

Physical education and recreation for Asian  
Countries.

# PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND RECREATION

FOR

## ASIAN COUNTRIES

Asia is on the threshold of a . . . . . With political freedom dawning upon the countries of Asia, there is a great awakening in the peoples that inhabit this vast continent. The countries of Asia want not only to be free but are eager to take a leading part in the affairs of the nations of the world. We are fully conscious of the big part we should play in building up world peace because upon our progress, politically and economically, the stability of the world depends. If there should be enduring peace in this world there should be freedom and progress in the Asian countries.

The dawn of political freedom has opened our eyes to our potential strength as well as to our weaknesses. To day we realise more than ever that our great potential strength lies in the vast man power that we can command. Over 1200 million people, almost three-fourth the population of the world live in the Asian countries. We also too well realise now that though numerically superior, physically we are a C3 people. The two world wars have made us fully realise the importance of national physical fitness. Nations that are physically weak and degenerate can never achieve true freedom. If the Asian countries should be free, the peoples of Asia should first become physically fit. It is only then that we will be able to preserve and maintain our freedom.

The task of improving the physical fitness of nearly 1200 million people is not as easy as we imagine. It is a gigantic task. Physical education and recreation have a great part to play in the accomplishment of this task but there are some vital issues involved.

### HEALTH PROBLEM IN THE ASIAN COUNTRIES

The average expectancy of life in the Asian countries is very low compared to some Western countries. In

India the average span of life is only 27 years whereas it is over 60 years in Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, the U.S.A. and almost 70 in New Zealand.

The Indian child has very little chance to survive the first year of life. That is why there is a saying in India that a new born child is the property of the gods. If he survives the first year he is lucky. Over 15½ lakhs (1½ millions) of infants die before they reach the first year of life. Over 30 lakhs (3 millions) of children die before they reach the first year of life. Altogether about 60 lakhs (6 millions) of people die every year from various diseases. These figures are for British India alone. The Indian States are not included. If so many die how many suffer from diseases but do not die? It can only be imagined. It is estimated that between 30 per cent and 50 per cent of the population are always suffering from some disease or other. What a terrible waste and what a problem?

Roughly speaking, nearly 200 million people, more than half the population of India, suffer from malaria, killing over a million people each year. Tuberculosis is fast becoming a national menace. More than 5 lakhs (½ a million) die from tuberculosis annually. Epidemics of small pox, cholera, typhoid and dysentery carry away thousands of lives each year.

Why there is so much of disease and loss of life is because of certain contributory causes. Poverty and low economic status undermine the health of the nation creating acute problems of malnutrition in the masses which make them easy victims of disease and infection. Almost 90 per cent of the people are illiterate, living a primitive life, in wretched slums, in squalour and filth and dirt, with centuries old customs and superstitions. Where there is poverty and ignorance, filth and dirt, there is always disease. Nations that are afflicted with disease, ignorance and superstitions can never achieve physical fitness and true national freedom.

Conditions in some of the Asian countries may be better or may be worse than in India. But generally speaking, what is true of India is true of most of the Asian countries. Asia thus presents a tragic spectacle. If physical education and recreation were to play an effective role in our national life, physical education and recreation should become part and parcel of a national programme in which the improvement in the wealth of the nation, the raising of the standard of living, better nutrition, better housing, better control and

prevention of diseases, and the eradication of illiteracy is scientifically planned and carried out.

Health has a 'positive' side and a 'negative' or preventive side. Positive health is determined by the way the biologic needs of the body are met. These needs include food, exercise, play, sleep, rest, fresh air and sun shine. Preventive health is what we try to achieve by education, through sanitation and other methods to overcome environmental hazards to health, by medical knowledge in the correction of defects and prevention and control of infection and by propaganda and instruction through books, magazines, newspapers, radio and public health work generally. Positive health must be first assured to a people in order that negative or preventive health may have its value. Without positive health, our efforts at the improvement of health through education will mean only tinkering with the problem.

A study of the progress in health following the industrial revolution in Europe and England will illustrate this point.

"Towards the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries, important changes occurred. The population of England and Wales increased by 23.6 millions. The population of France, stationary for so long, increased by 11.4 millions, while in Europe as a whole the increase was even more striking. In the 100 years ending 1900, the population of Europe grew from 187 millions to about 400 millions. The expectation of life at birth for the average German increased between the 1870s and 1924-26 from 35 years to 56. The Englishman's average length of life increased from 41 to 55.6 years between 1870 and 1920-22 and has since increased still further. A similar tendency was observed in other countries of Western civilisation.

"Not only did population grow rapidly and the average expectation of life rose, but general health and physique improved at the same time. The incidence and fatality of many diseases fell off progressively during the nineteenth century and there was undoubtedly an increase in stature. In Sweden,

the average stature increased between 1840 and 1926 by over 3 inches. In Denmark, the same increase took place between 1840 and 1913. In Norway, the increase was 4 inches between 1800 and 1900, and in the Netherlands, about 5 inches between 1850 and 1907. A similar phenomenon has been observed among both male and female students in American Universities.

