

The role of attitude in promoting sports participation

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Received : 10.09.2012; Revised : 25.09.2012; Accepted : 05.10.2012

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■ ABSTRACT

The purpose of the present investigation was to examine the role of attitude in promoting sports participation. Data were collected from the teachers, parents, coaches and students by administering questionnaires (N=70) (Parents=20, Coaches=10, students=20 and teachers=20). Results showed that parents, teachers, and coaches had a positive attitude towards sports and encouraged their children for sport participation. It was also found out from this study that students were interested and also self motivated to participate in sports and games.

■ **Key Words** : Attitude, Sports participation, Sports psychology

■ **How to cite this paper** : Bhandari, Deepak Singh and Kang, H.S. (2012). The role of attitude in promoting sports participation. *Internat. J. Phy. Edu.*, 5 (2) : 159-162.

Like other branches of psychology, sports psychology continues to expand today with many sports psychologists building the knowledge base of discipline by following scientific approach. Sport psychology is a branch of sports and exercise sciences defined as the scientific study of athlete's behaviour in sports. Sport psychology is a relatively young discipline. It embraces such fundamental concerns and concepts as motivation, attention, attitude, and management of stress. During the early 20th century a few sighted individuals recognized the importance of psychological factors, in sports and initiated sports psychological research.

Sport and exercise psychologists continue to explore the factors which motivate persons to exercise at levels which resulted in increased physical and psychological health. Intrinsic motivation, levels of enjoyment and family perceptions of exercise had all been linked to increase commitment to routine exercise activity (Brustad, 1996; Kimicick and Harris, 1996). In addition, the use of goal setting and other cognitive techniques also appeared to facilitate greater compliance to the exercise programme (Dzewallowski, 1994).

Although these factors were strong contributors toward exercise adherence, a positive attitude toward exercise was

the primary determinant of a physically active life-style. Aliport (1947) introduced the classic definition of attitude as a "mental and neural state of readiness, organized through experiences, exerting a direct or dynamic influence upon the individual's response to all objects and situations with which it is related". Thus, if a person had a positive attitude toward physical fitness his behaviour reflects this attitude (Gill, 1986). If a person had a negative attitude towards exercise but still was required to participate in a routine physical activity programme his preconceived notions toward exercise changed.

Attitude was defined as a person's behaviour, which indicated his/her thoughts, feelings, or opinions. In youth sports, we can know kids' attitudes by watching their behaviors during practice or players games. If they take the game as a game, they have an opportunity to learn skills, compete, increase confidence and fun, they go with the flow, fun, and relax. Overall, they show a sense of humour and a sense of good sportsmanship. They are able to learn from their mistakes. However, if they take the game as a pressure-filled event, with winning as the only acceptable outcome, most of their energies was spent trying not to make mistakes. If they make mistakes (which is inevitable in youth sports), they use lots of energy making excuses, blaming others, complaining about officials, etc.