



CASE STUDY

Sport as a Factor for Development of Rural Areas (Case Study: Badreh, Darreh Shahr)

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ABSTRACT

Sport and physical education is an integral part of education and a means to achieve physical and mental health. It should not be assumed that physical education and is a fancy worthless issue and merely a means for fun and engagement of children and adolescents. In contrast, it should be considered an important component of life activities. Concepts such as fitness, health, personal and social development and mental health are closely related to sport and physical education. A historical review demonstrates that civilized nations of the world always have paid attention to the importance and role of sport and used it for development of youth and preparing them to deal with personal and social problems.

There is a great gap between urban and rural areas in Iran. Rural residents clearly feel this gap in terms of sport facilities. The present study aims to fill the class gap by initiatives and demonstrating the benefits of exercise and sport, hoping that the status of physical education in rural areas would be more seriously followed in future plans of government.

Keywords: *Development, Sport, Health, Rural Areas, Physical Education*

INTRODUCTION

Ilam is one of provinces that has received less attention by macro-management system during past decades, despite its natural abilities and talents. Ilam is cited as one of the most deprived areas of Iran. Deprivations and being bereft of its expected share of national income and wealth were intensified during the war. Ilam was at the forefront during the war. War conditions in the region prevented implementation of local development plans and investment in infrastructures. By the end of the war as well as changing public conditions, a proper environment was provided for reconstruction and developmental efforts and strengthening the region's economic foundations. Within the new space, the economic potential of the region received much attention by allocating a greater share of public resources to compensate war damages. There is no less expensive potential than sport and physical education for evolution as an essential factor for rural development, because sport will strengthen hope and vitality in mankind to achieve objectives.

Sport and physical education is another view of join or fight with surrounding natural environment. It noteworthy that human mind requires minimal training. If circumstances are integrated with rural traditions, intrinsic rural development would be definitely followed by increased productivity of land and creatures. Sport and physical education not only facilitate human interaction with rural development factors, but it will reconcile humans with development and their economic, social, cultural activities with surrounding environment.

The author believes that the present study is essential, because sport is a tangible issue that its development or underdevelopment can clearly be seen. On the other hand, all of us know that there is a great gap between urban and rural areas in Iran in terms of facilities, employment and etc. Sport facilities clearly reveals this gap. There are few sport facilities in rural areas. Sport and physical education is a healthy way to discharge youth energy along with vitality. In general, rural youth can be used in national and international competition scene due to good physical condition.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Realities indicate limited hardware and software sports facilities in Iran. Given the young population and youth enthusiasm and interest in sport, authorities should develop a plan for decentralization and development of sport facilities in different parts of Iran. A general look at the structure of sport and physical education in Iran clearly reveals lack of facilities in rural areas. This can lead to migration, drug addiction and other social complications.

In developed countries such as Germany, sport clubs are established in rural areas. This results in vitality of rural residents and helps villages economically and socially. Considering sport as a development factor and adopting models used in developed countries, sport and physical education must receive greater attention. Thus, villagers can be used in different teams at national and international levels in long-term plans, because a significant part of youth live in rural areas.

Objectives

The main objective of the present study is proper distribution of sport facilities in rural and urban areas of the region and thereby propelling rural talents to championship as well as using them in provincial sports teams. The specific objective of the present study is to demonstrate the effects of sport and physical education in the society. The researcher attempts to provide sport facilities for rural areas of the region. The most important objective is propelling villagers to public sports which can bring vitality for the residents.

METHODS

Several methods have been used including desk study. Written and illustrated information was obtained referring libraries of Statistical Center of Iran, Physical Education Institute of Science, Research and Technology Ministry, Rural and Tribal Sports Federation, Center of Scientific Information and other relevant libraries. Furthermore, field study (referring all rural areas) was used through oral QA (Question & Answer) of residents with note taking and observing factors involved in the project such as sports facilities. Finally, scientific and analytical methods and other contexts of research methods were used.