"This improvement in vitality and physique was not the result of the chance or natural selection. Two main influence appear to have been responsible. On the one hand there was a rapid growth of wealth, resulting mainly from advances in scientific knowledge and its application. In addition to the improvement in economic welfare, important advances were made in sanitation and medical knowledge. There was thus an improvement both on the 'positive' side in building up health, physique, and resistance against illness generally, and on the 'negative' side in controlling and preventing diseases". \*

## HISTORICAL SURVEY

Every country in the world has contributed to physical education in some form or other. The primitive races have done as much through their appreciation of rhythm and dancing as some of the civilised races with their introduction of technique and scientific principles. The people of Asia from very early times understood the value and need of physical exercise and wholesome living in keeping the body physically fit and at a high level of health. In this respect India has made some significant contributions to the field of physical education.

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\* The Relation of Nutrition to Health, Agriculture and Economic Policy, League of Nations Final Report, Geneva, 1937, pages 24-26.

## Our Heritage

A careful study of the Indian culture reveals that for many centuries the people of India from the Vedic era lived a life in which adequate physical growth and development were the normal outcome of a natural outdoor life. The Aryans fought their wars and ploughed their fields but soon settled down to a life of ease which provided ample leisure for meditation and philosophy. The vigorous physical activities once provided by their natural life in the open gave place to a system of exercises and practices known as the Yogic system.

The word Yoga means 'to yoke'. The yogin through a graduated series of physical and mental exercises attempted to unite his soul with the world-soul. 'Realise the Atman in you' was the watchword of this system. Cleanliness, ~~self-discipline~~ discipline of body and mind and resignation to life were some of the features of Yoga. The impression that is gained in other countries that Yoga means self-mortification and torture of the body is not true. Such aberrations are not countenanced by Yoga. The immediate goal of the yogin was self-control and not self-torture. To day, these exercises are found to have great keep-fit and therapeutic value.

India is famous for its wrestling. Wrestling was a great national sport in ancient India. Akhadas, and Talimkhanas which were once the Greek gymnasia of India, promoted physical education through a system of indigenous body building exercises and wrestling. Many Akhadas and Talimkhanas still continue to flourish in various parts of India.

India has also received a rich heritage of rhythmic activities in the form of classical and folk-dances. These dances and songs that accompany them represent the soul of India's culture. The folk dances of South India and the Brat-chari dances of Bengal are still enjoyed by large sections of people. Indian classical dances have become world famous. The Bharata Natya and the Manipuri dances are two of India's famous classical dances. These dances have a charm peculiar to India. They are noted for their elegance, beauty, rhythm, grace and intricacy.

India is not the only country in Asia with such rich heritage. The Chinese people also had their own indigenous systems of exercises and games. Japan has given the world its ju-juitsur, the famous Japanese art of self-defence. She also produced some world champion swimmers and athletes. It must be

said to the credit of Japan that she was the first in Asia to introduce physical education on a nation-wide scale but her motive was military conquest. Russia's contribution to the field of physical education and recreation is recent but Russia has a rich heritage of rhythmic activities in the form of folk and cabaret dances.

### Western Influence

Asia has been influenced in the field of physical education and recreation by two western countries, England and America. English people were the first to develop outdoor sports and recreation. They fostered the team games of football, cricket, hockey, tennis, golf, boating, swimming, rowing and archery. Wherever they have gone, the Britishers have taken their sports with them, and through the Association with Britain extending to over 200 years, these English games have come to stay in some Asian countries.

America also has influenced Asia in many respects. Countries like China, India, Japan and the Philipines came under the influence of America mostly through the Y.M.C.As. The concept of physical education as understood in America gradually permeated into the East through the Y.M.C.A. Games like basketball, volleyball, softball, baseball and track and field sports were introduced. One great contribution of the American people to physical education in the Asian countries has been the starting of physical education colleges in India and China to train leaders in physical education.

### PRESENT POSITION

From the above brief historical sketch it will readily be seen that practically every Asian country has a rich treasure of physical education and recreation activities, some indigenous, others Western. It must be emphasised that in promoting physical education and recreation in our countries we should lay emphasis on our national games, sports and dances. These embody in themselves the genius innate in the people for organised recreational activity. It is in the national interest that these ancient activities which have great cultural value be preserved and not permitted to die out. Apart from this,

our own national games and sports are generally less costly than the Western games and in large scale schemes of physical education, the cost cannot be ignored.

This does not mean that games of Western origin should be brushed aside. What is wanted is a happy blending of the old and the new. Participation in the Western games like cricket, hockey, tennis, track and field sports etc., will help the Asian countries to take part in International competitions and in the World Olympic Games. Asia through sports will be able to bring the nations of the world together and help to build a better world.

It is strange that although we possess such a rich heritage of games, sports and dances, there has been no attempt to use them as nation building activities, as is done in England, the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. The apathy towards games, exercises and other forms of recreation that we see in our people is due to certain deep rooted causes.

