

Analysis of World Alliance of YMCAs towards Promotion of Physical Education and Sports with Particular Reference to India

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Received: 23-06-2021; Revised: 15-06-2021; Published: 17-07-2021

Abstract

World Alliance of YMCAs is a worldwide Christian ecumenical voluntary movement for both men and women with special emphasis on and the genuine involvement of young people, The movement has rendered pioneering services in the spheres of Education, Sports and Games In the 1870s and 1880s that the YMCAs health or Physical Education programmed receive its start under the effective leadership of Robert J. Roberts of the Boston YMCA. The need for trained Physical Directors and YMCA secretaries were met in part by the founding of Springfield College under the name School for Christian workers in 1885 – The first formal program of its type in the movement. In India, Bombay YMCA was the first YMCA in India to recognize Physical Education as an important and integral part of its programmed. The Calcutta YMCA was the first association to attempt a programmed of Physical Education under the guidance of a qualified secretary. Dr. J.H. Gray was the first National YMCA Physical Director in India and he organized an introduced schemes of recreation through all the YMCAs of this country. The foundation of scientific Physical Education in this country was laid down in 1908 by Dr. J.H. Gray and later on Dr. Nobren who succeeded Dr. Gray also helped in the advancement of the cause to some extent but the success achieved by these two National Physical Directors of the YMCA in India. In August, 1920, H.C. Buck started a School of Physical Education at Madras with a view to train teachers also might attain a higher objective of Physical Education to uplift the cause of Physical Education, Sports, Games and Recreation in India. The contribution of World Alliance of YMCAs with particular reference to India is pioneering one in whole of Asia. The alliance through its pioneering institutions conducted different courts in Physical Education, Sports, Games and Recreation. Young as well as old are being benefitted through the new sports invented, new courses started, models of physical education and sports facilities created, coaching camps, adult fitness programmers, project physical education for disabled and so on. Thus, the contribution of World Alliance of YMCAs with particular reference to India is noteworthy and well-founded for generations benefitted and generations to come.

Key words: World Alliance of YMCAs, Promotion of Sports and Games, India

Introduction

The YMCA Movement is a worldwide Christian ecumenical voluntary movement for both men and women with special emphasis on and the genuine involvement of young people, which seeks to share the Christian ideal of building a human community of justice with love, peace and reconciliation for the fitness of life for all creation. Sir George Williams founded the movement on 6th June 1844 in London, and today there are more than 15,000 local associations with 45 million members in nearly 130 countries, making the movement the largest international ecumenical youth organization in the world. YMCA aims at the overall welfare and development of spiritual, mental and physical facilities of the people without any distinction of caste, color, sex or race. The movement has rendered pioneering services in the spheres of Education, sports, Relief and Refugee work, Physical Education, Youth work, camping, hostels, co-operative endeavors and rural reconstruction that has consultative status with the economic and social council of the United Nations. In 1878, World Alliance of YMCAs offices were established in Geneva, Switzerland and later, in 1900, North American YMCAs, in collaboration with the World Alliance. (George W. Blagden, 1954)

World Alliance for Physical Education and Sports

A federated model of governance has created a diversity of YMCA programmes and services, with YMCAs in different countries and communities offering vastly different programming in response to local community needs. In North America, the YMCA is sometimes perceived to be primarily a community sports facility; in Great Britain, the YMCA is sometimes perceived to be primarily a place for homeless young people; however, it offers a broad range of programmes such as

sports, personal fitness, child care, overnight camping, employment readiness programmes, training programmes, advice services, immigrant services, conference centers, and educational activities as methods of promoting its values. (Thompson, G.P., 1904)

It was in the 1870s and 1880s that the YMCAs health or Physical Education programmes receive its start under the effective leadership of Robert J. Roberts (1849 – 1920) of the Boston YMCA. He became the first Christian Physical Director in 1876 and referred to gymnasiums as “Halls of Health”. The need for trained Physical Directors and YMCA secretaries were met in part by the founding of Springfield College under the name School for Christian workers in 1885. the first formal program of its type in the movement (Doggett L.L., 1943).

YMCA in India and its Contribution to Physical Education and Sports

The Bombay YMCA was the first YMCA in India to recognize Physical Education as an important and integral part of its programme. Soon after its organization in 1875 an enthusiastic group of volunteer leaders developed a well – balanced programme of physical activities. The Calcutta YMCA was the first association to attempt a programme of Physical Education under the guidance of a qualified secretary. This demonstration began in 1894 when a fraternal secretary from Australia, A.P. Stockwell, joined the staff. Before leaving to Calcutta, Stockwell had been the Physical Director as well as the General Secretary of the Melbourne YMCA. (Dunderdale J.H., 1962) Meanwhile, the Madras YMCA was trying to launch a Physical Education programme. They secured the service of a fraternal secretary, Dr. J.H. Beals, from the International Committee. He joined the Madras YMCA in 1896 but had to leave before the turn of the century because of

his slow recovery form a major operation. (David M.D., 1992)

Dr. J.H. Gray was the first National YMCA Physical Director in India and he organized an introduced schemes of recreation through all the YMCA's of this country. The foundation of scientific Physical Education in this country was laid down in 1908 by Dr. J.H. Gray and later on Dr. Nobren who succeeded Dr. Gray also helped in the advancement of the cause to some extent but the success achieved by these two National Physical Directors of the YMCA in India seems to have been restricted to some limited progress.

H.C. Buck came to India in the year 1919, on being appointed as Physical Director of the central YMCA at Madras, by the parent organization of the YMCA, USA, just after the First World War when this country was facing numerous problems in social disorder, collapse of economy, scarcity of essential commodities and unrest, which resulted in deterioration of the general health of the society. In such uninspiring and positively discouraging, circumstances Buck started his pioneering work with the ambitions of helping Indians to help themselves to overcome their handicaps in health and wellbeing.

