

Deccan Chronicle

1,720 of 4,577 schools in Telangana don't have sports teacher

Hyderabad: For encouraging children to take up sports they have to be introduced to it in the school level itself. But 1,720 of the 4,577 high schools run by the Telangana government have neither the position of a School Assistant in Physical Education or a PE Teacher (PET) specifically sanctioned.

In fact, only 645 of the 4,577 schools have SA positions sanctioned. Around 300 positions lie vacant in state government high schools where SA or PET posts have been sanctioned.

While IT minister K.T. Rama Rao and even Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao announced designing of a new sports policy for Telangana on Monday after P.V. Sindhu's triumphant return from the Rio Olympics, 16 years ago, in 2000, the then Andhra Pradesh government had issued a Government Order on AP Sports Policy making it mandatory that each high school should have a PET, provide facilities in at least three sports, the sports authority should coach PETs in certain disciplines, school assistants in upper primary should also be coached in sports, and other positive changes.

■ Back in 2000, then erstwhile AP government issued a GO on AP sports policy making it mandatory for each high school to have a sports teacher and facilities for at least three sports. The orders remain on paper.

■ Basic equipment such as balls, nets and rackets is missing in most schools



■ Around half of more than 3,000 schools in the city of Hyderabad have no playgrounds

■ Only 100 schools make use of public grounds



There is a need for incentives to be given by the government even for mandal, district and state level winners for students to take up sports as a career
— DR S. SOMESHWAR, Chief of PET association

But these instructions remain only on paper. Another GO released in 2012 mandated six periods of physical education each week, but this too isn't being followed by many schools.

In schools where the state government has been responsible enough to recruit specific school assistants and Physical Education teachers, kabaddi and kho-kho, which have insignificant international presence, remain the most played sports because no infrastructure is required for these games.

Basic equipment such as balls, nets or rackets is missing in most schools due to lack of any separate financial provision for sports. Grounds are not maintained and have uneven surfaces with patches of wild grass.

The situation is so pathetic that none of the 4,557 government schools can even dream of having infrastructure for capital-intensive sports such as gymnastics, swimming or tennis.

While such is the situation of sports in government schools, private schools that cheered Sindhu lustily on Monday for winning the Silver in badminton, are no better.

The GHMC in December last year had opened up its 521 grounds for private schools to rent so that they could bring students for sports and other activities. The rent is Rs 10,000 for 75 hours, just around Rs 133 per hour.

However, only around 100 private schools from the city have availed of the facility of these public spaces even though half of the more than 3,000 private schools in Hyderabad have no playgrounds.