1. The ascetic philosophy of the East. The traditional attitude towards life in the Orient is one of negation. The body and things pertaining to the body are looked down upon. The mind and things pertaining to the mind and the soul are often over-emphasised to the almost complete neglect of the physical.

2. A national inertia towards physical activity brought about by poverty, sickness, disease, malnutrition and starvation.

3. The nature and type of the present day education with its over-emphasis on intellectual attainments, accumulation of knowledge, memorising of facts, passing of examinations etc., neglecting almost totally the physical basis of life and its significance to the health, growth and development of the child.

4. Lack of sufficient number of well-equipped and adequately staffed physical education colleges to train the large number of leaders required in this field.

5. Lack of attractive service conditions - salary, status etc., to attract really capable men and women to take up the physical education profession

Physical education and recreation are nation-building activities. These activities can exert their maximum influence on a people if the obstacles standing in their way are first removed.



1. First, the ascetic philosophy of life should give place to one in which life here and now is to be lived well and abundantly.

2. The concept of the human organism as a psycho-physical unity must be accepted. The physical basis of life must receive its due emphasis and attention. The masses of Asia should be roused to the need of the betterment of their physique.

3. The standard of living of the masses must be improved. Adequate food, shelter, clothing and medical aid must be assured.

4. Education must receive a thorough re-orientation. The present over-emphasis on the development of the intellect should give place to the education of the whole child. Education of mind and education of body should receive equal attention. Physical Education must become an integral part of the 'total education' of the child.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

### An Interpretation of physical education

Physical education is that part of the general education programme which is concerned with the growth, development and education of children through the medium of big-muscle activities. It is the education of the whole child by means of physical activities. Physical activities are the tools. They are so selected and conducted as to influence every aspect of the child's life - physical, mental, emotional and moral.

### The aim of Physical Education

Physical education should aim to provide the skilled leadership, adequate facilities and ample time for affording full opportunity for individuals and groups to participate in situations that are physically wholesome, mentally stimulating and satisfying, and socially sound.

This implies a thorough understanding of the nature and needs of the participants and a programme utilising activities and facilities catering to their interests and needs.

The objective of physical education are:

1. The protection and improvement of health and the development of organic fitness.
2. Increase in strength and neuro-muscular control.
3. Development of desirable social attitudes and standards of conduct.
4. Acquisition of skills, habits and attitudes in a variety of physical activities which will contribute to wholesome and enjoyable leisure pursuits.

#### THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Elementary education in the Asian countries needs a thorough change. Education of large numbers of our children are carried in places which do not deserve to be called schools. Many schools are housed in ill-ventilated rooms, with very little or no furniture, in crowded localities and in very unwholesome, and unhygienic surroundings. The curricular emphasis is entirely on the mastery of the three R's. The Physical activity that the child needs biologically for his growth and development at this stage is completely neglected. Biologists tell us that an elementary school child needs four and a half hours of big muscle activity during the day. This fundamental biologic need is completely forgotten in planning the education of the elementary school child. It is also true that the elementary school teacher in many Asian countries is both ill-trained and ill-paid.

A more serious problem which affects a large percentage of school children is the low level of their health. Health examination of large numbers of school children in India in other Asian countries reveal that almost 90 per cent suffer from malnutrition. Carious teeth, defective tonsils, adenoids, eye defects, ear defects, postural defects, hookworm infection, lungs trouble, liver trouble and heart trouble are very common defects of childhood.

If building a better generation and a better and stronger race is our objective of a national programme, we should begin with the primary school children. The early years of the child are very important both in developing physical fitness and in forming the right habits and attitudes. The education of the primary school child should therefore be planned with these objectives in mind. There should therefore be provision for a co-ordinated programme of physical education and health education, beginning from the elementary school right through the middle and high schools. A brief outline of the programme at the elementary school level will be as follows:

### Physical Education

1. All children in the elementary school should participate daily in a programme of supervised physical education activities during which time the teaching of skills, techniques and attitudes should be stressed. The minimum daily instructional period should be thirty minutes in length, preferably thirty minutes in the morning and thirty minutes in the afternoon. In addition, there should be recess periods, periods for free supervised play, and integration of physical education activities with other phases of the curriculum.

2. Activities included in the physical education programme for elementary schools should be varied in nature, and should include games of simple organisation for large and small groups; rhythmic activities including free and creative rhythms, singing games, and folk dances; hunting and chasing games; modified athletic games; stunts, tumbling and self-testing activities; activities on gymnastic and play ground apparatus; mimetics and story plays. This programme of activities should be suited to the interests, needs and physical capacities of the pupils. Individual differences must be taken into account.

3. School managements should provide equipment and supplies sufficient in amount and variety, together with sufficient indoor playroom and outdoor playground facilities, to permit conduct of such a programme.

4. Elementary school teachers should have a sufficient amount of training to enable them to conduct physical education activities suitable for elementary school children. Such training should be given in every teacher-training institution.

