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The Evolution and Progression of the Kabaddi Sport: A Historical Overview

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ABSTRACT

This study provides a comprehensive historical overview of the evolution and progression of the sport of Kabaddi. Kabaddi, a traditional team sport with deep roots in South Asia, has undergone significant transformations throughout its history, evolving from a rustic pastime to a globally recognized and competitive discipline. By tracing its origins, historical milestones, and the key factors that have shaped its development, this research elucidates the intricate journey of Kabaddi's growth and transformation. The study offers valuable insights into the social, cultural, and competitive dimensions that have contributed to its contemporary status.

1. Introduction

In the realm of Kabaddi, a game that rapidly transitioned from rural to urban areas and became an integral part of physical education curricula in colleges, it also secured a place in competitive settings at various levels, including inter-school, inter-collegiate, inter-university, inter-district, and interstate competitions. To regulate and oversee this burgeoning sport, the Kabaddi Federation of India was established, given the game's popularity in India and neighboring countries. This move paved the way for the formation of the Asian Kabaddi Federation, giving rise to a multitude of state and national-level Kabaddi tournaments held annually, in addition to continental and sub-continental competitions.

The game's recognition at the national level occurred in 1918, with its roots tracing back to Maharashtra, which played a pivotal role in elevating Kabaddi to a national platform. Standard rules and regulations for the game were officially framed in 1918, and these rules were published in printed form in 1923. Subsequently, the All India tournament was organized in Baroda, setting in motion a series of tournaments across the nation. Kabaddi gained international recognition when it was featured as a demonstration sport during the 1936 Berlin Olympics, courtesy of the Hanuman Vyayam Prasarak Mandal of Amaravathi, Maharashtra. The game was officially incorporated into the Indian Olympic Games in 1938. The All India Kabaddi Federation was established in 1950, ushering in a culture of conducting national-level championships with specified rules and regulations.

In 1952, the practice of hosting national championships with set guidelines commenced, with Madras hosting the first national championship for men, followed by Calcutta hosting the inaugural national championship for women in 1955. New rules for the game were introduced during the 1954 national championship in New Delhi. Attempts were made to introduce Kabaddi to the world youth festival held in Moscow in 1957, but various challenges hindered the realization of this goal.

Kabaddi's prominence further escalated as it became an integral part of the curriculum of the Indian Universities Sports Control Board in 1961 and was included as a discipline in the School Games by the School Games Federation of India. In 1972, the Amateur Kabaddi Federation of India was formed, with the primary objective of organizing national-level competitions and promoting the sport in neighboring countries. This move also led to the inclusion of Sub-junior and Junior sections in national championships. The National Institute of Sports, the premier institution for sports development in the country, introduced Kabaddi into its coaching curriculum in 1971. Notably, Kabaddi became an official competition in the Asian Games at Beijing in 1990, with India emerging as a dominant force in Asian Games Kabaddi events. The sport has gradually gained popularity in various countries, including Japan, Thailand, Malaysia, China, the Maldives, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Nepal, Korea, England, and France.

Kabaddi is celebrated as the "Game of the Masses" due to its widespread popularity, thrilling moments, easy-to-understand rules, and universal appeal. It requires minimal equipment, making it accessible in developing countries and adaptable to both outdoor and indoor settings. The game is played on clay courts or synthetic surfaces, often referred to as mats. The duration of a Kabaddi match varies based on the category, with junior boys and men playing 45-minute matches, including a 5-minute break, while women, girls, and sub-junior boys and girls engage in 35-minute matches with a 7-minute break between two 15-minute halves.

Kabaddi is a combative sport played between two teams, each fielding seven players on a rectangular court. The court measures 12.50 meters x 10 meters for men, and 11 meters x 8 meters for women and junior sections. The midline,

or center line, divides the court into two halves, and the lobby line, drawn about one meter from the side line along the length of the court, designates the lobby area. Within each half of the court, Baulk lines, located approximately 3 meters from the midline and parallel to it, indicate the Baulk area.

The game's objective is to score points through offensive raids into the opponents' court, tagging as many defensive players as possible, and safely returning to one's home court without being caught by the opposition. During a raid, offensive players are known as "Raiders," while defensive players are collectively referred to as "Antis." Only those defensive players tagged by the raider are declared "out" unless they successfully catch the raider before returning to his/her home court. The game is characterized by the raider's continuous chanting of "Kabaddi" during the raid. Defense in Kabaddi encompasses both individual and collective efforts to prevent the raider's successful attack. Notably, Kabaddi requires players to exhibit strength, power, speed, agility, flexibility, balance, coordination, psychological stability, and excellent physiological parameters to perform effectively in various scenarios.

