

# School Sports: The Missing Dimension in the Debate about Sports Transformation in Democratic South Africa Since 1994

Goolam Vahed

*Department of Historical Studies University of KwaZulu Natal, South Africa  
E-mail: vahedg@ukzn.ac.za*

**KEYWORDS** ANC. RDP. Sports Quotas. Chatsworth. Race. Class

**ABSTRACT** This study examines debates about sports in post-apartheid South Africa where there is great pressure on sports bodies and administrators to transform the game by introducing more Black players and administrators into the mainstream sports arena. While the government blames the lack of racial transformation on White administrators, this paper argues, through a case study of the township of Chatsworth in KwaZulu Natal, South Africa, that the government must accept part of the blame because it was instrumental in the collapse of sports at school where future sports stars are nurtured. This has resulted in a class-based system where mainly rich children in private and "Model C" schools have access to expert coaching and outstanding facilities from a young age which gives them a head start in the race to achieve sporting success. Reversing this trend requires a great deal of will and dedication on the part of sports administrators, and policy interventions and resources on the part of government to make facilities available to all children and young people across the country, while also addressing long term issues of malnutrition and poverty which is connected to sporting performances. Unless such intervention is forthcoming, race and class will continue to determine sporting access and opportunities for young people.

## INTRODUCTION

*If school sports come into being then there's some progress. Let's take for example athletics. We used to have school sports in our school ground, that's no more. They take it to Chatsworth Stadium, the teacher will say, okay, we'll have some practice sessions and those who are interested in the 100m, if you are a long distance runner, there's no practice sessions at all. The child goes on the school sports day, they don't have houses like in the past, there's no talent scouting. In the past we used to practice for months for our school's sports and if somebody identifies the talent out there and the teacher said, okay, you are okay to go to [trials], but teachers now do not have the time to take the child to King's Park on a Saturday. The parent must take them, there's no school involvement. If you have school sport, you may find an athlete that's very good there, but now a child participates in a sport day and finished, that's how it is.*

- Devan Pillay (2011)

Most educators, sports administrators, and community activists who spoke about their lives in Chatsworth bemoaned the demise of school sport. They associated participation in sport with various physical, emotional, and even moral health benefits, beginning in childhood but carrying through to adulthood. Schools can play a positive role in this regard. Community activ-

ists believe that the absence of organized sports structures is one of the causes of juvenile delinquency; educators feel that the absence of physical education in schools is leading to obesity and is a reason for the failure to produce well-rounded children; and sports officials believe that Black children are not given a fair deal after decades of sacrifice during the apartheid era when Black people were denied the opportunity to participate in international sports. These debates are taking place in the broader context of intense government pressure on sports associations to "transform" national teams by including more Black<sup>1</sup> players.

The African National Congress' (ANC) Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) of 1994 promised redress in many areas, including sport. Section 3.5 'SPORT AND RECREATION'<sup>2</sup> pledged as follows:

3.5.1 *One of the cruellest legacies of apartheid is its distortion of sport and recreation in our society, the enforced segregation of these activities and the gross neglect in providing facilities for the majority of South Africa's people. This has denied millions of people and particularly our youth the right to a normal and healthy life.*

3.5.2 *It is important to ensure that sporting and recreational facilities are available to all South African communities. Participation in sporting and recreational activities should reflect the country's demographics.*

*3.5.3 Sport and recreation are an integral part of reconstructing and developing a healthier society. Sport and recreation should cut across all developmental programmes, and be accessible and affordable for all South Africans....*

*3.5.4 Particular attention must be paid to the provision of facilities at schools and in communities where there are large concentrations of unemployed youth. Sport and recreation are an integral and important part of education and youth programmes.*

*3.5.5 A sports policy ... should include ... a national sports academy to undertake and coordinate training programmes concerning coaching, refereeing, umpiring and sports management.*

School sports is important in shaping future and even lifelong participation in sport. A 2005 survey by the Department of Sport and Recreation found that 46.9 percent of people aged between 16 and 20 were motivated by their school experience to participate in sports (DSRa 2005: 14). The survey called on government to 'allocate resources to schools since schools are a strong motivator for life-long sports participation. Access to Physical Education classes at school, participation in organized sports at school and involvement in competitive sport at school level all increase levels of sport participation' (DSRa 2005: 26). As important is that most sporting codes in South Africa continue to be dominated by White sportsmen. The failure to provide facilities and opportunities for young people is detrimental to developing high quality Black sportsmen and women. Ronnie Govender (2011) made this pertinent point:

*Not enough focus has been on development as such, of trying to give people the opportunity just to play –match participation – and we believe that if you start doing things correctly at a young age –from about eight to ten years old when they start talking about sport science, sport medicines, nutrition, all that is taught in those [elite] schools and yet it doesn't happen in our schools and this is why you find all the national players are coming through that pedigree. If those basic things are done properly, you'll be able to identify players that you could take to an excellent level but, at the same time, you are not neglecting the masses.*

The story of school sport in Chatsworth suggests that government has failed to adhere to its

stated goals, reducing the possibility of Black representation in national teams.