## Health Education

1. Medical examination and follow-up work — Every child must be given a thorough physical and medical examination. Such examinations should be done in the presence of one or both parents, and the findings entered in proper health records. Defects discovered should be specially noted and the necessary follow-up work completed as early as possible.

2. The school lunch: Many children get only a scanty or no meal during the middle of the day. Arrangements must be made in schools to provide the child with a nourishing lunch. Milk ought to be part of the lunch. Malnutrition in school children which is very common in the Asian countries can be combated only by such methods.

3. Routine weighing and measuring: Children should be weighed and measured once every week. Such weighing and measuring have great educational value. It arouses the interest of the child and also of the parents. It also offers a means by which the child may be brought to understand the cause and effect relationship between healthful living and growth.

4. Habit training: During this period the emphasis should be on the formation of right habits of health. There is no need for special instruction on health but children must be taught certain simple rules of health. The child must be helped to develop an attitude of self-control and a feeling of responsibility for his own health, conduct even at this age.

## MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOLS

### Physical Education

1. All pupils in the middle and high schools should participate in a daily programme of supervised physical education activities. The minimum time allotment for physical education class instruction periods should be the equivalent of the school's regular academic periods.

Additional time should be allotted for practice and participation periods. Time-tables for physical education instruction classes should be planned as carefully as are other class periods. They must fit into the regular school day along with other classes in such a way that every pupil may receive physical education instruction daily. This may necessitate radical re-organisation of the entire school programme, even to the extent of starting the school day earlier; but if we are to educate the whole child we must re-organise school life in such a way that our aim may be realised.

2. Classes in physical education should be small enough to permit efficient instructions. Twenty five pupils per teacher per period is desirable. Never should a class consist of more than forty pupils per teacher. Pupils should be classified and grouped according to their several abilities.

3. The content of the programme of physical education in the middle and high schools should be broad and varied. It should include a variety of team games, major and minor; a variety of individual and small team sports such as tennis, archery, handball, badminton, teniquoit, fencing, boxing, wrestling, quoits, stunts, tumbling, pyramid building, gymnastics, drills, marching etc., efficiency tests and group competitions; track and field athletics; rhythmic activities including folk dances and gymnastic dancing etc..

4. Classes in modified activity, corrective physical education or rest should be provided for those pupils who, because of disability or illness, may not safely participate in vigorous activity. The medical examination and doctor's recommendation should be the basis of assignment to this programme. Facilities for conducting the above programme should be provided in each school. The service of teachers with specialised training in corrective physical education should be available for each school.

5. Adequate bathing and sanitary arrangements, dressing rooms, indoor and outdoor play facilities should be provided in each school in order to make possible the most effective programme.

6. The physical education programme in the middle and high school should be in the hands of specially trained physical education teachers. The programme of physical activities should be carefully planned and organised for the

entire school. The headmaster and other members of the school staff should render their active support and co-operation.

### Health Education

The health education programme in the middle school should continue to emphasise the practice of health habits acquired in the elementary school. In addition, increasing emphasis should be given to the child's responsibilities in promoting communal health. Instructions in health through health lessons must be offered at the middle school stage. Such health lessons should include study of the human body, its form and functions, nutrition, fresh air and sunlight, cleanliness, exercise and rest, care of the eyes and ears, care of the teeth, bodily and mental health, first-aid etc. The periodic medical examination should be repeated in the middle school and defects discovered corrected.

Health teaching in the high school should emphasise in an increasing measure the social and community aspects of health and the scientific foundation for health habits. Health instruction at the high school level should include study of the human body and its functions, care of the human body (personal hygiene), community hygiene, factors affecting health namely heredity and environment, principles of healthful living, and nutrition including a study of the vitamins. It is advisable to give a health check up as soon as the boy enters the high school and any defect discovered properly treated and corrected. There should be a great emphasis on posture and the erect carriage of the body at this stage.

## COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Colleges and Universities in many of the Asian countries are planned on the British model. It is said of universities in India that India has taken all the bad things from the British Universities and left off all the good in them. This may be true of other countries in Asia. The emphasis of college and University education is

entirely on the intellectual aspect. Many Universities are of the examining type and naturally the emphasis is on examinations. It is true that the prime objective of a student when he enters a University is to somehow pass through the four or six years of University life and secure a diploma degree. College life with its undue emphasis on amassing of book knowledge, memorising of facts, passing of examinations, tests etc., has become a drudgery. Not only is it a drudgery, it is found to adversely affect the health of many a University student. Many students by the time they leave the University are completely broken down in health. Health examination of large numbers of college students reveal that majority of them, about 90 per cent, suffer from some remediable defect or other when they enter college but nothing is done to diagnose or correct such defects.

That the system of University education in our Universities needs change is beyond question. It is an urgent necessity now. Universities and colleges should become places where our youths prepare themselves for some form of active service which will elevate our masses. To help our young men and women to be servants of our people, they must have robust health, physical, mental and moral. Universities should see to it that such robust health is within the reach of every student.