In August, 1920, therefore a School of Physical Education was started at Madras with a view to train teachers also might attain a higher objective of Physical Education to uplift the cause of Physical Education in India. (Arokia Kavitha Sundari T, 2000) In its way to contribute sports and games achievements, the college has developed adequate playground facilities for the teacher training of physical education, which served as backbone for the achievements of the college in Sports. Right from 1920, the World Alliance of YMCAs through its Physical Education college at Chennai offering Physical Education courses, such as, Diploma in Physical Education, Certificate Courses in Physical Education, Degree Courses in Physical Education, Post Graduate Degree

courses in Physical Education, Pre-Doctoral Courses in Physical Education and Doctorate Degree courses in Physical Education. At present the college is offering courses as detained in Table I.

Table 1. Showing Various Courses being Conducted by YMCA College of Physical Education

S.No	COURSE	Strength		
		I	II	III
	Under Graduate			
	B.P.E.S.	59	60	58
	B.P.Ed	150		
	B.M.S.	20		
	Post Graduate			
	M.P. Ed	30	30	
	M.Sc. (Fitness)	10		
	M.Phil	12		
	Ph.D.	25		
	Diploma Course			
	Higher Grade	40	40	
	P.G.Dip in Sports Coaching Tennis	8		
	Diploma in O and M	14		

Contribution to Sports and Games Enlisting Public

The YMCA College of Physical Education not only conducting teacher training courses in Physical Education, but also stands as a living monument to the public by introducing various schemes for the promotion of fitness / imparting fitness awareness among the public. The college serves as a model in conducting Intramurals and Extramural for the development of the sports and games. The college conducts intramurals among the college students every Wednesday throughout the academic year in all the major games and sports. Coaching classes were conducted through qualified coaches especially in the games of cricket, Tennis, swimming. All the blossomed activities in sports and games make the students to get adequate training in their interested games and sports participation in such extramural competitions.

Table 2. Sports Meets and Other Games Conducted by College Students for Educational Institution

S. No	Purposes	No. of Institutions / Times	Number of participants
1	For Conducting Sports Meets	7	3500
2	For Recreational Purposes	1	500
3	For playing Cricket	21	2200
4	For Playing Hockey	2	780
5	For Playing Football	4	1800
6	For Playing Basketball	1	450
7	For conducting Shuttle	1	50
8	For Swimming (Swimming Pool)	5	1250
9	For conducting Camping	1	300
10	Any other purpose (Cultural Activity)	1	500

Table 3. Details of Individual Members Enrolled Under Adult Fitness Programmer in A Year

S. No	Name of Scheme	No. Benefited
1	Gym / General Jogging	128
2	Indoor Shuttle Cock	125
3	Weekend Cricket Net Practice	66
4	Swimming – above 12	70 (daily)
5	Swimming – below 12	40 (daily)
6	Tennis	52

Table 4. Details of Annual Coaching Camps Conducted for School / College Students in a Year

S. No	Purpose	No. Benefited
1	Cricket - below 12	40
2	Cricket - above 12	30
3	Swimming - below 12	200
4	Swimming - above 12	185
5	Swimming – Girls	40

The college is serving as a center for Industries, Schools, Colleges, Clubs in and around Chennai city for all their fitness needs, recreational needs and for conducting programmes in Sports and Games. Table 2 shows the average number of such participants in the College.

As can be seen from the Table II World Alliance through its College creating awareness among the general public by extending their helping hand to them in conducting their sports meets are excellent with participation of around 11,330 persons

per year. Further, in serving the individuals to get themselves physically fit, the college has introduced several schemes, namely, Adult Fitness Programmed, Learn to Swim Courses, Cricket Coaching Camp, Foundation for Fitness Academy etcetera. Table 3 shows the number of general public's being covered under Adult Fitness programmer in a year.

The World Alliance encouraging in conducting coaching camps for young men and women and the college is regularly conducting such coaching camps for

Cricket, Swimming etc. as shown in Table 4.

This study proved that World Alliance of YMCAs has contributed for Sports and Games throughout the length and breadth of the world and now serving in more than 130 countries in the world. Even though it was started to serve among young people of the world, by its nature of involvement on different programmes for youth, started contributing to sports and games through invention of new sports, supporting sports organizations such as Olympic Movements, World Games, Asian Games etc, establishing pioneer institutions such as Springfield College, University, YMCA Colleges in Physical Education, Camping Centres, Coaching programmes, Fitness Programmes and so on. The contribution of World Alliance of YMCAs with particular reference to India is pioneering one in whole of Asia. It started a College of Physical Education, through which physical education professionals were trained right from 1920 and spread the mission throughout the length and breadth of Asia, particularly in Malasia, Burma, Ceylon, Pakistan, West Bengal. The physical education professionals trained in these institutions have started physical education colleges, coaching center's, fitness center's and so on for the benefit of young and old who still being benefitted through the contribution of World Alliance of YMCAs towards sports and games.

Conclusions

It was concluded that the contribution of World Alliance of YMCAs with particular reference to India is pioneering one in whole of Asia. The alliance through its pioneering institutions conducted different courses in Physical Education, Sports, Games and Recreation. Young as well as old are being benefitted through the new sports invented, new courses started, models of physical education and sports facilities created,

coaching camps, adult fitness programmes, project physical education for disabled and so on. Thus, the contribution of World Alliance of YMCAs with particular reference to India is noteworthy and well-founded for generations benefitted and generations to come.

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