## METHODOLOGY

This study is based primarily on oral interviews with sports officials, community activists, and educators who were or are active in organizing schools sports in the apartheid era as well as in the post-apartheid period. The interviews were carried out in the period January to March 2011. They were digitally recorded and transcribed. These interviews were part of a larger and comprehensive project on the township of Chatsworth which dealt with all aspects of residents' experience – education, work, housing, sport, religion, and so on. These interviews were supplemented by accessing the websites of organisations such as the African National Congress and the Department of Sports and Recreation of the South African government to establish official policies. The interviewees were not arbitrarily chosen, but they were specifically approached to share their experiences because of their long involvement in the organisation of non-racial school sports.

## RESULTS

### a. School Sports – The Apartheid Era

Maya Singh has lived in Kharwastan, Chatsworth, for almost half a century; taught in the townships' schools for over three decades; and has been involved in school sports for most of this period. Singh was born in 1942 and matriculated from the HS Done School in Clairwood. He qualified as a teacher at the Springfield College of Education in the mid-1960s and taught at Port Shepstone High, then Westcliff Secondary in Chatsworth for three years, and spent a few years at Sastri College in Durban before being promoted to senior assistant at Glenover Secondary in Chatsworth. Singh's next stop was Isipingo Secondary, then Crossmoor Secondary, and after five years he was promoted to Deputy Principal at Phoenix Secondary. This meant travelling over a hundred kilometers daily to and from his Kharwastan home in Chatsworth. Singh is convinced that 'the department [of Education] was gunning me because of my involvement in non-racial school sport.' At the time he was head of

the Natal High School Sports Federation which opposed the education department's race-based sports policy. Persistent protests led to his transfer to Umzinto High and then to Shallcross High where he taught until 1997 when he took the offer of early retirement at the age of 55.

Singh married Pushpa in 1970 and they have four children, all of whom attended the local Umhlathuzana Primary and Apollo Secondary schools. Singh was a keen footballer, and through his student years played for teams such as Shaves Football Club, Blue Dahlia, and Riverside Juniors. As an educator Singh has always been involved in sports administration. At Glenover, Singh found that some of the students were not 'academically inclined. They could easily become drop-outs so sport became one outlet for them.' He introduced tennis, football and 'chess, so that outside school, they've got something else they can do.' Several Natal Chess Championships were held at the school. Singh prioritized sport at all schools where he taught: 'if Natal High had eighteen codes of sport, I made sure we offered eighteen,' he said proudly. This was one reason why Chatsworth produced 'some of the finest school athletes, some of the finest cricketers, footballers, volleyball players, the best gymnastics participants.' Singh was an official of the Natal High School Association, which was formed in 1957 and affiliated to the South African Senior Schools Sports Association (SASSA) which, in turn, affiliated to the South African Council of Sports (SACOS).

For most of the twentieth-century Black and White South Africans played sport separately. Segregation intensified when the National Party (NP) came to power in South Africa in 1948 and introduced its policy of Apartheid which sought to separate South Africans rigidly according to race. The internal and external strategies to put pressure on the apartheid government included applying economic and cultural sanctions against the white minority government. To coordinate an international sports boycott of South Africa, non-racial sports organisations established the South African Council on Sport (SACOS) on 17 March 1973. "No normal sport in an abnormal society" became SACOS' slogan (Nauright 1997).

Singh was president of SASSA when the organisation commemorated its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1982. SASSA abided by SACOS' principles, which included not using "white" facilities such

as the King's Park and Kingsmead stadiums. Interest in school sports at the time, according to Singh, was 'tremendous. We had over eighty schools affiliated, and participation from school level to provincial level was very good because we had structures – inter-school, zonal, inter-zonal, regional, provincial and national.'

There was rapid political change from the mid to late-1980s. SACOS continued to adhere strongly to its slogan of 'no normal sport in an abnormal society'. When serious political negotiations began to take place between the NP and the African National Congress (ANC), SACOS was sidelined. Instead, the ANC-aligned National Sports Congress (NSC) was formed in 1989 to oversee sporting unity in the country (Nauright 1997). The ANC felt that sport could create positive images of national strength and shared ideas of common destiny and appropriated sport as part of its nationalizing programme (Booth 1998). According to an NSC discussion document dated September 1990, SACOS' 'strategies and tactics were static, outdated and counterproductive.... Its actions are out of tune with those of the ANC ... its ideological rigidity is a fatal barrier to progress' (Allie 2001: 194). Unlike SACOS, the NSC was willing to open discussion with established (White) sports bodies. This mirrored the ideology of those in the ANC which believed that change would come through negotiation with the White government (Gemmell 2004).

