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WAR AND PEACE: SPORTS AS A TOOL FOR SERENITY

~ K Chakra Pani

INTRODUCTION

Unquestionably, one of the most well-preferred leisure activities in the world is Sport, which also describes an amazing phenomenon where people from all over the world participate in, attend, watch, listen to, discuss, and experience sports at all levels of competition, from amateur to elite. It is frequently said that sport is a universal language that everyone can understand. It is an effective means of fostering tolerance, understanding, and peace. Since it unites individuals from diverse backgrounds, ethnicities, and religions. Its principles of cooperation, justice, order, and respect are universally recognized and can be applied to strengthen social cohesiveness and solidarity.

Sport is no longer regarded as an extravagance in today's culture, rather it is seen as a vital investment in the present and the future, particularly in emerging nations. Sport is a promising tool for fostering social change and peace in addition to being fundamental rights that must be upheld and promoted on a global scale. Everybody should be encouraged within the sport for development and peace which is dedicated to furthering knowledge and utilizing the special power of sport to successfully use it to promote lasting peace and worldwide development.

KEYWORDS

Commitment, Coordination, Peace, Politics, Sports

THE ROLE OF SPORTS IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Sports developed, became, and continue to be a significant, beneficial sanction in international relations. It is one of the most significant cases from the previous century to the present day due to its growing impacts. Before the Olympic Games, a small minority of earlier sporting tournaments had a significant impact on the entire world. Even more pervasive than facts like democracy, the free market, and even freedom, sports have become in recent years. The use of sports in national and international politics has been crucial.

International politics and relations are greatly influenced by international sporting events. International sporting events are a useful venue for displaying a state's ethnic characteristics or its perceived national supremacy to its competitors. It is common knowledge that international sporting events promote peace rather than conflict. A law of nations - like international sports law - exists. Sport is the noblest conflict on the global stage since it is a conflict for peace. The conflicts in international sports do not really resemble those in politics. The athletic contests are conducted in a manly, sincere, cordial, and sportsmanlike manner. A person cannot be a natural athlete for such sportsmanship; rather, he should be deserving of the designation.

The Olympic Games' five interlocking rings represent the five continents. This demonstrates a wonderful community where young people are uniting for world peace. Sports are one of them that have a significant impact on international relations due to their global popularity. Previously restricted to the local, regional, or national level, modern sports have now reached the international stage and have access to the social and political spheres. International sport is now a site of global politics and diplomacy given that the International Olympic Committee (IOC) has 202 member states, which is even more than the 192 UN member states.

SPORTS IN CONTEMPORARY TIMES

With the advent of many social movements and political events, sporting events have turned from not just being a mere playfield of sportspersons, but also for social causes and can be influenced by political pressures, along with other external factors. The sportspersons then used to participate for the sake of participation and the vision to win and bring laurels for their country, but now, some come with social causes, and their motive is not to win, but to show their presence and make their cause felt and realized.

There is, and has been, a significant movement and calls for gender equality and roles in society. The feminist movement was, and is still, the leading movement fighting for women's rights to be on the same paradigm as men in society. Women are generally discriminated on their gender, and this affects their opportunity to participate in many activities, especially in sports. Sports has always placed a level playing field for women to come and try out their skills. However, this is influenced by the existing societal norms and restrictions. The suppression of women's rights and freedoms to participate in sports is being broken down with the increased participation of women in multiple sports. The increased participation is breaking down barriers to come out and show that their participation is equally important.

Political events affect the participation of players in sports events, be it due to government orders, or changes in rules in sporting events. Arguably, one of the biggest political events that affected multiple sports significantly is the Russia-Ukraine conflict, which resulted in an outright war for political reasons and gains. This massive conflict resulted in many sporting organizations amending rules in support of Ukraine, by banning all Russian athletes in many sports like tennis, badminton, etc. Huge sporting events like the Olympics allowed the participation of such players but under an independent scheme regulated by the organizer itself. There were huge calls of backlash against Russia during this period, and this significantly affected the talented players who had no motive in the conflict but were merely participating in their success. A leading example was that of Tennis star Daniil Medvedev, who participated in major tennis events, and showed that he was not a part of the Russian conflict, and there must be an amount of mercy to be shown to such people.

Another event that sparked the international community was the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement. This created massive support for the Black community through various means, most of it through protests and riots. Sports had a significant impact on it. In most of the huge sports, all the players supported the movement. Cricket displayed the teams wearing black wristbands and kneeling, tennis displayed support through similar means, basketball also did the same, etc. The impact was incredibly significant, with more Black participants and sportspersons joining in, showing their respect and support, and representing the Black community on the world stage through their participation.

With the above-mentioned movements and influences in sports, along with many other minor and major movements, sports have developed an angle of spreading awareness rather than chasing success among sportspersons. This, among the international community of different countries, has developed a sense of unity and cooperation indirectly among the political powers and societies.