Literature review and theoretical background

The review of previous studies and titles relevant to the present study demonstrated that there are few studies in this regard in Iran. However, there are many studies in this regard in developing countries, examples of which are as follows:

1. James et al. (1996). The relationship between smoking, weight, physical activity and risk for prostate in rural residents under 65 years old (Case Study: United States of America)
2. Greval et al. (2000). A comparative study of rural athletes of four states in India.
3. Matthew Tont. Racing or competitive sports and social capital in rural areas of Australia.
4. Caroline et al. (2004). What do we know about damages of rural sports and recreation in Australia?
5. Martin Olson (2004, Oxford University). Sports and Suburbs, effective participation in racing sports.
6. Tont (2005). Reconstructions and the effect of rural geographic variations on competitive sports in Australia.
7. Fred et al. (2004). Participatory exercise: expenses or priorities.
8. Eric (Journal of Sports and Community). Participation in sports in Latin America in 1982.

Study area

Ilam province, with a surface area of 20,150 km², forms approximately 1.2% of the total surface area of Iran. Ilam province is located in west of Zagros Mountains. It is limited to Khuzestan, Lorestan and Kermanshah from south, east and north, respectively. Ilam has 425 km border with Iraq from west. The study area (Badreh) is located at 40 km northeast of Darreh Shahr and southern domains of KabirKooch on the common border with Ilam City. The region has an area of 521 km². The majority of this region consists of mountainous areas. Badreh with a population of 17,000 is one of the most developed areas in terms of arts and culture in Ilam. There are about 2,500 athletes in the region. Of this, 1500 people were organized. There are 12 independent sport councils in Badreh including football, karate, taekwondo, volleyball, wrestling, gymnastics, swimming and lifeguard rescue, rural and tribal council, handball, bodybuilding, public sports and track and field.

Freestyle wrestling, karate, football, and women's futsal and track and field athletes are among outstanding athletes in Ilam province. They were leading medalists in provincial and national competitions. They had a continuous presence in national team in recent years. It noteworthy that Badreh is among top districts in Ilam province in terms of training professional athletes in various sports. About 12 sports councils in the region and introducing several athletes at provincial, national and international levels indicate that there are top sport talents in this region, despite all problems.

Terms

Young population: a community in which more than 35% of the population is below 20 years is considered as a young population.

Active population: The age group of 15 to 64 years old in any community is considered as active population.

A definition of sport and physical education

According to Dehkhoda dictionary, sport and physical education is synonymous with exercise and culture. It also refers to physical education and regular daily physical exercises. Thus, the causal relationship between agriculture and related activities and sports and physical education can be easily observed.

What is development?

Today, the development is considered tantamount to a better life and communities will benefit more from development than before. "Sometimes development is propelled by economic methods, policies and strategies. Such methods failed to measure and determine the true value of human and natural resources. On the other hand, such policies and strategies threat humanity and other life forms because of excessive limitations (Yazdi, Rural Development)".

Rural development studies slowly began with social development after World War II. "Community development movement expanded rapidly during the 1950s. By 1960, more than 60 countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America adopted national or regional community development plans. But by the mid-1960s, community development was neglected by development-aiding organizations and national governments."

Sport and its interaction with the rural environment and activities

Culture is a set of beliefs, customs and lifestyles based on common values of a community. In fact, it is a heredity through a community. One of the important characteristics is the support of religious, ideological, and national and homeland aspects of livelihood activities in the community. Body as the objective nature of mankind and manifest of spiritual themes of faith, morality and behavior will be able to play its role, when it achieves its rights. Health, improvement of physical strength, instinctive enjoyment and pleasures provide body growth and excellence. Economic status of individuals, leisure, attitudes of rulers, national-religious culture history and acculturation are among factors which have partial roles in establishment of sport position in social culture. All these factors influence and impact on each other like a gear.