### **b. Flawed Unity and Misplaced Priorities**

The period leading up to South Africa's first non-racial election in 1994 saw the former 'white' and 'non-racial' sporting associations merge to form single associations. In the opinion of many sports officials as well as ordinary spectators, the way in which this took place sowed the seeds of future problems. SACOS, as pointed out, opposed the settlement because its members felt that the beneficiaries of change were those who had enjoyed the benefits of racial discrimination. But their views were disregarded by the ANC aligned National Sports Congress (NSC).

Ronnie Govender, a resident of Kharwastan since 1971, was the Sports Development Officer at DUT at the time of our interview in 2011, President of the Kharwastan Sports Union (KSU), and member of the Curries Fountain

Committee. Like Maya Singh, he has been involved in non-racial sports for almost five decades. Born in the working class area of Mayville in 1948, he dropped out of school for financial reasons and took up spray painting as a career. Govender was politicized at an early age as one of his neighbours was M.P. Naicker, a high ranking official of the South African Communist Party (SACP), and Govender was exposed to brutal police raids on political activists. Govender played soccer and cricket for teams such as Young Aces, Sydenham United, and Mayville Parades and, when he moved to Sydenham, he was one of the few Indians to take up rugby when he joined Crusaders and was the club's delegate at provincial rugby meetings.

Govender is adamant that the principles on which sports unity took place were flawed as sport was sacrificed on the altar of political unity:

*I remember during the Gatting tour [1990]. We were all in this place [Curries Fountain] planning a big campaign. The ANC was also meeting and then there was going to be a cricket game at Kingsmead – Krish Mackerduj was also here – and an instruction came from higher up, they said, no, the cricket game must go on and the protest will take place in Cape Town against that tour. Some of us were part of the national team that was negotiating for unity in a number of codes of sport - every one of those meetings we went to, we were beginning to see establishment sport agreeing suddenly to everything. I think they were told to please give in to these people and we will play international sport. The SACOS people weren't happy about that.... What we expected is not really happening very seriously in terms of development.*

The main problem, according to Govender, is that the focus of government and sporting bodies has been on elite sport at the expense of mass participation of young people which would help to unearth future international sports stars.

*Whilst winning medals should be the ultimate, you need to start somewhere, and that is creating opportunities for everybody to play sport.... If you look at SASCOC,<sup>2</sup> their focus is on medals. They need to produce medals. Is that what we want for the country? And yet we are saying, promotion of sport should be part of human development also. You cannot compare South Africa's programmes to the ones in Aus-*

*tralia because we come from a different past. We want to get people to start participating in sport rather than looking at excellence.*

### c. USASSA (1994) and its Discontents

The NSC formed the United School Sports Association of South Africa (USASSA) in 1994 to replace the SACOS aligned SASSA. When SASSA met in Kimberley on 30 April 1994, delegates agreed to formally meet with USASSA and resolved that for 'a meaningful and lasting unity of school sport', the process should take place in three phases: unity at executive level; demarcation into zones to organize inter-school and inter-zonal matches only; and 'once the vestiges of the past have been removed', these zones will lead to provincial and national competition. Maya Singh was one of those who preached caution. In a letter to Post Natal on 8 April 1994 he warned:

*Unity in certain codes of sport was achieved as a matter of expediency.... With vast differences in education expenditure and equally vast differences in availability of resources, it will be a travesty of justice and a tragedy that we will forever be shameful of if a hasty package on unity in sport is concluded. I will not be party to nor will I sacrifice our children.... We will continue to serve the best interests of school-children and provide them with sports opportunities at grassroots level.*

Singh, as president, represented SASSA at the "unity talks" in Johannesburg which brought all schools under one body. Although he was concerned about the consequences of unity for Black schools because of historic imbalances, Singh realized that unity was inevitable and that staying out of negotiations would not stop the process but would deny him an opportunity to influence the process. He was appointed vice-president of the new body.

Unification of school sport, ironically, led to the virtual implosion of an active school sports programme. Bala Kamal, principal of Summerfield Primary in Chatsworth, has been involved in school sports since 1979. He believes that SASSA's sound structures had provided 'a number of opportunities for the kids, you know, every month something was going on.' Post-1994 unity has not materialized as school officials expected: 'everything just fell flat and there's not much opportunities for our children.' This

has disappointed teachers, officials, and children themselves.

