etc. were the source of collection of secondary data.

FINDINGS AND RESULTS

The identification of problems of SAI coaches and trainees are based on the group discussions which are as under:

Lack of Discipline and Dedication

Lack of discipline, dedication and a strong sense of national pride, both among sportspersons and coaches, has been cited as one of the major factors contributing to the decline of Indian sports. Today, international events at times are being taken merely as shopping jaunts for sportspersons and Managers. There are perhaps more mementos than medalfions in the returning baggage of sportspersons coming home after participating behaviour of many of our sportspersons are reported, quite often, in the Press. Coaches and Managers are scared of reporting against them because of various reasons. As a result, even after qualifying in the selection trials, many of our athletes fail to match their own best performance in competitions like Olympics, Asian and Commonwealth Games.

Inadequate Incentives

There are no two opinions on the fact that we have not been able, so far, to create a congenial atmosphere for the promotion of sports culture in the country. The efforts so far made are sporadic. Coupled with the lack of proper congenial atmosphere for sports, there is a feeling that sports do not offer adequate career and job opportunities for our youth. Parents, therefore, do not want their children to take up sports as a career. There is no dearth of talent in the country for sports but the pertinent point is neither we have been able to create an atmosphere which is congenial for the promotion and development of sports nor have we been able to provide adequate and proper job opportunities for our young generation so as to attract them towards sports as is the case with other professions like IAS, Engineering and Medical disciplines etc.

Lack of Coordination and Accountability

Besides the lack of coordination between various agencies engaged in promotion of sports, there is no accountability and responsibility for poor performance in sports in international events. In fact, these bodies blame each other for the poor performance. Although SAI is the apex body controlling sports in the country, it washes its hands off for the dismal performance of our teams at the international play-fields and so do the national federations. The need for clearly demarcating the duties and responsibilities is neither of each nor of the agencies so that accountability could be fixed for their lapses.

Last Minute selection of Teams

There has been a series of complaints about the late selection of teams. There is tension in the minds of sportspersons till the last minute as they are not very sure about their final inclusion in the team. This results in utter confusion and players are not able to concentrate on their sporting activities. Rather they are busy running around the embassies for getting visas and clearances. It is often seen that teams are selected virtually almost on the last day and at times had reported after the events had already started.

Funds Crunch

In some cases, the Government is paying only 90% the fare and the remaining 10% is to be borne by the player himself or herself. The logic behind this part payment is not clear. Moreover, international air passage fares are so costly that it would not be possible for any of our players to bear even the 10% of the expenditure from their own pockets. It is very unfortunate if such a thing has happened with any player. The Government is, however, not giving any grants for the boarding and lodging of players. The Federations/Associations are supposed to bear the boarding and lodging cost of the players. Many associations do not make payment of the boarding and lodging expenditure although there is no dearth of money with them.

This is an important issue on which the Government should issue proper guidelines to the Federations/Associations and players cannot be left in the lurch, particularly when they are away from their homeland. The Government should, investigate as to why part payment of air fare is being made to players attending international meets and ensure that such a thing is not repeated in future. Government of India generally gives airfare for participation in Olympic, Asian Games and Commonwealth Games whereas federations send teams for

participation in various world championships as well as Asian championships. If it is considered imperative to participate in various Asian and world championships, for the sake of getting competition exposure, as part of long-term development programme, then it should be obligatory on the Government of India and for the federations to provide air-fare, as well as board-lodging expenses, to sportspersons, coaches and managers. They should not be left to fend for themselves whenever they have to go for participating in any tournament outside the country.

Training for Sportspersons

In countries like China and Japan, the teams are trained all through the year. In Germany, sportspersons are scientifically selected between 6 to 8 years of age. First few years they are provided general training, to develop their athleticism and thereafter, they are assessed to find out in which particular discipline they are likely to excel and are then provided specific training for a period of 8 to 10 years before they start representing their country in various international tournaments. Sportspersons in India are given training barely a couple of months before the actual commencement of the competition. Training forms the core of good performance and champions cannot be produced by training the sportspersons just for few months before the games. Sports' training is a systematic process extending over a long period of time. For better results, the system of training has to be based and conducted on scientific lines. Therefore, sports' training has to be properly planned and controlled for achieving the best results.

Supply of Equipment

Sportspersons are not provided with the kits well in advance. Many of them are not in a position to purchase the kits at their own cost as they are quite costly. Besides, there is an apprehension of getting sub-standard quality of kit if purchased by the player on his own which may have adverse effect on the quality of his performance. Some sportspersons complained of getting different sized shoes in Korea, creating avoidable tensions and problems in the last minute. Kits should be provided to players and teams well in advance before they leave for international meets. Non-supply of kits in time hampers their practice, causes confusion and tension in the players' minds and also affects their performances in the game.

Nutritious Diet

Availability of nutritious diet and food is one of the basic requirements of any sportsperson to excel in sports. Efforts should be made to ensure that the diet available to sportsmen and women has the nutritional value necessary to meet the specific requirements of different games and sports in which they participate. The sportsmen and women, in the absence of proper and nutritious diet, cannot show outstanding results irrespective of the amount of training/coaching we many provide to them. At present lack of proper and nutritious diet for our sportspersons is perhaps the one basic factor for our sportsmen not having the necessary stamina to win medals in international sports. The parents, by the large, cannot afford such a costly and rich diet for their children.

SUGESSTIONS

A broad based system of sports promotion and sports policy is a must if India is to take its deserved place in the international sports arena. If other small nations could transform themselves within twenty years to a supers sporting nation, why India can not win supremacy in the realm of sports. But it has to be remembered that even within the small GDR, there are six thousand youth clubs and two thousand club houses for working people alone, apart from thousands of other sports centres in the country. These similar facilities may take some years to be provided in India. If a comprehensive sports promotion and policy is adopted.

Proper use of the funds and proper coordination and accountability will lead to a different scenario for the sports persons and will encourage the coaches and in result it would give us a new era of sports persons who will not only win the medals but also will raise the name and fame of India.

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