

# Sports and Human Rights

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The 2008 summer Olympic Games in Beijing, China witnessed a record television audience of over four and a half billion people. The huge numbers confirm that Olympics, Paralympics Games and other huge sporting events provide an unparalleled opportunity to reach out to more people than ever before. Such events have immense potential to promote understanding of human rights as they receive international media attention. Both sports and human rights have many fundamental values and objectives in common and therefore it is surprising to see how little interaction there has been till now between the human rights movements and the world of sport.

Sports have a vital role to play in encouraging human rights that is often overlooked. From fighting racism, sexism and homophobia to standing up for the rights of the labours building stadiums, sports and human rights are intrinsically linked. Sport is essential in the human rights context as it allows and encourages the interaction between people from different economic and ethnic backgrounds and thus help in promoting a fluid society. By introducing sport in community and school, it can encourage children towards achievement and can instil positive qualities in them. Also, participation in physical activities can help in channelling of certain emotions in the right direction as would be discussed later in the paper.

In recent times, certain organizations have devoted themselves to explore the possibilities of using sports and sporting events in ways that can bring positive changes to the society. The organizations like *The Olympic Charter*, which regulates the organizations of the Olympic Movement, are clear about their goal of placing sport at the service of

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