

Sports As a Means of Enhancing Self Reliance and Nation Building

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Abstract This study examined sports as a means of enhancing self reliance, the writer see sports as an employment avenue for athletes, coaches, managers and sports writers in Nigeria, creating socio-economic development for the country. This paper also identified some values of sports as an instrument that enhance national unity irrespective of ethnic and religious diversity. The writers recommended that people should be encouraged to participate in sporting activities in order to achieve the needed values.

Introduction

Sport is a social agent that brings different people of different ages and religious background together, either as a sport producers or consumers, so that both can make good use of their leisure time. The players are usually referred to as primary producers who engage in sporting activities in order to entertain the spectators, while secondary consumers watch them perform (Babalola and Oyeniya 2003).

According to Olajide (2003) sports is an institutionalized physical activity which operate by rules fixed externally. He described sports as activities with clear standard of performance involving physical exertion through competition, governed by norms, definitions and role relationships, typically performed by member of organized group, with the goal of achieving some rewards through defeat of others competitors.

Sports today, is global in scope and sporting events are followed with great interest by the people of many countries. Sports in an international tool for politics and nationalism. As such, it has a means of obtaining recognition and giving attention in the desire of the people (Omoruan, 1992):

It is now important for the federal, state and local government to provide adequate facilities for the schools. It is also important to employ qualified personnel in the tertiary institutions to teach physical education. Precisely, if facilities like soccer field, handball court, hockey pitch, gymnasium, volleyball court, basketball court, tennis court, to mention a few are available, plus adequate personnel, the rate of participation will be high. It will later produce skilled sports men and women as well as good physical educator or teachers (Abubakar, 2006).

Intercollegiate sport refers to the competition where top athletes of higher institutions compete within themselves. It is primarily meant for elite sport men and women of higher institutions like University, Polytechnics, colleges of education etc (Olajike, 1992).

According to Bucher (2001) inter collegiate sport represents an integral parts of total physical education programme which mostly involved from the intramural programmes. It is designed for students that are highly skilled in sports. Intercollegiate sports serve the following purposes.

- It provides students with opportunity for fun, recreation and fellowship through participation in sport.
- It serves as an extension of the instruction programme by giving students the opportunity to practicalized what they have learnt in the classroom, e.g moral and theories of games.
- It provides students with opportunities that will be conducive to their health and physical fitness.
- It motivates students participation in sports skills at their own level.
- It provides students with opportunities for the release of tension and aggression and provides a feeling of achievement through sports participation all of which are conducive to mental and emotional health.
- It provides forums or avenues to share common interests.

- It encourage the process of psychological wearing of self-confidence, so important to the adolescents.
- It develops the give and take attitude, essential to good sportsmanship.
- It plays a vital role in the development of sports in the country, especially in the field of manpower development and provision of expertise and experience, which are very important to sport promotion.
- It promotes social interaction and cultural heritage, in spite of the diverse cultural differences among ethnic groups in the country.
- There is no doubt that the purposes or objectives of intercollegiate sport are quite lofty and desirable. It is unfortunate however, that there are lost constraints to the achievement for the goals stated above. The purpose of this paper, therefore, is to examine sports as a means of enhancing self reliance.

Importance of Sports to the National Development

Augustine (2003) listed the followings as the importance of national development.

1. Sports create employment for several people aside the athletes themselves. This includes job for coaches, managers, agents, medical professional, dietician, journalists and body guards. All these people demand goods and services in an economy, which leads to growth and development of the economy and the society in which they live.
2. Sports also provide tremendous business opportunity in merchandising and in the healthcare sector in many economics. Whole lots of manufacturing industries have emerged producing sports attires. Sports equipment sports souvenirs, health products and services for sportsmen, women and fans, such industries are contributing immensely to socio-economic development of the country.
3. Media organization earn lots of income from providing local, national or global satellite coverage of major tournaments such as; European champions leagues and world cup.
4. The hosting of major international sport events and festivals drives growth and development to the host countries or cities. Such development includes construction of hostels, stadium, roads, games villages, provisions of information technology, security, media and hospitality services etc.
5. African countries with reference to Nigeria have become majors exporters of talented soccer stars to Europe and most of these players earn huge income. Many of these repatriate significant amounts of money, home to improve the economic situation of their families as well as contribute to the development of their communities and country at large.
6. Sports do promote and contribute to the development of societies and nations. First and foremost, a sporting culture just for the fun or if, produces healthy and more productive citizens. No wonder the ancient Romans used to say "mensa ana incorpore sano" meaning a sound mind lives in a sound body.

