

Ever-changing sports sector needs qualified professionals

While Sports Management education around the globe has expanded to reflect growth within the sports industry, these education platforms are not available around India, explains academic **Mike Rayner**

Priyanka Srivastava
@timesgroup.com



Sports industry needs to be guided by experts with a wide range of managerial skills

COVID-19 has had a significant impact on public health, society and the global economy. Numerous sporting events around the world have been postponed or cancelled in a bid to prevent the spread of Coronavirus. Mike Rayner, associate head (Education), School of Sport, Health & Exercise Science, University of Portsmouth, explains how all this changed the demand for sports education:

VID-19 era, sports management professionals will fast become the most sought-after commodity in the ever-expanding global sports industry. These professionals will be at the forefront of an unprecedented industry growth that is predicted to see a 6% increase in global value to £530 billion by the year 2022 and beyond. The professionals will be responsible for providing effective leadership, crisis management and business continuity.

What is the key requirement for Indian students to understand about Sports Management?

Sports is no longer considered a side-show of global business activity and is now an independent global industry. Consequently, this industry needs to be guided by experts with a wide range of managerial skills in subjects such as finance, law, analytics, human resources, and many other traditional business competencies but with a specific focus on the diver-

se dynamics of the sports industry. Gone are the days of a reliance on mainstream business professionals and now there is a requirement for industry specialists to understand and develop the ever-expanding sports industry. Subsequently, sports management professionals have skillsets that enable them to manage athletes, create wealth through marketing and sales strategies, and manage staff for national sport organisations and global companies associated with sport. It is these varied career opportunities that demand specific industry experts and illustrates the value of this expertise in maintaining and enhancing the ever-increasing value of global sport. India has a long and significant history in terms of its contribution to the global landscape of sport. However, despite this history and

the recent government initiatives within India, such as the Indian Premier League (cricket), Hockey India League, India Badminton League, Pro Kabaddi League, and the Indian Super League (Football), there is still a significant shortage of suitably qualified sports management professionals. While Sports Management education around the globe has expanded to reflect the consistent growth within the sports industry, these education platforms are not available around India. This crea-

tes an opportunity for students, who are suitably qualified sports management specialists, to realise career aspirations within the sports industry. This also creates an opportunity for higher education institutions to develop Sports Management degree programmes. Careers in Sports Management provide real opportunities for individuals to make an impact within a community, work with high profile clients and parlay a passion into a career.

COVID-19 pandemic brought the world to a standstill, how should the society re-imagine physical activities?

Staggered arrival times, health checks and contactless entry will all become future of spectator-based events. Furthermore, the wider health and leisure industry will utilise hygiene scores, hand sanitiser stations and one-way systems to enable people to return to their leisure pursuits, such as the gym, in the post COVID-19 era. Supporters and participants want to come back, but they also want to feel safe. The entire sports industry from the elite level to the participation model of sport will benefit from reimagining activities for both spectators and participants.

How will the demand for sports management and managers change in the post COVID-19 era?

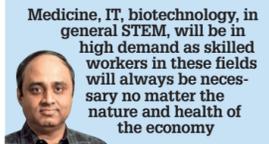
The removal of match day revenues, such as ticketing, food and beverage, car parking and VIP/corporate hospitality revenues and broadcasting revenues will have a profound impact upon the global sports industry. COVID-19 has already seen several global sports organisations make redundancies and reduce the volume of available entry-level jobs with the global economy not predicted to recover until 2023 – the year in which students who start their degree level studies in 2020 could graduate. Consequently, in the post-CO-



Focus on the fundamentals and mastery of high-tech fields in the US

College admissions and career opportunities are going to be more competitive in the new normal, says academic **Snehasis Mukhopadhyay**

Rajlakshmi Ghosh
@timesgroup.com



Medicine, IT, biotechnology, in general STEM, will be in high demand as skilled workers in these fields will always be necessary no matter the nature and health of the economy

COVID-19 has impacted all university students in the US, including local and international, as it is a disruption in the normal educational planning. "However, the impact on the international students, including Indian students, has been particularly severe, where the students are being forced in some cases to choose between their family and their higher education," says Snehasis Mukhopadhyay, associate director, STEM Education Innovation and Research Institute (SEIRI) and professor, Computer and Information Science, Indiana University Purdue University, USA. He adds that if they visit home to see an ailing and, in some cases, a dying close relative, they cannot come back due to visa and other restrictions. If they are staying back, they may have to take financial costs in finding a place to stay, as the low-cost residential facilities offered by universities are becoming irregular at best, due to COVID-19 social distancing regulations. "Universities are doing their best and trying to prioritise the housing needs of international students. But they are also limited by financial constraints and local evolving regulations," he says.