According to the statistics, green space per capita for sport in Iran is about 4.1 m², while it amounts 7 to 12 m² in developed countries. According to an expert in sports, unfortunately, people do not have a right attitude towards physical activity. The feeling of being full of energy and kinship is obtained through exercise and mobility. A man without activity and mobility is gradually converted into a man with reduced productivity and various diseases.

Sport and Culture

Each issue that is brought to mind is of subjective cases or becomes true in the outside world, then its culture comes to mind. Culture is an integral and required part of each phenomenon. For example, when business and economics come to mind or we engage in the outside world, then we definitely need to know the culture of business or economics or at least its prevailing culture; in other words, its general culture. This is essential to be of value among traders and economists, otherwise we will be outside economic and trade issues or at least will not be a successful economist or businessman. Thus, the culture exists in all worship and transactions phenomena such as culture of praying, worship, business, culture, sport and etc.

The objective of the present study is to analyze and criticize sport culture and its roots and foundations. First, since Islam is a divine religion for the guidance of mankind, it did not change all customs and culture of community, but it strengthened and promoted common cultures among people which were compatible with the religion or could be placed at the service of religion with few changes. Thus, sport and physical education is an issue existed since man settlement on earth. It was probably not similar to contemporary new complex methods, but there was a rudimentary form and Islam oriented it and put it at the service of religion.

The current status of sport and distribution of sport facilities in the study area

Ilam residents are largely aware and interested in local games and sports. This demonstrates that local sports and games constitute a large part of the culture of people in this region. It has a significant relationship with customs of the region. Thus, they do local games and sports in special events such as festivals, the beginning of the year and marriages, harvesting seasons. Today, with the advancement of technology and development of modern sports, local games are rarely common among the residents of this region.

According to the comments of the subjects, it seems that local sports and games is significantly related to education level and age such that awareness and interest in sports and games increase in higher ages. Moreover, the use of sports and games is more common in people with higher education levels. They probably use such available tools at no cost due to the use of scientific techniques and exercises. Traditional sports and games are foundation of modern sports, so that such sports and games have an important role in improving sports records, in addition to maintaining them as traditional and national sports.

The people in this region have a low monthly income. Therefore, poor financial status significantly influences on lifestyles of residents of the region. So local and indigenous games and sports can be used with minimal facilities and costs to fill their leisure time. According to the above studies and research, it can be concluded that sport activities is one of healthy and vigorous tools to fill leisure time. Thus, sport authorities should take required measures to provide sport facilities. Furthermore, they should take necessary measures to promote and publicize these precious assets through investing in local sports and games.

Table 1- Demographics and ratio of athletes in villages and rural districts

Rural district	Rural district center	Number of villages	Number of villages with population between 500 to 999	Number of villages with population over 1000
Doostan	Vali-Asr Town	14	2	1
Hendmini	Zarangoosh	12	5	2

Table 2- Villages, towns and rural districts in Badreh District

Rural district	Village	Population	Male	Female	Number of sports facilities	Number of athletes
Doostan	Kolam Bala	687	343	344	0	25
Doostan	Vali-Asr Town	2284	1082	1202	2	200
Doostan	Abhar Paeen	914	435	479	0	150
Hendmini	Ab Cheshmeh	891	410	481	0	50
Hendmini	Gach Kooban	877	433	444	0	45
Hendmini	Cheshmeh Shirin	1172	601	571	3	150
Hendmini	Talkhab	786	393	393	0	25
Hendmini	Zeid	643	309	334	0	30
Hendmini	Gallehdar	850	411	439	0	75
Hendmini	Zarangoosh	1605	783	822	0	130

Table 3. Distribution of active sports in the region

Number of Towns	Number of rural districts	Number of villages with population between 500 to 999	Number of villages with population over 1000	Number of villages
1	2	7	3	26