#### **d. Chatsworth and Districts School Sports Association (CADSSA)**

Prakash Nanjee was involved in the Natal Primary Schools Sports Board structure prior to 1994. He was the first chairperson of Charlammo (Chatsworth and Lamontville), which was formed in 1994 when individual sporting councils were scrapped and areas re-demarcated to break racial barriers. Charlammo included schools from Lamontville and Chatsworth. Because of problems around demographics and transport, the area was divided into six zones, five in Chatsworth and one in Lamontville. Primary schools in each zone played against each other and the winners met in finals where a composite representative team was selected. This arrangement lasted for three years before collapsing. One reason was finance. Each school had to pay an affiliation fee per student (with USASSA and Charlammo each taking 50 percent) which poorer children / schools could not afford. There was also no subsidy for transport (it cost R80 per taxi load within Chatsworth and more for trips to Lamontville), and there was a perceived lack of interest by teachers in some schools.

The demise of Charlammo led to the formation of the Chatsworth and Districts School Sports Association (CADSSA) in 1997 to organize school sports in Chatsworth. The likes of Vinay Mothiram, Gopie Naidoo, V. Singh, V. Lalla, Bala Kamal, and Prakash Nanjee have been active in CADSSA structures. Chatsworth is divided into five sub-zones. For example, units one and two (Bayview and Havenside) constitute a sub-zone of eight schools which is called Bayhaven. Its current chairperson is David Malaki of Excelsior Primary; Prakash Nanjee is on the executive; Mrs Govender from Fairhaven is the secretary; the principal of Oceanview Primary, R Naidoo, is treasurer, and there are various co-conveners. At the commencement of each year, Bayhaven conducts workshops which educators attend in order for schools to affiliate. Workshops cover such things as refereeing, umpiring and coaching skills.

CADSSA has a calendar of events for the calendar year. Its covers such codes as soccer, cricket, table tennis, chess, volleyball, netball,

swimming, athletics, and basketball. All of this is self-funded. From the Wednesday games, a composite CADSSA team is chosen to play at Durban and District level. From there, players are selected for the province and then the national team. The strong primary school structure is not carried over to high school. At CADSSA meetings, according to Nanjee, chairperson Vinay Motiram, principal of Crossmoor Secondary, almost always expresses his disappointment at the low level of participation at secondary school level.

#### **e. Lovelife Games**

The demise of USASSA, Singh believes, exacerbated the problems of school sport. From 2000 to 2005, Singh was involved in Lovelife Games, a national intervention programme funded by the Kaiser Family Foundation (75 percent) and the South African government (25 percent) to promote positive lifestyles among school going children. As USASSA was a partner in the programme, Singh was involved at national level in the initial discussions with Lovelife. The aim of the programme was to 'use sport as a means to fight against social evils like HIV/AIDS, teenage pregnancy and drugs and what have you.' The programme started with eight sporting codes and was running 23 codes by 2005, including netball, chess, football, softball, baseball, table tennis, and cross country running. Drama, creative arts, and debating were part of the programme. According to Singh,

*the games were organized at the lowest level so Chatsworth had its own little games. It went on from zonal to inter-zonal, to regional, from regional to provincial, then to inter-provincial, it became the National Games – that was a whole year programme. And education was part of it to see if they [young people] can carry out a new lifestyle. We introduced such things as drama, art, graffiti, you know, so that they can express themselves in a more meaningful way. We tried to channel their energies in a proper way.*

What, in Singh's opinion, was a very successful programme that reached half a million children in 3,700 schools countrywide, came to an abrupt end in 2005. At that point, USASSA was organizing 44 regional games countrywide, which culminated in nine provincial games, and

a single national game. Singh was co-ordinator in KwaZulu-Natal. At a meeting at the Clairwood Racecourse in early 2005, where Singh was chairperson of the local organizing committee, the then Minister of Sport informed them that USASSA would have to 'wind down' as his Department would be taking over the programme. What followed was a 'tragedy', according to Singh, as the department 'couldn't even get the regional games off in the whole country, they only had about half a dozen here and there.' There were no provincial games and Singh was inundated with calls from people wanting to know 'what happened, when are we going to play games? I said, "don't ask me, phone Sport and Recreation".'

