

# *An Analytical Survey of Sports for All Objectives, Strategies and Background in Iran (From 1979 To 2000)*

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## **Abstract**

As life grows more mechanized around the world, most individuals tend to lose interest and even the opportunity for an active life style. Subsequently, this leads to many psychological and physical ailments such as: overweight, muscular and joint pains, mental stresses and depression. To surmount the problem, governments and sport administrators in many countries, including Iran, have devised special procedures and methods in order to encourage participation in physical activities. This article aims to introduce and analyze the following items: A throughout survey of the formation of organized sport for all in Iran, especially after the Islamic Revolution. Definition of the organizations and departments concerned with promoting and developing sport for all among all the layers of society, a survey of objectives and performance of sport for all federation for men and the sport for all Association for women in Iran, Investigation of the performance of the concerned departments in promoting and developing sport for all in Iran, an analysis of current condition of sport for all in Iran. This article intends to present suggestions for the promotion and the improvement of sport for all in Iran, based on the identification of strong and weak points in its performance.

**Keywords:** sport for all, strategies, Iran

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## **1. The formation and development of fundamental units of sport for all in Iran.**

Before the Islamic revolution, no sport for all federation existed and no governmental and official units were responsible for these activities. People would gather to play and to hold sport activities with their friends and family for recreation - without any formal planning. After the Islamic revolution, the structure of many of the country's organization including physical education organization underwent huge changes; together with war with the Iraq, these were factors hindering the establishment of a unit in charge of sport for all in Iran.

During this time people carried on with their favorite sports on their own. This continued until 1984 when an office named the "Office of Sportive Jihad" was formed under the aegis of the Instructional and Cultural Department. This office intended to organize the sport for all activities in Iran. Its plans were carried out through the related associations and sport units in cities and villages.

In 1993 the principles of the responsibilities and performances of this office were written and signed by the head of P.E.O<sup>\*</sup>, which enabled it to cover 26 provinces under its activities (Dabbagh 1990)<sup>†</sup>.

However, as the office's responsibilities developed, and especially when the sport activities of ladies and gentlemen were separated in 1998, it was decided that the national sport for all federation for gentlemen and sport for all association for ladies should be founded in 2 sections. While having more or less the same objectives they

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\* . Physical Education organization

† . Reference No.1

provide the people with different services, performing whole scale plans around the country. (I.P.E.O)<sup>‡</sup>

## **2. Objectives and duties of I.P.E.O<sup>§</sup> concerning the development of sport for all.**

### **2.1. Definition of federation and association of sport for all in Iran:**

These are actually popular units which have legal personality and are independent. They aim to realize the goals set by P.E.O under the supervision of both instructional, cultural and also ladies sport departments.

### **2.2. The goals of sport for all federation and association in Iran:**

Improvement, advancement and popularization of physical education and sports in order to reach physical and mental health; creating enjoyment and helping a beneficial use of leisure time in society based on the importance of sport in Islamic culture of Iran.

### **2.3. The duties of sport for all federation and association in Iran:**

These duties consist of planning, coordinating, supervising, evaluating, communicating and human resource training as well as conducting sport plans and activities such as the following:

- a. To attempt to adjust and coordinate sport activities with the Islamic culture.
- b. To provide and arrange the annual calendar and the short-term, long-term plans: to predict the essential credits; and try to carry them out after acceptance by the authorities of the P.E.O.
- c. To conduct researches and studies in order to find scientific and practical method for realizing the aims of the sport for all federation and association.
- d. To provide the essential information and instruction so as to familiarize the society with the effects of sports and P.E, also to encourage and inspire people to participate in sport activities.
- e. To communicate with all the related organizations arranged by the sport for all federation and association.
- f. To attract and employ the resources and to obtain popular support in order to conduct constructing, instructing and advertising plans which are meant to improve, enhance and popularize sports.
- g. To publish instructional, scientific and sportive books, pamphlets, periodicals, catalogues and posters to elevate public awareness and to encourage people to take up sports.
- h. To supervise the technical and instructional affairs of sport associations in provinces and towns; also to maintain contact with them in order to work out the goals and perform the set tasks.
- i. To hold scientific and researching congresses which should help choose the appropriate methods of managing the concerned duties and responsibilities.
- j. To form instructional, refereeing and coaching classes in order to employ and elevate the needed resources, technical knowledge.
- k. To classify referees and coaches through recognizing technical and moral efficiency.
- l. To hold events, festivals, camps and sport carnivals in different age levels.
- m. To make sport stations, sport and cultural bases popular centers and sport associations in order to popularize sport activities.
- n. To provide and arrange guidelines, rules and regulations necessary to carry out plans and perform duties (I.P.E.O. 2)<sup>\*\*</sup>.