It is true that some Universities have organised programmes of health and physical education. In a few Universities physical education is even compulsory. But it can be said generally of these Universities that the programmes are not comprehensive or adequate enough to favourably influence the health of the students. Universities should lay greater attention to the organisation of effective programmes of health and physical education.

Each college must have a department of health and physical education. The head of the department should be the director of health and physical education. This person should have high educational qualifications, and adequate training in health and physical education in a recognised physical education college. He must have assistants and coaches for special games depending upon the strength of the college. Besides assistants, each college must have a full time college doctor who will work in close harmony and co-operation with the director of health and physical education.

A thorough health examination should be the starting point of the programme of health and physical

education. This health examination must be done by the college doctor and the director of physical education. The doctor and the director of physical education. The doctor and the director should work together in correcting the defects discovered at such examinations. The correction of the defects should be done as expeditiously as possible. The co-operation of the parents must be sought and in indigent cases the college should bear the responsibility of correction.

The emphasis at the University stage in physical education should be on vigorous team games, track and field sports, boxing, wrestling and swimming. At the same time it is important that every student is taught those games which he can continue to play for a number of years even after leaving the college. The habit of taking regular exercise and playing games in order to keep physically fit should be established in every college student.

More emphasis must be given to intramural games and competitions. In many colleges physical education have come to mean the college teams in various games and sports while the great majority are left uncared for. A programme of intramural competitions in which every student participates should therefore be given greater importance.

Inter-Varsity competitions have also a great place, but these varsity competitions should be organised and conducted by experts. Exchange of visits of teams would not only improve the standard of games and sports but can also provide educational and social experiences. Competitions when properly organised and conducted have great character education possibilities.

#### PHYSICAL EDUCATION FOR GIRLS AND WOMEN

In most Asian countries the education of girls lags especially behind that of boys and in physical education their position is even worse. More facilities should be provided for the education of our girls. The social disabilities and customs which stand in the way of their getting the due share of out-door life, play, exercise, etc., must be removed by educating the parents and the public.



The programme for girls depends on their age. Till about the age of eleven, boys and girls may play the same games. They enjoy activities such as running, chasing, dodging, climbing, swimming, skipping, hopping, jumping, vaulting, singing, etc. Games of minor organisation are also suitable for this age. Competitions between boys and girls in running, jumping, throwing, etc., are also permissible till this age.

A distinction is to be made in certain respects between the physical education to be given to girls and the physical education to be given to the boys after this age. The distinction is based on certain biologic and psychologic factors associated with adolescence. Violent exercises, games, sports, etc., indulged in freely by boys of their age should be avoided. Girls could compete in running, skipping, dancing, swimming etc., with other girls and could also begin to take part in team games such as net ball, throw ball, ring tennis, badminton, tennis, playground ball, hockey, kho-kho, atya-patya, etc. Rhythmic exercises and dances especially those which can be performed to the accompaniment of music and song are eminently suitable. These dances should find a very significant place in the physical education programme for girls and women. Posture training should be very much stressed.

Physical education for women after the age of twenty is very much neglected. So, during their school and college career, they must be taught games and exercises which they could continue in later life. Games like badminton, activities like walking, skipping, swimming, etc., can be indulged in throughout life. Keep-fit exercises also must be taught.

The primary aim of education for girls should be to enable them to be happy and healthy now, and as adults to be efficient members of the community, and the majority to become strong and sturdy mothers, able to run a home efficiently and look after their children intelligently. Their education therefore must be different from the present day system and should lay stress on her health, growth and development. Mother craft, child care, anatomy, physiology, personal, home and community hygiene, nutrition, etc., may be included in a course in health education.

## RECREATION

What is recreation?

The term recreation is not often understood in its fullest sense. Many people think that recreation consists only in playing games. Of course, recreation does include playing games but it also includes much more. Truly understood, recreation includes all the beautiful skills, crafts, hobbies that human beings can practise, up to the finest of the fine arts.

Recreation in its fullest sense is conceived in three stages: primary, secondary and higher. The primary stage includes all the normal physical activities of childhood namely walking, running, skipping etc., which brings the whole body under the control of intelligence. In the next stage, the secondary, the child is introduced to the playground giving him the widest possible choice of play and encouraged to play whatever game that brings him most joy and satisfaction. The higher recreation is an art, from its simplest form in the manual craft of hobby, to the finest work of the musician, painter, sculptor and architect. Recreation thus ascends from simple physical activities, through play to the creative activities of art. The higher recreation is a realm where intelligence is vitalised, character ennobled and real values created. Those who spend their leisure in the higher recreation contribute to the real wealth of the world namely art, painting, sculpture, music and drama. It was a Chinese sage who said that whether a civilisation will live or die depends on the way it spends its leisure.

The need for recreation

Asia is a land of peasants. Almost 90 per cent of our population are peasants and they live in our villages. These millions present a tragic spectacle. They live woefully inadequate lives. They are illiterate, ignorant and superstitious. Sadness, gloom, depression and despair are written on their faces. Joy, laughter and happiness are conspicuous by their absence. Poor, ill-clad and ill-fed, they give the impression of going through biologic degeneration. In its

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totality this constitutes an enormous debt on the books of society and if this degeneration is allowed to go on unchecked, it may ultimately prove the bankruptcy of civilisation.