According to the then Minister of Sport and Recreation, Makhenkesi Stofile, USASSA had 'outlived' its usefulness and he shut it down on 15 December 2005. Government took over the organisation of school sport while SASCOC was to focus on high performance sports. The programme was to be co-ordinated by a National Co-ordinating Committee (NACOC). Cabinet had endorsed this in principle on 25 June 2003 and the framework for collaboration between the Departments of Education and Sports and Recreation was signed by Ministers Naledi Pandor and Stofile respectively on 17 March 2005. Speaking before a parliamentary committee, then USASSA president D. Nkosi complained that a unilateral decision was made to shut down USASSA without consulting his organisation. USASSA had no idea whether and how they would be integrated into the new system and felt that government was 'riding roughshod' over them (PMGa 2005). According to Singh, this change was tragic because, 'after that, there was no school sport, it's dead, nobody is having fixtures any more. CADSSA is having some fixtures because they are interested. The people that are laughing all the way to the bank in sport are the ex-Model C schools and the private schools – it's business as usual there.'

This is not just the perception of disgruntled educators. When the Departments of Sport and Recreation and Education briefed Parliament's Sport and Recreation Committee on 6 February 2008, they conceded that there were structural problems, in part because the NACOC confederation was dominated by bureaucrats and was not seen as representative of sporting codes. The committee felt that 'school sport should be run

by educators with minimal involvement from civil servants' and that a representative structure should be created. The department proposed a Section 21 company which the Committee opposed as a move towards privatisation (PMGb 2008).

#### **f. Memorandum of Understanding (2011)**

After a lengthy delay, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed by the Minister of Basic Education and the Minister of Sport on 13 December 2011. At the beginning of 2012, schools were invited to register in a league programme ("Magnificent Wednesdays") which kicked off at Vlakfontein High School in Mamelodi in Gauteng in March 2012. During 2012, 11,000 of 27,000 schools registered for programme but only 7,000 schools were actively participating in five sporting codes: football, rugby, netball, cricket and athletics (DSRb 2012). By the end of May 2012, 23 per cent of schools in KZN had registered. Schools faced many challenges: lack of equipment and facilities at schools; limited capacity in terms of coaches; difficulty in enforcing the registration of schools; and funding. While former Model C schools were on board, disadvantaged schools were finding it difficult to commit to the Department's programmes as most of them were rurally based. Committees had not yet been formed at district and provincial levels, nor was there a National Code Committee or a teacher-driven structure for school sports (PMGb 2012).

Presenting the annual report before the Parliamentary Monitoring Group on 17 October 2012, Alec Moemi, Director General of the Department of Sports and Recreation, said that he hoped to have all schools participating by 2016. Independent (Private) schools, however, continued to participate in their own leagues. 'The Department did not want to disrupt their leagues,' he pointed out, and had postponed their integration by three years. This was 'also due to the mismatches that would exist currently between independent schools and the others.' A three tier school sports system continues to exist in South Africa, perpetuating class and race privilege. Major problems in implementing the government's programme include the lack of personnel (trained teacher coaches) and the fact that 'the Department's budget was being cut back each year and the mandate had become

more difficult to fulfill. Expansion plans have been temporarily halted because of these financial issues.... The Department often feels like the stepchild of the government as we are always the first to experience budget cuts' (DSRB 2012).

Chatsworth is one area that is not yet actively involved in the new structure. Nanjee's Bayhaven schools, for example, are not involved. He received a questionnaire from the education department which he filled out but heard nothing subsequently. It was at the CADDSA AGM in February 2012 that V. Lalla spoke of the new government initiative. When Lalla was asked how he got to be invited he explained that it was as a representative of the KZN Cricket Union. CADDSA as a sports body that had played a pivotal role in sport for so long was not invited. In June 2012, however, CADSSA was recognized by the new body.

## DISCUSSION

School sport has been and continues to be plagued by a number of problems in post-apartheid South Africa. These are summarized below.

### a. Structural Problems

There are structural problems in school sport, according to Singh, because longstanding and sound school sports structures were dismantled. Local areas such as Chatsworth, he points out, 'got lost because the organizers who took over, number one, did not have the expertise to organize for that vast area; number two, they did not have the foresight to say, "look, we've got the expertise in all those places, bring them in to do it;" unity brought people together but, at the same time, lost a lot of people.' In the Durban South – Ethekwini municipality all the primary and high schools were brought under one structure. It was impossible, Singh contends, 'to make adequate provision without forming sub-zones so that schools within each area could work together. Chatsworth was swallowed into this large structure and came to be neglected.' Organization was poor. Schools were often notified on a Thursday or Friday that a tournament was going to take place on the weekend. 'Without a prior inter-school arrangement and selection process, what team are you going to send there?

And if you get to that area on that day, it is totally in disarray.'