INTERNATIONAL HARMONY THROUGH SPORTS

The presence of major sporting events brings together many countries to not just compete against each other, but to give an opportunity to develop harmony and cooperation among them. It is not always about competition and the will to win; it is also about the bonds and friendships developed among participants from different countries.

When the Russian conflict was taking place, many sporting organizations, in support of Ukraine, banned Russian athletes in multiple sports. In response, the international sports community displayed their support for such athletes, as they are just sportspersons and not active supporters. They have their agendas and goals to participate in big events and banning them due to unrelated political reasons is unreasonable. Different communities, although not related to the political conflict, showcased their support, and calls were made to allow the participation of such athletes.

The beauty of a sporting field is that: only merit is seen and considered among the athletes. There is no involvement of political, social, or economic factors between players personally. Although some athletes come intending to represent some social movements, it is highly respected, and merit prevails over such factors. They compete against each other over merit, not over external factors. This gives an opportunity for them to interact without any biases and external factors, thus developing serenity, peace, and friendship between not only the players but also the countries.

Organizations and associations like BIMSTEC, ASEAN, UN, WHO, Quad, etc. are of immense importance, as in these events, the participating countries come together to discuss major issues like pollution, terrorism, security, etc. They leave their political and social differences behind and come to achieve a peaceful solution and harmonious environment and conduct for the parties involved. The only aim of such meetings is to encourage and improve

peaceful cooperation, help develop a friendly bond among all and sort differences that affect the international community in general.

Similarly, big sporting events like the Olympics, Commonwealth Games, Asian Games, World Championships, European Games, etc. bring together athletes from different countries to participate, compete, and succeed. But Sports does not always mean this alone; it also means meeting different and diverse players, understanding them, and developing friendships among them. Here, as mentioned, there is only consideration of merit. All the political and social differences are forgotten, and only talent, hard work, and skill are seen on the field. This, along with the coverage of media, brings the idea of harmony among not only the athletes, but also the political leaders, and while giving scope, encourages them to achieve the same. This teaches the leaders that there is much more to political grudges and differences; there is mutual peaceful coexistence, and with harmonious cooperation, more wonders can be done that can benefit all countries.

Sport gives a lens through which the world is viewed without any biases or history. There is only consideration of ability, merit, and hard work. This helps countries to cooperate more harmoniously and achieve better goals and dreams. There must be the desire to move on and work through to achieve what benefits all the parties, which can be through ways like investments, naval exercises, training, exchange programs, etc. While viewing the world through the influence of a sporting lens, there is only focus on the betterment of bonds, striving to develop better, and helping others develop along with self-development.

Given that it is a component of global culture, sport serves as an effective tool for bringing people from all over the world together. It is a practice that advances world peace. It can be characterized as the sum of all actions taken to affect both bodily and moral as well as societal advantages. It has served as an excellent weapon for sanctions in international affairs. It is expected that sports will become increasingly effective in world politics. Sports can be utilized as a second diplomatic tool by nations and groups that feel helpless when the first diplomatic instruments fail to produce the desired results. It completes people's and nation's education. It is based on common training and serves as a reflection of people's mentality and degree of education.

SPORTS FOR DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL INTEGRATION

Sports can be helpful not only in developing international communities among countries but also within each country itself. It is a field of opportunities that has immense scope for development in many areas, be it economic, social, financial, etc. It does not merely provide opportunities for the athletes to perform but also gives scope for many other indirect participants in the game.

As a field with scope for development, Sports can bring development not only for itself but also for society. The recent trend of the world is Sports being a field of investment opportunities, with more hunger emerging among budding athletes to be successful, more competition emerging, and to meet such high demands, there is the scope for attracting investments to develop such facilities to meet the demands. This can bring in not only domestic investments but also attract foreign investors, leading to world-class facilities being built for the emerging talent in society. With this development, there is more attraction towards sports with the advent of such facilities, and this attracts more talent to participate, discover, and refine their skills. This paves the path for a society to become an investment hub and destination. This helps provide more development and advanced facilities in many countries, which leads to more talented athletes participating in events, and helping in displaying advanced facilities to help athletes achieve their dreams.

CONCLUSION

From political leaders to homeless people, from the elite rich to the unbearably poor, everyone relates to sports in some way. There is interest in some sport or the other in every country, like Basketball in the USA, cricket in India, Badminton in Malaysia, etc. Right from the Prime Minister to the poor households, all look at sports either leisurely or with passion. Sports is one significant aspect that can determine the relationship between two or more countries. If two athletes are friendly, then there is an effort for the political leaders to be friendly. But if there is a slight discomfort between two athletes, this increases the already-intense tensions between the countries. Thus, sports can be viewed as a tool and way to improve cooperation, leading to harmony and serenity among everyone, even the worst of enemies.