Another problem facing these millions is enforced leisure. Most of them are idle for a great part of the year. To fill the idle hours of enforced leisure with creative work is the task of recreation. Providing these millions with food, shelter and education is not enough. We must provide them also with activities which will bring joy and happiness into their dull and dreary life and also rouse their creative instinct. Education through recreation, the millions of Asia need it.

#### RURAL RECREATION

Recreation for the rural population should be properly organised. Facilities, aid and direction for recreation should be provided by the State in rural areas. Every village should be helped to develop its own recreation centre. Rural Recreation leaders specially trained for this purpose must be appointed to initiate community recreation programmes for every village. Inter-village competitions may be organised. Such programmes should always be promoted with the co-operation of the people. Gradually the villagers must be made to feel their responsibility in maintaining the recreation centre as a village institution. In the early stages, financial assistance should be given by the State. The shifting of the financial responsibility must be gradual.

The amount of good that will come from such recreation centres is immense. Much will depend on the leadership. Leaders by the thousands will be needed by every country. This will provide an opportunity for educated young men to serve their country.

#### RECREATION FOR INDUSTRIAL WORKERS

Asia is on the threshold of great industrial advancement and progress. To raise the standard of living

of the masses industrialisation is necessary, and with industries growing many problems will arise. Millions will be employed in the industries. The number of hours of work will become less and less leaving ample leisure for the workers. Welfare work and recreation for the industrial worker will have to be provided in order to protect his health and promote his well being.

Recreation for the industrial worker when properly organised will provide the following benefits.

- (1) Afford the means of rest and recuperation.
- (2) Open up avenues of free and creative activity.
- (3) Give opportunities and training for useful social service.

Rest from work is essential for the worker. The tired body, the jaded nerves and the dulled spirit need rest and recuperation. Every working individual must therefore have respite from work. He must be guaranteed rest every day, every week and every year.

#### Importance of rest

Long hours of work are detrimental. Each day's over work leaves its fatigue lag which goes on accumulating with injurious physical, mental and moral consequence. Many workers become physical wrecks. Several contract serious ailments. Some even die prematurely. Clean cases of mental ill-effects of over-work are found in the increasing number of neurasthenics among industrial workers. On the moral plane, the drunkenness, the vice, and the immoral practices among the workers are in a great measure the results of fatigued bodies and fagged out nerves. Rest and respite are the only remedy for over-coming fatigue.

#### Creativeness

Periods of rest which will provide ample leisure will alleviate many of the harmful consequences of industrial life. These leisure hours must be filled with wholesome recreative activities. These recreative activities may be

games, sports and competitions or they may be of higher type, hobbies craft, music, drama etc. Man is skill hungry and he likes to fill his leisure hours doing things which satisfy the skill urge in him. In developing skills, he is giving expression to his creative instinct. Hobbies and other artistic pursuits in a greater measure afford expression to the insistent creative urge in all human beings. Man must have the sense of positive liberation which the pursuit of creative work alone can give. Denied such a liberation he feels thwarted and enslaved and no wonder he becomes a social menace. What is true of adults is much more true of juveniles. They must have opportunities for games and sports under suitable direction and leadership. Otherwise they are apt to turn into street-arabs, guttersnips and potential gangsters. The causes of juveniles delinquency may not be fully known but this must be certain that wherever playgrounds and other wholesome recreational facilities have been provided, juvenile crime has considerable declined.

### Social Service

Recreation has still another boon to confer. It opens up avenues of social service and gives training in selfless social work. The organisation of games and sports, the producing of amateur plays and concerts, the conducting of hikes and excursions and other similar activities is social work of a high order. Such social work will bring happiness to others and considerable satisfaction to the person who does it. For, it is when engaged in such work that the worker satisfies the social urge in him and in satisfying this urge he transcends himself and attains real happiness.

Recreation is a tonic for the worker. It will afford recuperation, foster creative endeavour, build up morale and give opportunities for selfless social service. It will also help mankind to get over the ill-effects of the compulsion, the monotony and the dullness inseparable from most means of earning a living.

### FACILITIES FOR RECREATION

In providing recreation for our people, we should learn from Russia, Britain and the U.S.A.

## Russia

In a short period of 30 years Russia organised 30,000 athletic clubs, built 10,000 playing fields, 3,900 gymnasia, 2,700 swimming stations, 650 stadiums, 350 aquatic sports stations and 100 houses of physical education. Besides these facilities over 600 parks of culture and rest were laid out in the cities and in the rural areas. More of these are built every year.

The Gorky Park of Culture and Rest in Moscow's central park is a model for others. The workers of the Moscow factories and mills built this park by their own initiative and effort. Gorky Park combines rest in picturesque surroundings with wholesome recreation. No less than sixty to seventy thousand people use the park on working days. On free days and holidays the number of visitors reach over 200,000. All sorts of sports, concerts of light music, symphony concerts, choir circles, opera performances, popular lectures and talks on science, art, literature, health and hygiene are provided.

