

Active Life Project

A Report

A physically active population is a healthier population. Sport and physical activity provide one of the most cost effective forms of preventive medicine with the potential to dramatically cut health care costs. Sports also provides psychosocial benefits as fostering social integration and teaching coping mechanisms as well as psychological benefits such as reducing depression and improving concentration. Many of the core values inherent in sport are compatible with the principles necessary for development and peace such as fair play, cooperation sharing and respect. The life skills learned through sport help empower individuals and enhance psychosocial well-being, such as increased resiliency, self esteem and connections with others. These features of sports are beneficial to people of all ages but they are especially vital to the healthy development of young people. Development is a process of enlarging choices and increasing the opportunities available to all members of society. Based on the principles of inclusion, equity and sustainability, emphasis is on the importance of increasing opportunities for the current generation as well as generations to come,

The opportunity to participate in and enjoy sport and play is a human right that must be promoted and supported. Sports and play are therefore not only a means, but also an end.

A child's right to play is enshrined in Article 31 of the Convention on the rights of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child. The Article continues, stating that not only do children have the right to play; they also have the right to the provision of opportunity to play.

Inspite of rules and laws, the right to sport and play is often denied. This is because of discrimination ,particularly by gender and ability .it is also frequently due to political neglect of the importance of sport in society ,exemplified by the decline in spending on physical education and the lack of appropriate spaces and resources necessary for sport.

However the fact that access to and participation in sport and play are human rights create the responsibility to ensure these rights are upheld. It places a duty on society to ensure that the opportunity for participation in sport and play exist, allowing all people to enjoy their right to sport and play

The pilot project of Bakshi Foundation Trust 'Active Life' has been initiated in Gadarodang Village of Brahmagiri block of Puri district of Orissa. The village school has been chosen as the institution for implementing the project. Gadarodanga village is inhabited by 371 households and the total population is 1555 out of which 805 are male and 750 are female. The school has total strength of 224 out of which Boys are 115 and girls 117. In keeping with the mission of the project that is to promote free play and organised sports both indoor and outdoor the school has been provided with sports and recreational materials. The school did not have any provision for sports and recreational activity. The school is entitled for a grant of Rs500 per year by the government for supporting its sports requirement. But this grant is very irregular and since last few years the school has not received any grant. Since most of the children of Gadarodang in the age group of 6 – 13 years attend the village, hence it makes the school a perfect institution for implementing the project. The schedule worked out with the school for use of the sports material is 3.15 -4.15 pm everyday for all children

Some of the positive impact of the project on the social dimension of the target group

It is seen that the skills and values learned through sports and play are especially beneficial for the girls, given that they have fewer opportunities than boys for social interactions outside the home and beyond the family networks. Ensuring that girls receive equitable access to quality education is central to development. Since achieving education for all and reaching girls who are denied access to basic education means expanding the way education is provided, non formal forms of provision such as sport and play are of enormous importance. Through involvement in sports and play girls are given the chance to be leaders and improve their confidence and self-esteem. As girls begin to participate in sports they acquire new interpersonal skills and access to new opportunities allowing them to become more engaged in school and community life. Sports provide young people with their own space both physically and emotionally which is especially important for girls

A very interesting example in this context is as follows

After the sports material were provided to the school children of Village Gadarodang a group of girls wanted to play with the cricket kit . To this the boys replied that cricket was a boy's game and therefore only boys should play with the kit. In response to this argument one girl replied "don't you know, even girls play cricket, the women's cricket team of India is playing in the Cricket World Cup.

Training Sessions

A training program for introducing basic cricketing skills to children in the age group of 10 -14 years was organized by the Trust. Renowned coach Shri Manoj Mohapatra of Town Club Bhubaneswar conducted the camp. He was assisted by Mr. Manas Das captain of Town Club cricket team