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<sup>‡</sup> . Reference No.2

<sup>§</sup> . Iran's physical education organization

<sup>\*\*</sup> . Reference No.3

### 3. The performance of the executive sport for all units in Iran.

**3.1. The Jihad office which was active from 1994 to 1999** under the supervision of the social culture office of the P.E.O, succeeded in conducting the following tasks through motivating sport associations:

- a. Reviving, developing and enhancing the traditional, local and native sports.
- b. Organizing self-active groups, attracting and engaging people in morning sport programs.
- c. Building morning-sport stations in parks and public squares.
- d. Making simple sport facilities such as specifying sport spaces in parks and designing sport courts; also installing sport instruments in these spaces.
- e. Making and installing fixed tables for table-tennis in parks, residential blocks, schools and sport centers.
- f. Educating sport for all coaches and forming instructional classes of different degrees and age levels.
- g. Building and installing instruments for children's play and recreation in public parks.
- h. Making and providing economical sport instruments.
- i. Holding events for rural people and the nomadic Ashayers in their favorite games.
- j. Forming running, mountain climbing, jogging and cycling carnivals.
- k. Holding sportive and cultural festivals; also performing native and local sports as well as acrobatic shows and martial arts.
- l. Conducting sport programs for adults.
- m. Performing sport programs for children and other age groups.
- n. Forming sportive, cultural and recreational camps.
- o. Holding cultural and sportive events.
- p. Organizing scientific and instructional seminars about sport for all.
- q. Establishing sport for all bases in governmental organizations and departments as well as in industrial, working and educational centers.

### 3.2. The gentlemen's sport for all federation performance.

After the sport for all federation for men gained approval and started working, it arranged its executive trends in achieving the goals in three main directions: instruction, advertising and sport events. Each of them according to the geographical situation and local interest has its own branches whose lines of action are as follows:

- a. Mission if association of local, native rural sport throughout Iran.
- b. Mission of natural sports which supervises over the following activities: public climbing, cycling, running, jugging, recreational walking and fishing.
- c. Mission of morning sports and physical fitness: This mission is lead by appointed coaches in sport clubs, public places and parks in every morning and afternoon.
- d. Mission of sport for adults: This mission is responsible to present sport services to men above 41 years old, categorized in the same age range ( $\pm 5$  years) who participate in various recreational activities.
- e. Mission of sport for governmental personnel: This mission is responsible to present sport services to governmental personnel through the cooperation with physical education units of governmental organizations.
- f. Mission composed of yoga, skate, Icido (a kind of martial art) and special sports for certain patients (particularly those who have undergone kidney-trans plant).
- g. Setting up sport bases in schools especially during the summer vacation to fill up the pupil's leisure time.
- h. Setting up sport bases in mosques to fill up adult's leisure time.

Furthermore, sport for all federation cooperates with some federations inside the P.E. organization including climbing, martial arts and swimming federations. As well as some organizations outside the P.E. organization such as Environmental Protection Agency, Fishery (shylat), Municipalities, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Science and Higher Education (I.P.E.O.3)<sup>††</sup>.