Excellent facilities are provided in the Gorky Park for all kinds of out-door sports, light athletics, gymnastics, swimming and other aquatic sports. In winter, facilities for winter sports are provided. All these activities are conducted under the guidance of experienced instructors.

Leading theatrical companies give their performances regularly. One of the most interesting aspects of the Park's activities is the development of amateur arts. Thousands of people come to the park to dance, learn folk dancing, music and painting. The amateur art circles give concerts and performances in the park's theatre. The park's lecture halls, laboratories and libraries are well equipped and are the rendezvous of the leading scholars and scientists. In addition to lectures and research, exhibitions are held regularly.

## Britain

The British have been known for their love for out-door sports and team games. The recreation movement in England was entirely sponsored by private agencies and

voluntary enterprise. It is only recently that it has become centralised and co-ordinated. In 1925 in 94 towns with a population of about 7 millions there was only one football ground for every 8,000 people and one children's playground for every 11,000 people. In 20 years, thousands of acres of land have been added for playing fields and recreation grounds. Holiday centres, play centres, clubs and camps have been organised. Besides out-door physical activities in the form of sports and games, other recreative features of art, musical and dramatic activities and folk dances have been included in the adult recreation programmes. Leaders have been trained, associations have been formed to advise local bodies and encourage the right use of leisure. Every locality has a playing Field Association. The Youth Hostel Movement and the National Playing Field Association have been mainly instrumental in encouraging and organising recreation. A Central Council of Physical Recreation to-day guide the recreation of the nation.

### The U.S.A.

The recreation movement in America, had a very small beginning with the sand-garden for the very young children. Here children were given supervised play. In the space of 60 years the movement had a phenomenal growth. The movement soon developed from the sand-garden to the playground, the small park, the recreation centre, the Civic Art Centre and Welfare Centre, the Neighbourhood Organisation to the Community Service. The movement was sponsored for the most part by philanthropic and private bodies. The year 1906 was a land mark in the history of the movement, for in this year the Playground Association of America was formed. This was the first attempt at concentrated action towards co-ordination of the movement into a national movement. Today the Playground Association of America has grown into a National Recreation Association.

Recreation for the public in the U.S.A. is no longer handled by private bodies or semi-official agencies. Municipalities, State Governments as well as the Federal Government itself are concerned with the provision for public recreation. State owned parks, recreation areas, facilities for swimming, winter sports etc., have been developed a great deal. The idea of State providing and making provision for play and recreation is now an accepted

necessity. The movement has assumed national proportions and recreation has become an integral part of American life.

### Leadership in Physical Education and Recreation

It will be readily seen from the foregoing discussion that great strides have been made by countries like Russia, Britain and the U.S.A. in the field of Physical Education and Recreation. The health and well-being of our masses will depend on how quickly and how efficiently we are going to tackle all the problems connected with the promotion of physical education and recreation for our people. The success of any national enterprise will depend on the leadership that is provided. We will need leaders by the thousands and we should see to it that the leadership that we provide is of a high quality. What other countries have done in meeting the problem of leadership will throw a flood of light as to what we may do in Asia.

### Denmark and Sweden

There are two colleges of physical education in Denmark and two in Sweden. The College of Physical Education for Women at Silkeborg in Denmark provides a three year course. The National Gymnastic Institute for Men and Women at Copenhagen, under the famous physiologist Professor J. Lindhard, offers a five years training to the university undergraduates who wish to be trained as teachers. They learn the theoretical work at the university and obtain their practical training at the National Training Institute.

In Sweden there are two institutions training lecturers of physical education. The Swedish Gymnastic Institute situated in the University town of Lund run in co-operation with the University. Practical and theoretical gymnastics are carried on in the Institute but courses in Anatomy, Physiology and Pathology are given at the University training in medical gymnastics is provided at the University Hospital. The course lasts for two years. The other Institute is the Royal Central Institute of Gymnastics at Stockholm. It provides a three years course for teachers of physical education and medical gymnastics.



Germany

In Germany before 1937, every teacher of physical education in a secondary school had first to undergo one year's training at the Teachers Training College. Then he had to spend four years at the University. During this period he specialised in physical education. In Germany every physical education teacher receives University education for four years out of which he spent  $2\frac{1}{2}$  years for physical training.

Russia

In Russia, Marshal Stalin was quick to see the need for leaders of physical education to assist in the programme of race betterment. In 1918 the Central Institute of Physical Culture was organised. This Institute began the preparation of thousand young men and women for physical education work in schools, industries and the army. Graduation from the College necessitated the completion of a four year course in theory and practice and complete mastery of at least two sports.

In the U.S.S.R. to day there are five National Colleges of Physical Education established at Moscow, Leningrad, Keiv, Kharkov and Ibilise. The courses are for four to five years and several thousand students take these courses. There are shorter courses for instructors, but they too last for two years. The number of schools at which these shorter courses are offered is twenty five.

