

Lessons from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar: Sport Development Initiatives and the potential for India's Sociologies of Sport

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Aim

Despite the potential of sport development to highlight broader social complexities, sociologists in India remain disinterested in the area (and sport generally) as avenues of legitimate study. Yet, sport development programs provide sociologists opportunities to know and engage with body politics, questions of structure & agency, and social transformation. Accordingly, in this paper I draw on Bourdieu (1992; 1993) & Giddens (1990; 2009) to understand the construction and consequences thereof, sport development projects and the broader processes to which they are a part. I discuss my research with youth in two Indian states, and, consider how sport development agendas are often confounded by tensions, negotiations, and resistances contours of the local context.

Data & Methods

The factors influencing sports participation have emerged as a point of interest among many academics (Wheeler, Sharon; 2011). In order to detect determinants of sports participation, a constructive and exploratory research methodology has been adopted. The data drawn upon in this study has a sample size of 500 interviews, spread over two States of India.

Results

The inclination of parents given their socio-economic background towards putting their children in sports shows a declining trend. Involvement and attainment in a 'field' are based on a combination of one's habitus and cultural capital. With rise of income level, inclination towards sports does increase. In many ways sport represents a social 'field' (Bourdieu, 1990), a structured space of positions that impose specific determinations on those who enter it and this has been tested positive.

Conclusion

Rather than simply enhancing individual freedom and opportunity, sport-based programs serve as social control and regulation. Basic education is important for gaining foothold in sports in order to think of social neoliberalism. Social environment, geographical conditions, educational arrangements and the regional economy determine to a large extent if personal development and ambition are able to flourish.