### b. Financial Constraints

Lack of finance handicapped USSASSA which, at provincial and regional levels, was unable to provide meaningful financial support to schools and sports players. USASSA was made up of teachers and retired teachers who volunteered their time and depended on external funding. Government financial assistance was not forthcoming. The likes of Singh and Govender found this ironic in the context of the push to increase Black participation in competitive sport at a national level. USASSA was seeing to 30,000 children, many in poor areas, who were unable to participate in organized school sports due to the lack of funding. USASSA, and by implication the government, failed to realize its mandate of mass participation. In many parts of the country, school sport was kept alive by dedicated individuals at their own initiative, though under USASSA's banner. According to Singh, 'in areas like Chatsworth, Phoenix, Verulam, Tongaat and even Pietermaritzburg, those people that were involved in the previous structures kept things going by organizing among themselves.'

### c. Attitude of "Model C" Schools

The attitude of some former Model C school, according to Singh, hampered the unification process. "Model C" is a special category of school in South Africa that refers to schools in former white areas. Historically, these schools were given a disproportionate amount of resources and had excellent sporting facilities. They are also situated in more affluent areas of the country which means that parents are able to subsidise sport at these schools unlike the vast majority of children who live in economically depressed townships and rural areas. According to Singh, Model C schools did not want to compromise their programmes and 'kept away from all of this – kept their own sport going, did not get involved in the greater structure.' In 1996 USASSA met with 'relevant stakeholders from the white side to come and address us' in Pretoria. To Singh, who was vice-president, it was evident that 'they did not want to continue participating because they had their own ar-

rangements, their own little tournaments, but we made sure that whoever participated in those tournaments will not be eligible to be selected for internationals because USASSA was affiliate of the International School Sports Association.' So former Model C schools 'were forced to come in, but tongue-in-cheek, tolerating the situation as it were.' The reluctance of privileged segments of the school population to integrate with the wider school sporting structure added to the difficulty of achieving sporting parity.

#### d. Spirit of Volunteerism

Volunteer teachers constituted the lifeblood of school sport for decades but teachers are now reluctant to give off their time as they realize that the "playing fields" are not level. One reason, according to Singh, is that teachers find it difficult to 'volunteer their services as they were doing in the past [because] of the workload in schools as class numbers became bigger, so sport became a very minor priority.' A second factor, Kamal pointed out, was that former Model C schools had 'the funding to employ outside coaches and they are paid. In the so-called ex-Indian schools, the teacher is expected to do that coaching [without compensation].' Teachers questioned this disparity.

Prakash Nanjee of Meadowhill Primary in Unit 2 (Bayview), Chatsworth, has also been involved in school sport for more than three decades. Prior to 1994, he was involved in the Natal Primary Schools Sports Board structure. Post-1994 he was the first chairperson of CharLmo (Chatsworth and Lamontville), which evolved into the Chatsworth and Districts School Sports Association (CADSSA). While 'the transformation period was very difficult, a lot of teething problems,' he said, 'I was prepared to go through with it.' Nanjee pointed out that some of his colleagues who had transferred to former Model C schools and who had for years volunteered their services without remuneration, found that at the end of the academic year they were given an "honorarium" for their involvement in sporting activities. When word got around, this was demoralizing to the so-called ex-HOD [Indian schools] teachers who say, "listen, I'm putting petrol, we used to take kids on sports tournament, your own money, you buy orange juice for the learners because it's not a

tradition in our school that the hosting schools provide eats and refreshments. So it has contributed to some form of apathy amongst some former ex-HOD educators who feel, "I'm going the extra mile, I'm benefiting nothing".

Ronnie Govender also felt that 'times have changed', due to the commercialization of sport:

*In the old days we were in sport because it was a passion for us, it wasn't about money. With unification there was a whole problem of money becoming easily available so with our administrators, unfortunately, the focus was, what are we going to get out of it? People don't do things voluntarily anymore. If you are planning a programme, one of the items on your budget will be food and transport – we paid out of our pockets for those things because it was bringing communities together.*

#### e. Lack of Physical Education (PE)

Another negative development, according to Singh, is that PE 'as a subject in most schools has gone out of the window completely. It has been lumped together with Life Skills or Life Orientation, school sport became nil. They don't even have such a thing as inter-house activity, inter-class activity, all went out through the window.' Devan Pillay is a longtime sports administrator and community activist, who is also chairperson of the Chatsworth Sport and Regional Council. He is adamant that 'the government's to blame [for the demise of school sport], we must not mess around on this, taking away PE teachers from school?' This has perpetuated class differences because schools in affluent areas appoint sports masters. As Pillay points out, 'sport is provided for the so-called elitist class again that we've been fighting for a long time against, and the poor child is still kicking a flat ball in the streets.'