Physical education in school in the U.S.S.R. is in the hands of school teachers. Every teacher is expected to be well versed in physical education. With the object in view, physical education is now made part of the curriculum of the countries 320 teacher training schools and institutes. In 124 teachers' institutes offering a four year course of study, 778 hours are devoted to a course of physical education out of which 484 hours are spent in the institute and 294 hours in summer camps.

The U.S.A.

Physical education is now offered as a major subject in 206 colleges and 84 Universities in the U.S.A.

The state should assume all the responsibility for providing the necessary facilities for physical education in schools and colleges and universities and recreation for the public in the rural and urban areas and for the industrial workers. The facilities should include playgrounds, parks, gymnasia, swimming pools, camp sites, community centres, recreation halls etc.

2. Education should receive a new orientation and health and physical education must be placed in the fore-front of educational schemes and programmes. We must accept the fact that physical education is an integral part of general education. Old theories about physical education have been exploded. Today, physical education has developed into a science. It is now universally recognised that proper physical education plays a very important part in the intellectual and moral development of a people and that any time, effort and money spent on it are fully justified.

3. In many of the Asian countries like China, India, Burma, Ceylon, Siam, Malaya and Indonesia, physical education must be co-ordinated with health education. Physical education will have its full benefit only if the fundamental health needs of the child are adequately met. These will include nutrition, diagnosis of defects, correction of defects, and suitable instruction in health. We will need an army of school doctors and school nurses to do this work effectively and efficiently.

4. We will need thousands and thousands of trained physical education teachers for our schools, colleges and Universities. The only possible way we can get them in large numbers is by starting training colleges. Every country must have adequate number of physical education colleges offering at least a two year course in physical education. Such colleges must have excellent facilities for training a large number of students as well as excellent staff, library, etc. It is about time that physical education is offered as a degree course in our universities. A University degree will give physical education the dignity and status it deserves and this will be the only means of attracting the right type of people to join the profession. Moreover, research in physical education which has a very wide scope in Asia can only be done in a University environment.

5. Besides colleges of physical education, every country must have a Central Institute of Physical Education. The Central Institute will be the 'Brain Trust' in physical

Education for each country. From this Institute shall flow all the propaganda material, books, magazines, periodicals, cinema films and other aids in spreading the knowledge of physical education. Exchange of staff from one country to another country should be arranged for the mutual benefit of the physical education profession in each country.

6. The co-operation of class-room teachers will be required in any large scale scheme of health and physical education in schools. Health and physical education should therefore be emphasised in the training of all types of teachers, for the elementary, the middle and high schools. This will be possible only if the period of training of teachers in the normal schools is sufficiently extended from what it is in many Asian countries.

7. Suitable syllabuses in health and physical education will be indispensable in a national scheme of physical education. Expert committees may be set up in each country to work out syllabuses suitable for various age groups.

8. Rural recreation will be the backbone of any national scheme of recreation and a very large number of rural recreation leaders will be required in every country to organise and promote recreation among the rural population. The training of the leaders should be so carefully planned that they will be equipped with the knowledge and experience of doing other ameliorative work besides promoting recreation in the villages. As far as possible the training of these leaders should be in the various physical education colleges.

9. Recreation for the industrial workers must be organised as part of welfare work by the Government. The industries must bear the cost of such welfare work. Specially trained recreation leaders must be on the staff of these welfare organisations. The training of the recreation leaders must also as far as possible be in the physical education colleges.

10. Physical education and recreation can be promoted on a national scale only through a national organisation. In Russia, the national organisation is in the form of a Council of Physical Education and the Chairman has cabinet rank. In Britain there is a Central Council of Physical Recreation with the King of England as the patron. In the U.S.S. there are two organisations, the National Recreation Association and the American Association

for Health, Physical Education and Recreation. In India, the National Physical Education Association for India has just been formed with Shri Sarat Chandra Bose as its president. The national organisation may be formed from the voluntary effort but in order that it may function effectively, it must receive moral and financial help from Government. Annual gatherings, physical education demonstrations, national competitions, lectures, exhibitions, symposiums, discussions, etc., should be its main activities. It must also have a network of branches all over the country doing similar work.

#### THE ASIAN GAMES

There is a great need today to bring the Asian countries closer together, particularly the youth of Asia. Opportunity must be provided for our youth from various parts of Asia to come together and learn from each other. One way this can be accomplished is to organise the Asian Games similar to the World Olympic Games. The purpose of the Asian Games will be to bring together the youth of Asia not so much in competition with each other as in the World Olympic Games but in a spirit of learning from each other. Occasions like this could be made full use of by the host country to demonstrate those physical activities, games and dances which are the heritage of that country and which have real cultural value. The Asian games can be so planned and organised that they will have great educational and cultural value and will also be a means of establishing friendly relations. The future of Asia is in the hands of its youth and given such opportunities the Asian youth will play their part in building up a greater Asia.