

Kiren Rijju inaugurates Khelo India Community Coach Development Programme, says PE teachers, community coaches have a big role to play in making India a strong sporting nation

New Delhi, June 2: Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports launched a 25-days Khelo India Community Coach Development Programme for 15,000 PE Teachers and Community Coaches across India. The programme was inaugurated by the Union Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports Shri Kiren Rijju on Monday evening.

Calling this a critical and far-reaching programme which will further boost India's objective of becoming a sporting nation, Shri Kiren Rijju said, "Earlier physical education in school used to be an ad-hoc arrangement and never given much importance. But if India has to be a sporting superpower we need to create a culture of sports in the country. Community Coaches and PE teachers have a big role to play in reaching every child in every corner of India and motivating them to take up sports and fitness as part of their daily life. If the culture of sports can be developed, champions will automatically emerge."

Speaking about how Fitness has slowly become a way of life for people in India, the Sports Minister said, "The way our Honourable PM has envisioned the Fit India Movement, it has created an impact on citizens. Everyone always knew fitness is important, but with the Movement people have been encouraged to take up fitness as a way of life. We will work closely with the HRD ministry and start taking this to every school in India. Fitness should be a part of daily life, not something optional. This is the beginning and, in a few years, this will have far-reaching effects and India will turn into a fitter country."

The course module will equip PE teachers and community coaches with the right set of knowledge and skills to help children of all ages to take on a variety of fitness-related activities and conduct age-appropriate fitness tests. Besides the regular sessions to be conducted by eminent educationists in the field of fitness and physical education, the participants will also be exposed to an exclusive session by an international expert every day.

In the inaugural session, Professor Rosa Lopez De'Amico, President of the International Association of Physical Education and Sport for Girls and Women and Professor Darlene Kluka, Vice President of the International Council of Sport Science and Physical Education were the guest speakers. The speakers harped on the importance of not only making Physical Education classes in schools better but also ensuring that our PE teachers are well-trained for the job so as to ensure maximum output from the children they train. This was seen as part of the larger objective of making India a healthier, fitter and more sport-friendly nation.

Ms. Darlene Kluka called this online programme a great initiative for the world to notice and respect India for the changes it is making to their physical education strategy and said that it should eventually become a people's movement. "This is an important initiative towards making India a healthier nation. A healthy nation can afford to spend its money on various other things, rather than healthcare."

Ms. Rosa De'Amico who is also a former international gymnast from Venezuela spoke on the importance of this programme as well as the need to improve participation of women in sports. " It is very important to train PE teachers and community coaches. The pandemic has given an opportunity to start these online programmes, and participants must make the most of it. We have been encouraging the participation of women in sport. In many parts of the world, women are disadvantaged about participating in physical education and sport. While it is important to have PE classes, It is important that teachers are trained and are ready to work with more girl athletes," she said.

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