Village/Town Active sports	Vali-Asr Town	Cheshmeh Shirin	Badreh
Freestyle and Greco-Roman wrestling	Available (A)	A	A
Football	A	A	A
Futsal	A	A	A
Track and Field	A	A	A
Billiard	Not Available (NA)	NA	A
Taekwondo	NA	NA	A
Karate	NA	A	A
Bodybuilding	NA	NA	A
Gymnastic	NA	NA	A
Physical fitness	A	A	A
Swimming	NA	A	A
Public sports	A	A	A

Table 4. Distribution of sport facilities in the region

Town/village name	Vali-Asr Town	Cheshmeh Shirin	Badreh
Sports facilities			
grass ground	NA	NA	A
soiled ground	A	A	NA
Wrestling hall	NA	NA	A
Bodybuilding hall	NA	NA	A
Billiard club	NA	NA	A
Multipurpose hall	A	A	A
Track and field	NA	NA	NA
Volleyball hall	A	A	A
Asphalt ground	NA	NA	A
Artificial grass	NA	NA	A
Pool	NA	NA	A

Table 5. Comparison of sports facilities and hookah stores in the region

Town/village name	Number of sports/recreation facilities	Number of hookah stores
Badreh	10	3
Cheshmeh Shirin	2	1
Zarangoosh	-	-
Vali-Asr Town	1	-
Kolam Bala	-	4
Jaber	-	4
Abhar Paeen	-	4

Table 6. Demographics of Ilam Province and Badreh District upstream city (Darreh Shahr)

Description	Population	Male	Female	Household
Ilam Province	557599	282468	275131	135732
Urban areas	356896	180377	176519	88024
Rural areas	199327	101369	97958	47407
Non-residents	1376	722	654	301
Darreh Shahr	59551	29646	29905	14891
Urban areas	24961	12469	12492	6294
Rural areas	34288	17009	17279	8536
Non-residents	302	168	133	61

Table 7. Comparison of demographics and distribution of sport facilities in Badreh District

	Rural district/Town	Number of Villages	Population	Youth population	Active population	Sports facilities surface area (m ²)	Sports facilities per capita
1	Doostan	12	4394	1360	1100	12000	2.7
2	Hendmini	14	7453	1864	2086	9000	1.2
3	Badreh	0	4249	1190	1500	22000	5.1
4	Badreh District	26	16186	4414	4686	43000	2.6

Table. Economic influences of sports in various countries

Country	Year	Income (billion \$)
United States of America	1995	152
United Kingdom	1995	12.4
Canada	1996	8.9
Australia	1994	5.8
New Island	1996	0.958
Scotland	1998	0.947
Hong Kong	2000	0.549
Iran	2003	0.152

As can be seen from above tables, Badreh is among areas facing with imbalance distribution of sport facilities in the region despite high per capita of sport facilities, because most of sport facilities is located in the center of Badreh District, thereby rural youth interested in different sports have to travel the course between village and Badreh City. This leads to reluctance of rural youth for sports. Badreh District consists of 30 villages. Of this, only 2 villages (Cheshmeh Shirin and Vali-Asr Town) have sport facilities. Since available facilities are not well equipped, they cannot respond to demands for the use of sport facilities. This is one of the most important reasons for reluctance of rural youth for sports. The continuation of this trend leads to youth interest in other accessible entertainment.

Among the issues that arise due to the lack of sports facilities in rural areas are:

1. The loss of natural talent of rural youth.
2. Lack of motivation among youth interested in sports and drug disposition.
3. Migration of rural youth to achieve sport aims
4. Emptying rural areas of active population.
5. Fading joy and injecting depression due to lack of fun facilities
6. The loss of population structure in rural areas
7. Overshadowing national sports due to loss of a significant percentage of young population living in rural areas.

CONCLUSIONS

Of 26 villages in the study area, only two villages (Cheshmeh Shirin, Vali-Asr Town) have sport facilities for rural residents. The sport facilities in these villages compared with the District Center (Badreh City) are as follows: of 11 sport facilities in Badreh City, there are 3 facilities in Cheshmeh Shirin and Vali-Asr Town. Of 12 sport disciplines held in Badreh City, there are 8 disciplines in Cheshmeh Shirin and 6 disciplines in Vali-Asr Town.

