SPORTS AND ENVIRONMENT

An Abstract

To be healthy and to be involved in any sports, we rely heavily on environment. Major sports events like Olympic Games, Asian Games, World Championship etc. Use a lot of environmental resources. In the whole world, there are lots of people, who are involved in sports but promoting environment through sports make it easier to reach out to reach out the goals of sustainability of environment. In Olympic Charter it is mentioned to organize green Olympic games to promote environmental sustainability. Some countries have developed promising approaches, above all in the planning and management of sports and leisure activities. These are essentially aimed at ruling out, or avoiding as far as possible, potential conflicts and lessening existing conflicts. Numerous regulations that have been put into practice and proved successful show that they can meet the demands of both sport and nature conservation. Hence, there is a need that the governing bodies of countries should make it mandatory for all sports organizations to organize games without harming the environment.

Introduction

It is impossible to fully understand contemporary society and culture without acknowledging the place of sport. We inhabit a world in which sport is an international phenomenon. It is part of the social and cultural fabric of different localities, regions and nations, its transformative potential is evident in some of the poorest areas of the world; it is important to the television and film industry, the tourist industry; and it is regularly associated with social problems and issues such as crime, health, violence, social division, labour migration, economic and social regeneration, ecology, poverty etc.

In our society sport fulfils important functions and is indeed indispensable. It offers opportunities for physical activity in a world where physical activity is increasingly diminishing; it promotes good health and well-being (when pursued in moderation); and it provides a means of social contact and ample opportunity for intensive experiences. Hence, this we may consider as sports environment within itself.

Sport is a large part of our lifestyle. All sports use natural resources to some
extent and have an impact on our natural environment. Sports by their very nature bring people together; athletes, spectators, officials, sponsors and suppliers come together to participate in and support sport. Furthermore, sport has requirements that impact on the environment such as equipment, facilities, infrastructure, transportation, catering, sanitation and merchandising.

When we consider the people and materials involved in sport, it becomes clear that all sorts of resources from energy, water and other consumables are required to enable sports. Inevitably, sport leads to the generation of waste and pollution which impacts on our ecosystems. Environmental sustainability in sport is all about managing these interactions to minimize the negative impacts and maximize the positive.

As researchers look back through the history of the Modern Olympic Games it is evident that sustainability has not always been at the forefront of the Olympic charter. Previous Games have been blighted by problems of waste management, pollution and wildlife destruction. Communities have been left with derelict stadiums and irrelevant facilities, and Government spending has sometimes taken financial resources away from other crucial projects to fund the Games infrastructure. These issues go against the principles of sustainability.

Since the notion of sustainability was introduced to the Olympic Charter, the International Olympic Committee has been anxious to reverse the negative environmental image of the Olympics Games. From 1994, potential host cities have been obliged to demonstrate their commitment to a Green Games and this concept has become one of the fundamental aspects of the Olympics process. The International Olympic Committee (IOC) has thereby established itself as one of the leading bodies in the pursuit of environmental stability.

The Olympic Movement was one of the first organizations to pick up the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) baton. Within six weeks, at the Games of the XXV Olympiad (Barcelona 1992), International Sports Federations (IFs) and National Olympic Committees (NOCs) signed the Earth Pledge, committing to making the Earth a safe place.

This was followed by the IOC’s partnership forged in 1994 with the United Nation Environment Programme (UNEP), recognition of the environment as the third pillar of Olympism alongside sport and
culture at the Centennial Olympic Congress in the same year and the formation of the IOC’s Sport and Environment Commission in 1995.

Olympic Movement founder Baron Pierre de Coubertin was first and foremost an educator who saw sport as a powerful catalyst for social and economic development. He believed sport could bring about “the harmonious development of man” and “the establishment of a peaceful society concerned with the preservation of human dignity”. His thoughts chime with Agenda 21’s ethos of responsible development.

It was appropriate therefore that in 1999 the Olympic Movement adopted Agenda 21: Sport for Sustainable Development. Based on the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) model, it lays down a clear pathway for sustainable development throughout the sporting world. Stakeholders include International Federations and National Federations, National Olympic Committees, Organising Committees of the Olympic Games and Youth Olympic Games, sponsors, government partners, the sporting goods industry, athletes, youth and the media.

The benefits of bringing environmental sustainability into sports go beyond ‘doing the right thing’ by the environment. It is common for sustainability actions to lead to cost savings. For example, finding ways to reduce fuel, water and electricity use will lead to a reduction in costs. When an individual consider that he/ she is expecting to see increasing costs for most of resources over the coming years, finding ways to reduce these costs now is of much benefit. We may also find that the added recognition and reputation benefits we receive from ‘going green’ may lead to increased sponsorship and other funding opportunities for sports.

The starting point for The Olympic Movement’s Agenda 21 is that national approaches and policies on sports and environment should recognize that athletes need a healthy environment in which to train and perform at their optimum. Similarly it includes it includes the guidelines for all the human being involved in sports. These are Conservation and management of natural resources by:

- Ensuring all actions of the Olympic Movement respect the environment and encourage sustainable development
- Ensuring the protection of conservation areas, the countryside,
the cultural heritage and natural resources as a whole.

- Encouraging the best possible use of sports facilities, keeping them in good condition and improving them by increasing safety and reducing their environmental impact.
- Sourcing sports equipment which is environment-friendly.
- Reducing energy consumption; encouraging the use of renewable energy, sources and energy savings, and encouraging access to renewable and non-polluting energy sources for areas without such power supplies.
- Working to make accommodation and catering arrangements for major sports events become exemplars of sustainable development.
- Protecting water reserves and preserve the quality of natural waters; minimizing activities that could pollute water resources, including waste waters generated by sports activities.
- Minimizing all forms of pollution, including noise pollution and promoting community programmes for the management and recycling of wastes
- Opposing any practice – especially any sporting practice – that gives rise to unnecessary or irreversible contamination of air, soil or water; or jeopardizes biodiversity or endangers plant or animal species; or contributes to deforestation or is prejudicial to land conservation.

These were the important guidelines adopted by International Olympic Committee in Olympic Movement for sustainability of environment.

The use of nature for the purposes of sport should stop at the point where the type of activity concerned considerably affects or damages nature or the rural landscape. Thus sports activities should take into due account the degree of ecological resilience of the area concerned.

In order to reduce the damage to vulnerable areas early on and at the same time fulfill the task of providing for recreation, nature conservation bodies and representatives of sport should be more involved in the planning of opportunities in resilient landscapes. A positive impact on the recreational value of countryside is generated as a side effect of the various nature conservation programmes on species and biotope conservation.
In the past, some countries have developed promising approaches, above all in the planning and management of sports and leisure activities. These are essentially aimed at ruling out, or avoiding as far as possible, potential conflicts and lessening existing conflicts. Numerous regulations that have been put into practice and proved successful show that they can meet the demands of both sport and nature conservation.

Sport can make its own important contribution towards bringing about the model of sustainable development and thus to the implementation of Agenda 21 in all countries. To achieve this, sports organizations and others involved in sport must discuss this model intensively and anchor it firmly in their work.

References