Kabaddi players need to possess a blend of physical attributes, psychological fortitude, and skill mastery to excel in this dynamic and thrilling sport. Performance in Kabaddi is influenced by a range of factors, including genetic traits, skill development, physical fitness, and psychological preparedness. The sport demands players to be agile, exhibit vital capacity, muscular strength, coordination, quick responses, presence of mind, courage, and the ability to anticipate and adapt to opponents' moves. Allegorically, "performance" equates to the execution of actions. In the realm of sports, performance is the amalgamation of executing sporting activities to the highest attainable standards. It hinges on four primary factors: genetic characteristics, the mastery of specific skills, physical fitness levels, and psychological fitness.

Sports performance represents the culmination of a sports act or a complex structure of sports actions evaluated against established and socially accepted standards. Anthropometric parameters are largely influenced by genetic factors, which, in turn, impact an individual's sports performance. Studies indicate significant correlations between body weight, arm length, thigh and calf girths, and performance in Kabaddi. Additionally, moderate positive correlations exist between thigh circumference and fitness components like speed, strength, and endurance, while an inverse relationship is observed between abdominal circumference and these fitness components. Fitness constituents play a pivotal role in enhancing performance. It is widely acknowledged that adequate levels of physical fitness are crucial for scholastic achievement, as they support overall health and well-being. Healthier children tend to excel in academics, and the positive relationship between physical fitness and health status is well-established. Furthermore, physical activity is recognized as a fundamental factor in a child's capacity to learn effectively. Health and academic achievement share a symbiotic relationship, with one significantly influencing the other. Engaging in physical activity not only contributes to a healthier body but also fosters a healthier mind. Physical fitness is directly linked to improved cardiac health and general well-being, and it is pivotal to scholastic success. In essence, a child who excels academically is typically in good physical health. Therefore, nurturing a balance between physical fitness and academic achievement is essential for the holistic development of children.

2. Definition of the terms

Physical Fitness: Clarke (1971) posits that physical fitness can be characterized as the ability to engage in daily activities with vitality and mental acuity, devoid of excessive weariness, and possessing sufficient energy to relish recreational pursuits and address unforeseen exigencies. Mathews (1973) offers a definition of physical fitness as the aptitude of an individual to accomplish specific physical tasks that necessitate muscular exertion. In the context of this present study, physical fitness is construed as a quality encompassing diverse components associated with more effective engagement in sports (referred to as sports performance-related physical fitness). Additionally, it includes elements that provide a degree of protection against the initiation and progression of chronic-degenerative ailments that result from debility in the energetic and musculoskeletal systems (commonly known as health-related physical fitness) (Caspersen, 1985).

Health-Related Physical Fitness Health-related physical fitness pertains to the aspect of physical fitness primarily focused on averting or recuperating from illness, while concurrently cultivating a robust level of functional capability for both essential and optional life activities (Plowan & Smith, 2008). Bucher and Wuest (1987) elucidate that health-related physical fitness is centered on enhancing attributes that frequently serve as safeguards against maladies and are often linked with physical activity.

Muscular strength: Muscular strength refers to the muscle's capacity to generate force during an activity. It is a measure of the muscle's ability to exert force (Wilmore & Costill, 1994). Muscular endurance, on the other hand, is the muscle's capability to sustain performance without experiencing fatigue. It assesses the muscle's ability to continue functioning over an extended duration (Wilmore & Costill, 1994).

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Cardiorespiratory fitness pertains to the capacity of the circulatory and respiratory systems to provide a sufficient oxygen supply during sustained physical activity.

Flexibility: Flexibility, as described by Wilmore and Costill (1994), is the range of motion around a joint. In other words, it pertains to the extent of movement that can be achieved at a particular joint in the human body.

Body composition: Body composition, in accordance with the definition provided by Corbin and Lindsey (1994), pertains to the relative proportions of muscle, fat, bone, and other essential components within the human body. It involves an assessment of the distribution of these elements, which collectively constitute an individual's physical makeup.