### **3.3. Ladies sport for all association's performance:**

The goal of this association is sport and physical education development among women from all walks of life. It aims to improve mental and physical health and to create freshness and enjoyment in their leisure time. This is done through ten committees, as follows:

- a. The committee of sport, hygiene and health: This committee undertakes to explain the positive effects of sport and the safety measurements.
- b. Body building committee works toward the goal of educating specialist resources, coaches, referees for all of the committees that are covered by sport for all association.
- c. The hydrotherapy committee helps people who suffer different physical pains, by special movements in water.
- d. Local and native sport committee succeeded in revival of traditional sports and tries to encourage women of different age groups in towns and rural areas by emphasizing on anthropological studies.
- e. Committee of sport for governmental personnel assists in the holding of sport events according to women personnel's interest and needs; educates coaches from the women personnel; allocates specific spaces for women sport activities during the working hours.
- f. Committee of sport for the elderly presents appropriate sport for their age and gives exercising recommendations in order to generate a feeling of freshness and efficiency.
- g. Committee of sport in mosques covers a lot of women, girls and adult women with physical activities by using spaces in the mosques.
- h. The natural sport committee is active in planning for morning sports, juggling, climbing and public running in according to various situations all through the year.
- i. The committee of sport for families provides useful information through pictorial catalogues which aim to motivate women to take up sports as well as offering the proper indoor exercises and mother-child games, and teaching fundamental skills in controlling children's conditions also instructing the especial exercises before and after delivery.
- j. Other committees are active in different branches such as yoga, skate and artistic gymnastics. (I.P.E.O.4)<sup>††</sup>

### **3.4. Sport in schools and universities**

In schools and universities too, sport clubs are working to arrange extracurricular sport activities for pupils and students. Of course these programs are out of P.E.O. supervision but in some cases holding sport events either leisurely or for practice need some coordination with P.E.O.

## **4. Analysis of the current situation of sport for all in Iran.**

Regarding the presented information about goals, duties and performance of units who are responsible for developing sport for all in Iran, as well as researcher's information about Iran's social, cultural, and economical situation, now we are going to review the strong and weak points of sport for all in Iran's present situation.

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<sup>††</sup> . Reference No.4

<sup>††</sup> . Reference No.5

**4.1. The strong points:**

- a. Along with the growing mechanization of life. And the nation's increasing awareness of effects of an inactive routine, the number of participants in morning sport activities in parks and sport centers is creasing. The number of men and women exercising, running, and juggling during the present decade is incomparable to the ones in the previous decades. This is of course due to the increase of public awareness of useful effects of sports as well as the cooperation of different organizations including municipalities, P.E.O, and others.
- b. National and local games have always been greatly favored and each region has had its own games and sports that are the embodiment of local and tribal culture originated from that region's natural environment. All of these we consider as part of our cultural inheritance (I.P.E.O)<sup>§§</sup>.
- c. Sport development among women has been able, with quite limited facilities, to attract a great number of women to the sport centers in Tehran and other cities.

**4.2. The present drawbacks**

Despite the efforts of the two official sections of sport for all federation and association, there is still no precise statistics on the number of participants in sport activities; however, this number is quite small compared with the 60 million population of Iran. This could be because of several factors which, in order of importance, are as follows:

- a. Lack of public awareness and faith in essentiality and positive effects of sports in daily life; and subsequent inexperienced in this field.
- b. Occupational difficulties due to financial problems, together with having insufficient leisure time to devote to sports.
- c. Insufficiency in conducting systematic and organized researches and studies to recognize people's needs as regards and their satisfaction of the present programs of sport for all.
- d. Lack of correct statistical data on the number of participants in sport for all in both state owned and private sections, and subsequent drawbacks in proper programming based on statistical data.
- e. Failure in giving organized and full-scale information to the public which is on the side of the authorities responsible in popularizing sport for all.
- f. Cultural and social limitations imposed mostly on women's taking part in sport activities than men's.
- g. Population overgrowth and increasing immigration to large industrial cities which have hindered proper control and organization of sport programs.
- h. Inefficiency of governmental sections in providing sport services for the public, which is result of insufficient sport spaces, and human resources which in turn are due to budget deficit.
- i. Incongruity of sport facilities in state owned and private sport centers and the resultant difference in their admission fees.
- j. Strong inclination of the sport centers responsible to provide the public with sport facilities, towards privatization and thus gaining higher fees.
- k. Insufficiency of sport clubs and centers, together with the shortcomings in the authorities, programs and methods meant to fill the youth's leisure time with sport activities have lead to social delinquency in some youngsters.
- l. Inability of sport bases in schools, universities, factories and governmental administrations to create enough attraction to increase the number of participants.
- m. Failure of coaches in regular presence in parks and sport gatherings.