Stipend offered only on-campus students

There are only a few international students who are taking lessons remotely from their home countries. "Firstly, no financial support or stipend can be provided by a university to an international student unless the student is on campus. Secondly, time differences, poor local internet accessibility, and internet security concerns become significant practical limitations in doing a class remotely from another country. No new student visas are being issued by the US, so plans for many of these students continue to be uncertain," Mukhopadhyay says. The pandemic has not severely affected his research since as tenured university professor in the field of computer and information science, he can still supervise his students and conduct research collaborations through videoconferencing tools such as Zoom. But it is his teaching, also conducted via Zoom, that has been more se-

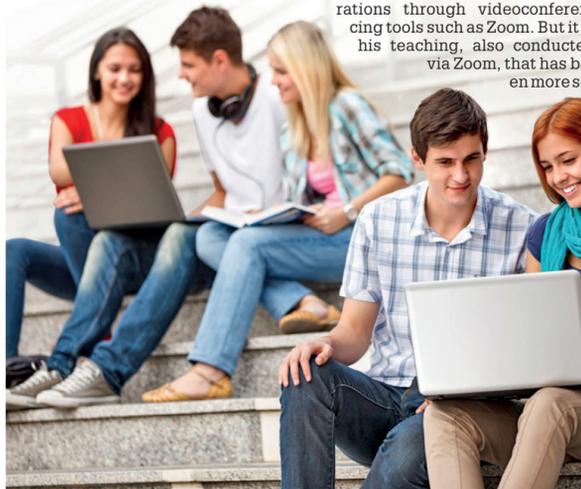
riously impacted. Mukhopadhyay, like faculty elsewhere, does not find it to be as effective as in-person teaching in terms of student engagement and academic integrity.

Are international students a valuable resource

The alumnus of Jadavpur University, Kolkata, and IISc, Bangalore, who did his PhD from Yale University, feels it all depends on who one asks. "The universities and the academic circle think international students are essential for the continued growth and vitality of US educational institutions. Others believe that supporting international students through financial aid is expensive, and they potentially take away opportunities and jobs of the local people. A few well publicised cases of visa frauds and/or espionage by international scholars do not help in the cause of the international students, either," he says.

Post-pandemic prospects

Emphasising that the pandemic will not have a significant long-term impact on US economy, as it is very resilient and have overcome many serious challenges before, Mukhopadhyay stresses that college admissions as well as career opportunities are going to be more competitive post COVID-19. "Medicine, information technology, biotechnology, in general STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) will be in high demand as skilled workers in these fields will always be necessary no matter the nature and health of the economy." Students should think carefully to ensure their choice of courses fit into their long-term career goals, particularly if they are paying their own expenses. "The days of label-oriented academic credentials are on their way out. Everyone wants to know and verify what a candidate really knows. The focus should be on learning fundamentals and mastery of high-tech fields, wherever that may come from," Mukhopadhyay affirms.



Study in Israel via PhD Sandwich Program in 2021

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

The Council for Higher Education, Israel, has announced scholarship programme for outstanding international PhD students to study in Israel for a duration of up to one year through a 'PhD Sandwich Program'. The aim is to provide such candidates the opportunity to further their doctoral research through academic experience in Israel. Recent PhD graduates will be able to take on postdoctoral positions with the scientists and scholars on cutting-edge research through this initiative in all fields of science, social science and humanities. The programme is intended for the scholars at each of the eight universities that offer doctoral programmes: Ben-Gurion University, Bar Ilan University, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Technion, Tel Aviv University, Weizmann Institute of



Science, University of Haifa, and Ariel University. The annual scholarship will be 80,000 NIS per year (Rs 17 lakh approx). To be considered for the scholarship, applicants must be enrolled in a doctoral degree programme at an accredited educational institution overseas. Interested candidates must apply directly to the relevant Israeli university. Due to the pandemic, the current call for applications is open for candidates who plan to arrive in Israel beginning of Spring 2021.

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What prompted Kanpur boy to opt for Turkey to pursue BTech degree

c-Jagriti Kumari
@timesgroup.com

Kanpur boy, Mohammed Sameed Khan, 21, who wanted to be an engineer, realised the cut-throat competition to get a seat in prestigious engineering colleges in India after finishing his class XII in 2016. His passion to be an engineer prompted him to look for options available outside India. During his research, he got to know about a scholarship called 'Turkiye Scholarships' being offered by the Turkish government to study bachelor's programmes at various universities in the country. "An easy admission process and a fully-funded scholarship were enough for me to zero in on Turkey to fulfil my long-cherished desire to become an engineer," says Sameed, who is pursuing BTech in Computer Science from Ondokuz Mayıs University (Universitesi) Samsun, Turkey. "My JEE score was not much to secure an admission in computer science stream in a good college. Instead of re-appearing for the exam to improve my rank, I decided to look for an overseas destination where I can get quality education," says Sameed, who belongs to a business family.

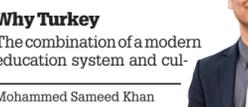
Why Turkey

The combination of a modern education system and cul-

ture intertwined, says Sameed, make Turkey an appropriate choice for higher education. "Additionally, the country offers world-class educational experience at an affordable price and a good standard of modern education at par with the best in the world," he says. "Fully-funded scholarship is another factor that attracts students from developing countries," adds the Kanpur boy. Sameed who wants to go for research in Germany after his BTech, says, higher education in Turkey, also enables students to be equipped with a degree which is recognised across the world that opens research opportunities.

Challenges in a new country

Initially, it was difficult for Sameed to interact with people as he was not familiar with the Turkish language. "Thanks to the preparatory course offered by the college, I have learnt Turkish," he adds. "Language is not a barrier to learn computer science as terminologies remain the same whether being taught in English or any other language," says Sameed as education in Turkey is offered in Turkish language. Post COVID-19, it was not a difficult transition from offline to online classes. He adds that there is almost negligible impact on regular study across institutions due to sound digital infrastructure.



Mohammed Sameed Khan

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