This is also very clear in a study conducted in rural areas of Badreh District. In villages equipped with sport facilities, such facilities affect various factors including leisure time which could be a factor for preventing risky factors such as addiction. Vali-Asr Town with mean facilities has considerable progress compared to other villages which even do not have such mean facilities. Vali-Asr Town has a soiled playground and a multi-purpose sport hall supporting sports such as wrestling, football and futsal. Thus, Vali-Asr Town has more lively youth than youth in other subordinate villages.

The observations in the field study showed that number of youth with social problems in Vali-Asr Town is lower given its higher population. This is due to sport equipment and facilities filling most of leisure time of youth. Migration is one of the causes of development and underdevelopment. However, the reverse migration (from rural to urban areas) shows development of the village. Observations clearly showed that people who migrated to surrounding urban areas for higher income or welfare, now returned to their ancestral homeland at the time of retirement, given the facilities that can fill their leisure. This reveals the effects of sport facilities and its impact on development.

People who migrated from surrounding urban areas to Vali-Asr Town certainly have a relatively good financial status due to higher income, it may lead to investment in productive activities that are conducive to development. It should be noted that Vali-Asr Town residents are closely related to Badreh City residents due to its proximity to District Center and cultural similarities. This helps further development of Vali-Asr Town.

There was no sport facilities in most villages in the region. Only a hall with an area of 700 m² is under construction in Cheshmeh Shirin. This sport hall can provide a context for human development. As Vali-Asr Town which is a good example for the region, Cheshmeh Shirin may train talented youth of the village and surrounding villages. Abhar Paeen is completely deprive of sport facilities. However, due to proximity to Badreh City, it has acceptable number of athletes in the region. In a general view, it should be noted that women have lower tendency to sports than men for various reasons. Among them are cultural problems. Thus, sport can be considered in direct relation to development, because many development factors including education, culture, employment and many other social problems are affected by sports. We hope that one day, sport facilities would be provided with lowest cost for all residents to remove cultural poverty in rural areas of Iran.

Whatever the interest in sport is higher among rural people, it will affect various factors such as joy and happiness, morale, health, economic and social issues and even in some cases political factors. The role of sports in health and economics of rural communities is undeniable. According to previous studies, more developed countries consider sport as a vital factor and use it to influence on various factors. To publicize sports, women as a half of population should be propelled to sport.

In regard to Physical Education Organization measures to publicize sports among women, it should be noted that women exercising as half of population is more significant than men. To internalize sports in

rural areas, rural residents should be motivated to participate in athletic competitions. Constructions are of great importance in public sports. Physical Education Organization should provide good conditions for exercising.

In general, it can be concluded that there is a direct relationship between sport and development in the region, because a village with good sport facilities had more lively youth with higher cultural level compared to other villages in the study area. The role of sports in rural development can clearly be seen in developed countries. This shows the effects of sports on development process.

SUGGESTIONS AND SOLUTIONS

- Development of policies and plans and required coordination to develop public and recreational sports of men and women in Ilam province.
- Establishment of National Public Sport Council and required coordination to establish corresponding provincial, urban and rural councils.
- Research to identify barriers to the development of public and recreational sports of men and women, and solutions to overcome them.
- Providing necessary facilities to support and development of public and recreational sports.
- Coordination and cooperation with relevant executive agencies and institutions including municipalities to participate and provide arrangements for development of public and recreational sports and monitor their performance.
- Secretariat works of councils and legislative assemblies related to public and recreational sports.
- Continuous study and research to strengthen the scientific and managerial basis of public and recreational sports in other countries and using their successful experiences in formulation of developmental plans.
- Establishing and developing relationships with regional and international institutions of public and recreational sports.
- Internalizing and development of the culture of public and recreational sport.
- Deployment or dispatch of outstanding coaches to train rural youth.
- Encouraging rural youth to exercise (with no cost for basic sports)

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