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at

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Autonomy for Excellence in Sports and Creating Sports Culture

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We live in a world where technologies have taken over the human beings. Individuals have become so very dependent on automation and transportation that the breed of *homo sapiens* is very close to becoming redundant in terms of power of the mind, and more importantly, the power of our muscles and physical strength. Therefore, the potentials of the human mechanics and intelligence are being challenged and replaced by our very own self-engineered tools.

We need to acknowledge this dilemma and rectify the consequent passive state of existence, irrespective of the fact that we exhibit not only a healthy mind but a healthy body too. A collective understanding is required to encourage young minds to train their young bodies through any physical exercise, be it yoga or sports in their places of learning which may be their home or schools.

If total education helps in developing the faculties of mind, then it is the physical well-being that sets the tone for any academic achievement. The need to take affirmative steps and not just lip-sympathy and to promote systemic approaches to nurturing the culture of sports in centers of learning is essential. For an all-round development of a child, the curriculum should include sports, games and health education; sufficient amount of formal hours should be devoted to sports and physical training. These should be included as integral parts of the syllabi.

However, it should be kept in mind that in the enthusiasm of sports participation, the academic rigour should not be compromised. A fine balance between the two should be maintained, and a guided supervision must ensure that neither one is over emphasized. Serious intervention to raise a generation of healthy young adults, who are not suffering from any mental health disorders, is the need of the hour.

As per the August 2018 statistics of WHO (World Health Organisation), 'every year close to 800 000 people take their own lives and there are many more who attempt suicide. Every suicide is a tragedy that

affects families, communities and countries and has long-lasting effects on the people left behind. Suicide has been a phenomenon and has been the second leading cause of death among 15–29-year-olds globally in 2016.'

On the 4th January, 2019, Great Britain declared obesity as a disease, though debatable, which occurs mainly due to a sedentary lifestyle bereft of physical activity. As a whole, approximately 2.8 million people die every year because of obesity and this disease is the main cause of heart attacks and diabetes in the world.

Therefore, comprehensive and integrated efforts to create an environment which is attractive for young adults needs to be developed. At our University level, we must adopt various practices and steps to promote sports and sports culture.

1. A specific time in the college routine must be allotted exclusively for games and sports. During this time, sports related discussions/seminars should be arranged at regular intervals. Sports person of repute may be invited to deliver speech on the basis of their experiences.
2. Group discussion among the students should be arranged under the supervision of faculty appointed for the same. Discussions might be done at the department level for maximum participation of students. Feedback can be taken from the students after discussion, on how they want the sports to be included in the curricula.
3. One faculty for each semester and per department, should be appointed as sports-in-charge who will monitor the sports related, physical and academic activities of the students.
4. One or two period everyday can be dedicated as sports class. The period will be mandatory for all the students and the attendance of which should be counted as an eligibility criteria for writing the semester exams. The arrangement of sports class should be done at departmental level so that proper vigilance can be maintained. Faculty should be assigned for each sports class to look after the students and their participation in sports. Also,

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mentors of students should encourage the students for regular involvement in sports activities. The mentors might also accompany them, if required.

5. The promotion of sports culture should start from the lowest level possible so that students understand the need for physical activity. Class teachers are more connected to their students and therefore, the promotion has to start from that level. This will help to keep a proper vigilance and record of the student activities and will also reduce the load at school or university level (when a number of students are to be kept under vigil, some students might sneak out).
6. Inter department sports competition can be arranged. Competitions can be held during annual meet or college festival days. Departmental teams should include both faculty and students. This will also help to create a good relation between students and faculty.
7. Under jurisdiction of UGC and subject to its necessary permission, the university can formulate the syllabi such that each student can be credited with some marks or grade allotted over the completion of course.
8. A hall can be dedicated to sports in the university campus, where photo/pictures/memories of National, International athletes along with local ones and sportsman can be displayed. All prizes achieved by the students on behalf of the institute should be displayed in the room, so that students get inspired for maintaining sports as a routine chore in day -to- day life. The students should be motivated to visit the hall periodically and read the achievements displayed there.
9. Government of India provides adequate funds for the promotion of games and sports. If well- planned proposal is prepared by an academic institute and sent to union sports department, the institute will be provided with big financial support from the central government. With the help of this support, special care may be provided to good, enthusiastic and bright players.

It is very encouraging to know that AIU has been

fielding sports in the right direction, to ensure that the youth come together on a common platform , AIU has taken all the necessary steps through the medium of sports. AIU has, under its wing, a wide number of sports programmes. At present, the Sports Board is managing annual Inter-University Tournaments individually and common for both men and women at 66 University centers. The Sports Board has been also active in the selection and training of Indian University Teams, organising exchanges of visits between the Indian University Teams and Universities teams from abroad, coordinating between the member universities for organising the Sports programmes, liaising with the Department of Youth Affairs & Sports, Government of India and other national level agencies like the Sports Authority of India for the promotion and development of sports in the University sector.

We, at RGU, have proposed a 'University Color' to encourage sportsmanship in the correct perspective. The essential aim is to recognize the talents and accomplishments of the students and reward their outstanding achievements based on a set of comprehensive assessment criteria which include academic and non- academic achievements especially in the area of sports.

I, too, from a very young age, would like to share that I have been a very active sports person. I have not only been in the field as a football player, but also as a manager and the coach for teams. The experience has been enriching and left in me a repertoire of knowledge and life skills. It has taught me teamwork, time management, handling pressure and to top the most, face both victories and loses with equal grace and move ahead in life, hoping that the next turn in the game of life will be a good one.

Source

<https://www.who.int/en/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/suicide> accessed on 05.01.2019

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p06w4ggl> accessed on 05.01.2019

<http://www.aiu.ac.in/sports/sports.asp> accessed on 06.01.2019