Nanee, a qualified PE specialist, points out that prior to 1994 there were male and female PE teachers at every school, and he finds it ironic that post-1994, 'when our learners have the opportunity of representing their country, the department has withdrawn the services of PE specialists.' How ironic, Nanjee points out, that government ministers are 'wanting to see more non-white representation at national level but at grassroots level you don't have this educator there to teach them the skills.' The role of the PE teacher, historically, extended beyond the

boundary. According to Kamal, 'the PE teacher was the livewire in the school, he or she was the motivator, they made things happen, everyone just followed but now you don't have that.' Nanjee recalls that 'in those days the discipline of the school was the responsibility of PE teachers because when you went down for PE, they disciplined you into your behaviour, your attire, and how you did in school.' He believes that this is contributing to disciplinary problems in schools.

#### f. Facilities and Resources

Even when teachers with initiative want to introduce sport at school they are constrained by the lack of facilities and resources. Nanjee pointed out that the *'type of facilities that the ANC government has provided for us at school level, is absolutely pathetic. We have to buy our own equipment. We're battling to pay water and electricity, we don't have stationery and textbooks, which is our priority. It doesn't make sense that the government has disadvantaged the disadvantaged more, and the so-called white learners and schools are still running the roost and calling the shots.'* Nanjee's school Merryhill *'had to go on a fundraising drive to put our own synthetic cricket wicket on it. We had to purchase our own lawnmower to maintain the ground, do our own marking and all coaching is done by the educators.'*

Kamal has been involved in cricket for a long time. At the time of the interview in 2011 he was chairperson of primary schools cricket in KZN coastal region. Many schools in townships, he pointed out, do not *'have facilities ... this is one of the major problems. How do you expect a child who doesn't have facilities to do well?'* Kamal's school Summerfield has a full-sized soccer field with a synthetic cricket pitch. The community motivated in 2002 to the municipality that there were no recreational amenities in the area. Following a feasibility study, the municipality offered to build a sports field at the school, which was the only vacant land in the community, on condition that the wider community would be allowed to use the ground after school hours.

The lack of facilities in townships has resulted in some of the best sportsmen being headhunted by former Model C schools. Nanjee, for example, mentioned that his nephew was offered a full bursary by a Model C school

*... without applying because he was a top swimmer at KZN Aquatics, his time was on the computer so they picked his time up, they headhunted him, they promised the parents a 100 percent bursary. So what these top former white schools are doing, because they have the facilities and the personnel, they market their schools, their schools are businesses, they just target all the top players and athletes and give them the bursary, bring them into their school, when they excel they actually promote the name of the school.*

Kamal pointed to Jonathan Vandiar as an example. Vandiar, a provincial cricketer for the KwaZulu Natal team, attended Moorlands Primary and would have gone to the local high school, Crossmoor. Instead, he was given a bursary to attend a former Model C school because of its cricket facilities. Had he stayed in Chatsworth, Kamal points out, he may well have inspired other young cricketers.

Both Nanjee and Kamal pointed to swimming pools as an example of the crisis in townships. The question, according to Kamal, was *'not how many schools have swimming pools but how many have swimming pools that are in operation - only one (Evergreen Primary) because they struck a deal with the swimming club to run it for them. The rest of the schools that I know of that have swimming pools in our area, they've all filled them up because they can't maintain them.'* Govender pointed out that while there were reasonable facilities for soccer and cricket, *'what about volleyball or basketball. There's no facilities for volleyball, three basketball courts for the whole of Chatsworth, so how are you going to produce players? There's basketball courts in schools but you don't have a school structure that can promote basketball, and the same with netball, volleyball.'*

The result is that there are great disparities in sporting facilities for children. Privileged sectors of society have state-of-the-art facilities and are able to participate in various sporting activities. Large segments of society, in contrast, are denied this opportunity because of the absence of proper playing fields and even rudimentary equipment. As Devan Pillay puts it, sports continues to be *'provided for the so-called elitist class again, that we've been fighting for a long, long time against, and the poor child is still kicking a flat ball in the streets.'*

## CONCLUSION

In the post-apartheid period in South Africa, there has been intense political pressure on sporting codes to produce international “stars”. Yet, as this study shows, the government has not fulfilled its responsibility to promote the game at lower levels through mass participation at school level. On the contrary its policies have contributed to the collapse of a working system of school sport. It is at school that most Black children first get the opportunity to play sport, both inter and intra-school. There are plenty of benefits to playing sport. One is improved health at a time when there is an obesity crisis; sport can help to develop leadership roles; it provides an opportunity for children to interact with other children and adults and develop social skills; and children feel empowered by representing their “communities”, be it the local neighbourhood, school, region, province, or country. In the South African context, where there is so much emphasis by government on transforming the racial make-up of national representative teams, it is unacceptable that young people are not given the opportunity to participate in sport so that those with talent can progress to higher levels of competition. The motto should be “every child, every opportunity”.