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<sup>§§</sup> . Reference No.6

- n. Air pollution in large cities dulls citizen's motivation for exercising in such a polluted environment.

#### **5. Suggestions for the improvement of the present situation of sport for all in Iran.**

Based on the above mentioned advances and drawbacks and researcher's own information about the present social, cultural and economical situation in Iran, here are presented some suggestions applicable to the current condition in Iran:

- a. Full-scale public informing through the mass media including the television, attractive and colorful catalogues and magazines which help to emphasize the necessity of doing sport in daily life and its positive effects on physical well-being also its role in preventing social delinquency; and finally, to create happiness and enjoyment in such a way that all people, from children to the elderly, would be addressed and impressed.
- b. Allocating a higher budget, according to the priorities, for construction of space centers and for providing public sport services by the government.
- c. Assigning a group of experts to obtain statistical data and information about the number of participants in sport for all activities, and to analyze the results.
- d. Systematic and objective programming, by the authorities, based on public need; and the precise recognition of the present situation and predicting future trends.
- e. Initiating recreational and friendly events (not professional or championship) in schools, universities, and parks attended by people from different age group, so that the basic inspiration and motivation is built up.
- f. Investment of the private sections and recognized organizations in order to help the process of development of sport for all, which would be done through purchasing sport spaces and giving public sport services; all with help from the government by lifting taxes and granting subsidies.
- g. Inviting the professional and pioneer athletes to attend and participate in sport for all activities, in order to motivate people.
- h. Increasing cooperation and coordination between P.E.O and Municipalities to achieve popularization of sport.
- i. Removing the air pollution in large cities with help of both governmental authorities and to provide opportunity to exercise in clean fresh air.
- j. Designing interesting and pictorial books and materials on physical education for schools, as well as introducing various national and local games.
- k. Making accessible the sport centers especially for ladies and lowering their fees.

#### **6. Summary and Conclusion**

The administrative activities would not reach a complete and satisfactory conclusion regarding the advancing and improving of sport for all, unless we could instill faith in sports and their positive effects into the people's minds, but implanting these ideas in people is easier said than done in their social and economical problems. And this great job develops quite slowly and even very hard in such countries.

In a country like Iran we can not expect to popularize the sports because the great majority of parents believe that sports are a kind of hindrance in the way of their children educational progress.

So first of all, we are to change this negative view of sport activities by convincing them of the fact that sports play a great and profitable role in the filling the leisure time of the children, youth grown ups, and even the older generation.

This should be accomplished by providing pictorial interesting books on sport activities and various games, appropriate for each age group of students.

As well as improving adults' awareness of positive and beneficial effects of sport in their daily and social lives in order to reach the subsequent increase in the society's proficiency.

It is necessary that the government and the sport directors devote more attention to providing a greater budget to developing of sport for all among the people different of social levels.

This may be achieved through different ways such as allocating easily accessible and economical sport centers in different parts of the cities; as well as assigning expert human resources to educate the public. However the insufficiency of the budget, which is always a problem for the third-world countries, accounts for so many obstacles. Yet with the help of the concerned international sport authorities including the international fund to assist these countries, then can be possible and practical solutions and methods to promote sport for all status in such countries.

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