Skill-related Physical fitness: According to Plowan and Smith (2008), skill-related physical fitness is the segment of physical fitness that specifically targets the enhancement of athletic performance. This aspect of physical fitness is oriented towards improving the skills, abilities, and attributes required for excelling in various sports and athletic endeavors.

As per the definition provided by Barrow and McGee (1979), agility is described as the capacity of the body or its individual components to swiftly and accurately change directions during physical movements. This definition underscores the agility's crucial role in facilitating rapid and precise movements in various activities and sports.

Balance: Balance is the capability to sustain stability and equilibrium whether in motion or at rest.

Coordination: Coordination is the aptitude to seamlessly and precisely synchronize sensory input with various body parts to execute activities smoothly and accurately.

Power: Power in the context of physical fitness signifies the fusion of strength with explosive speed, characterized by the release of maximal muscular force in the shortest time possible. This measurement is often associated with anaerobic activities, as acknowledged by physiologists (Mathews, 1973).

Speed: Speed pertains to an individual's ability to execute a series of repetitive movements with swift proficiency, focusing on a rapid pace, according to Barrow and McGee (1979). It involves the capability to transition from one location to another in the briefest possible time. Reaction time, on the other hand, signifies the duration required to respond and react to a given stimulus.

Cognitive processes encompass the mental activities involved in the acquisition and comprehension of knowledge, the establishment of beliefs and attitudes, decision-making, and problem-solving, according to the definition provided by Clarke (1971). Cognition, or cognitive ability, encompasses the full spectrum of mental capabilities and processes associated with knowledge, attention, memory, working memory, judgment, evaluation, reasoning, computational abilities, problem-solving, decision-making, language comprehension, and language production, among other facets. Human cognition operates at both conscious and unconscious levels, spanning from concrete and intuitive knowledge, such as language proficiency, to abstract and conceptual thinking, such as constructing a language model. These cognitive processes draw upon pre-existing knowledge while simultaneously generating new insights. The key cognitive variables usually involve intelligence, aptitude, memory, and the capacity to employ general learning mechanisms.

A variable, as described by Bobbie (2009), represents any factor, characteristic, or circumstance that can exist in varying degrees or forms. In experimental research, there are typically three primary types of variables: independent, dependent, and controlled. The concept of "relationship" pertains to the interconnection or interdependence between different variables, defining the manner in which two or more entities or elements are linked. Cognitive function refers to the cerebral activities that contribute to the acquisition of knowledge and encompasses all the methods and mechanisms used to gather information.

Cognitive functions encompass various mental processes such as reasoning, memory, attention, and language. These functions play a crucial role in acquiring knowledge, perceiving information, and comprehending ideas. Cognitive functions encompass all aspects of perception, thinking, reasoning, and remembering.

Nonverbal intelligence is the capacity to analyze information and solve problems using visual or hands-on reasoning. This type of intelligence is vital because it enables individuals to tackle complex problems without relying solely on language abilities. It is particularly valuable in fields like mathematics, physics, computer science, and various scientific domains that demand strong reasoning skills. In this study, nonverbal intelligence is assessed using Raven's Progressive Matrices, which consists of problems based on geometric figures.

Immediate memory refers to an individual's ability to recall a small amount of information over a brief duration, typically a few seconds. This involves repeating information immediately after perceiving it. In the present study, participants are asked to recite a sequence of digits, either in the same order as presented or in reverse order, to assess immediate memory.

Attention span (imitation) involves the act of copying or imitating a specific pattern of tapping. This approach is derived from work conducted at Ellis Island and serves as a means to estimate an individual's mental acuity. It measures both attention span and overall intelligence.

Depth perception is the visual ability to perceive the world in three dimensions (3D) and gauge the distance of objects. In this study, depth perception is assessed using Dolman's Depth Perception Box.

Adolescence signifies the phase in human development that unfolds between the onset of puberty and full adulthood. It is a transition period from childhood to adulthood during which individuals acquire the skills necessary for success as mature adults. Adolescence is marked by substantial changes, driven by the interaction of biological and psychological factors, leading to accelerated development and the opening of new horizons.

Academic achievement, as defined by Tang and Thomas (1977), refers to performance in standardized educational tests, particularly in the subjects that form the curriculum. In this study, academic achievement is the average of the percentage of marks attained by students in their mid-term and annual examinations.

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