A physically fit person is not only mentally alert, but also more productive, when it comes to the use of motors and psychomotor skills in the work environment.

Peter (2003) in his contribution stated that as a result of competition, there is evidence of a decline in youth crime and youngsters were given a sense of self esteem and local pride.

Values of Sports

Values are social shared ideas about what is good, right and desirable. These could be enjoyed through participating in sports. These values includes:

1. Physiological values
2. Psychological values
3. Sociological values

Physiological Value: It was observed that when a person is active in sport, it strengthens the heart, increases its efficiency and reduces resting heart rate. It also decreases the risk of coronary heart disease, prevents obesity and excessive. It prevent any disease that include varicose vein and decreases systolic and diastolic blood pressures, develops collateral circulation, quickly clears fat from the blood stream increases the amount of hemoglobin and coronary blood supply, reduces the clothing ability of the blood, improves cardio-respiratory functional capacity and physical working ability as a result of health status and quality of life. It increases flexibility and retards the physical and physiological changes that result from aging (Akinsami 1995)

Psychological Values: Persons who do not learn how to play at least in one sport aren't fully educated. Also, persons who can't or won't participate regularly in one sporting activity or the other many be accumulating tensions and frustration as well obesity accompanying with circulatory problems. However, Ajeigbe (2004) asserted that bodily events affects mental events and mental events in turn affects bodily events. Therefore, if sports is properly planned and harnessed it will help to train oneself to be disciplined, tolerant to pains, danger, discomfort and ability to adapt to the challenges of life, whether on the field of play or within one's society.

In addition, Biddle and Fox (1991) enumerated the psychological benefits of when they mentioned that sports and exercises aid the release of muscular tension, anxiety and enhance morales. All these are often accompanied by a post exercise reduction in blood pressure improve blood sugar and lipid profile.

Omolawon (1999) opined that the maintenance of a reasonable amount of fitness and activity throughout the life span helps delay the aging process, adding life to years as well as years to life.

Sociological values: The social values of sports include leadership and ability to follow and co-operate. Self confidence and a sense of belonging, appreciation of other skills and performance, respect for the right of others and good sportsmanship skills. Participants, are provided the opportunity to work together as a team. New friends are made among the participants, while olds ones are solidified. Sports equally teaches the youths how to cooperate and cooperate and coordinate with other people as a group. Sports also helps individuals to reduce tension and frustration, self acceptance and development of positive emotional and intellectual behaviour are enhanced. In addition, participation in sports can stimulate higher level of educational aspiration. Sports will also promote socialization process through interaction between coaches and players participants, spectators and fans etc.

Onifade (2001) opined that individuals, especially those from the multi-national countries could be merged through sports since it serves as a cohesive agent to bring about unity and national awareness. Sports is equally used as am avenue for appreciation of the ethical values in a country. Success in sport has some national impact such as prestige status and respectability.

Sports As a Means of Social Functions

Abubakar (2006) opined that sports is an important institution that is directly affecting the lives of the majority of the population, who are either participants or spectators of various sports. He said, like all other institutions, sports serve various social function e.g.

- It provides organized leisure activities in the society for the purpose of relaxation, enjoyment and entertainments.
- It offers opportunities for physical exercises that are useful for the development of physical fitness i.e strength, endurance, cardio respiratory endurance, flexibility and other related component of motor ability.
- It provides through its famous athletes role models those success, skills and determination are held up for emulation.
- It is good for the release of piled up feeling.
- It provides avenue for the release of emotion, resulting in good mental health.

- It serves to reinforce many of the basic values of the society. Certain value like hard work, discipline, success etc all of which are expressed in sports.

Conclusion

In the light of the preceding discussion, it is believed that sport have contributed to national developments, stressing out its importance to the participants, coaches, managers, agents, medical professional, dieticians, journalists, manufacturing, industries of sports equipment and supplies.

Sports can also promote development of good infrastructures, tolerance, unity, endurance, discipline and diplomacy. Values of sports for the participant ranging from human growth and development improve cardio respiratory functional capacity and physical working ability, as a result of health status and equality of life. Finally, sports was also examined as a means of social functions.

Recommendation

In view of the importance of sport as a mean of enhancing self reliance, the following recommendations are proffered.

- (i) People should be encourage to participate in sporting activities, in order to achieve the inherent values.
- (ii) Sports should be used as basis of fostering unity among the diverse ethnics and socio-economic group of the country.
- (iii) Adequate facilities and equipment should be made available to enhance sports performance in all institutions.

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