Government has performed abysmally as poorer children cannot afford costs associated with sport, such as affiliation fees, transport, and purchasing playing kits. Former white schools in urban areas generally have proper facilities and qualified PE teachers who oversee a variety of activities; conversely, in most schools in former Black and rural areas there is little organized sport. Government’s failure to provide a functional school sports system is due to a combination of factors, which includes its desire to “control” sport through bureaucrats and an unwillingness to invest financially in facilities and resources. While education in general is in a critical state in South Africa and enormous investment is needed to rectify past imbalances, the government invested billions of rands in building football stadiums for the 2010 World Cup, most of which are lying idle. That money would have been put to better use to develop sports facilities at schools in order to develop a flourishing sports development programme for the benefit of the masses.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Government should invest money and personnel (PE teachers / coaches) to establish sound school sports structures and prioritise the playing of organized sport at school level. Proper facilities and equipment must be provided;

Nurture talented sportsmen and women within townships. As the situation stands, children identified as ‘talented’ end up in former white schools, depriving townships of talented sportsmen and women who can serve as role models. This perpetuates the race and class divide that haunts South African sport.

Instead of placing the sports programmes in the care of bureaucrats, teachers with years of “on-the-ground” experience should be put at the helm of such programmes.

There should be massive investment in school sporting facilities, in equipping teachers with appropriate training and expertise, on the part of government and “big business” so that a framework can be created that allows young sportsmen and women to develop their sporting talents, which will yield benefits that extend well beyond the boundary.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Black, as used here, refers to apartheid designations Africans, Indians, and Coloureds. While “race” has no scientific basis, it is a social fact in South Africa. As Posel (2000: 51) points out, ‘after decades of apartheid’s racial reasoning, ‘the idea that South African society comprises four distinct races – ‘whites’, ‘Coloureds’, ‘Indians’, and ‘Africans’ – has become a habit of thought and experience, a facet of “commonsense” still widely in evidence.’

<sup>2</sup> The South African Sports Confederation and Olympic Committee (SASCOC) is the body that controls all “high performance” sport in South Africa. It was formed as a Section 21 Company 27 November 2004. The main object in forming SACOC was to develop high performance sport in South Africa and be the controlling body for the South African team at multi-sport international games such as the Olympics.

## REFERENCES

- Allie M 2000. *History Of The Western Province Cricket Board. More Than A Game*. Cape Town: Cape Argus.
- Booth D 1998. *The Race Game. Sport and Politics in South Africa*. London: Taylor and Francis.
- Chatsworth Sporting Club 2010. <<http://www.crazyfone.co.za/clients/chatsworthsporting/history.htm>> (Retrieved June 3, 2012).
- Department of Sport and Recreation (DSRa). ‘Participation Patterns in Sport and Recreation Activities in South

- Africa. 2005 <http://www.kzndsr.gov.za/LinkClick.aspx?link=GIS%2FParticipation+patterns+in+sport+and+recreation+activities+in+SA.pdf&tabid=128&mid=924> (Retrieved November 4, 2012).
- Department of Sport and Recreation (DSRb): Annual Report 2011/2012. <<http://www.pmg.org.za/print/34604>> (Retrieved March 2, 2013).
- Gemmell J 2004.*The Politics of South African Cricket*. London: Routledge.
- Nauright J 1997. *Sport, Cultures and Identities in South Africa*. Cape Town: David Philip.
- Parliamentary Monitoring Group (PMGa). 'Dismantling United School Sport Association of South Africa,' Sport and Recreation Portfolio Committee, 2 August 2005. <<http://www.pmg.org.za/print/6053>> (Retrieved June 2, 2012).
- Parliamentary Monitoring Group (PMGb). 'School Sports Challenges: Departments Of Sports & Education Briefing,' Discussion, Sport And Recreation Portfolio Committee, 6 February 2008. <<http://www.pmg.org.za/minutes/20080206-school-sports-challenges-departments-sports-education-briefing>> (Retrieved June 2, 2012).
- Posel D 2001. What's in a Name? Racial Categorizations under Apartheid and their Afterlife. *Transformation*, (47): 50-74.

## INTERVIEWS

- Govender, Ronnie. January 13, 2011. Sports administrator.
- Kamal, Bala, March 1, 2011. Educator and sports official.
- Nanjee, Prakash, March 1, 2011. Educator and sports official.
- Pillay, Devan. January 13, 2011. Community Activist and sports organizer.
- Singh, Maya, January 26, 2011. Sports official and educator.

