



Consumption of Sports: A Pro-Active Strategy to Youth Culture Promoting Wellness

Jasmine Joseph*

Government College of Engineering, Kannur, Kerala, India

Article Info

Abstract

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*Correspondence Author.

Jasmine Joseph
Assistant Professor
Government College of Engineering,
Kannur, Kerala, India
Email address:
jasminej@gcek.ac.in

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With an increased risk to non-communicable diseases attributed to lack of sufficient physical activity among young and old alike, it is highly demanding of any responsible and committed society to promote sports culture at community and scholastic levels. It's become the need of the time to bring about healthy citizens, and total wellness at individual level, especially in the post-covid scenario. At the outset, the culture of any society depends on the ways and means of living their day-to-day life. That's why it's important to seek the ways of imparting sports into their everyday life by means of adopting different sports consumption patterns like active involvement in sports activities, imparting knowledge and awareness on sports, fitness and health, sports followership like viewing, reading, sharing, discussions and spectatorships etc. Any efforts taken to promote sporting endeavours in a societal set-up would eventually nurture a positive attitude for sports, and enhance sports consumption by its members. This article relates the ways different sports consumption patterns affect the change in the culture of any given society.

Introduction

Consumption of sports means the ways by which people participate in sports such as participation in sports, games, and fitness activities, knowledge and awareness of sports, fitness, and health, sports followership, sports viewership, and attitude towards sports/ fitness programmes. People engage in various sporting endeavors like attending a game, buying team merchandise, watching a game on television, organizing a sports competition etc for diverse reasons. Based on an extensive literature Trail, Anderson, & Fink, (2000) identifies vicarious achievement, acquisition of knowledge, aesthetics, social

interaction, excitement, escape, family, physical attractiveness of participants, and quality of physical skills of the participants as some of the motives behind the consumption of sports. The satisfaction of the participants would depend on their motives and expectations of being attached to the sport. For some it would be highly competitive, for others it would purely a matter of fun and enjoyment.

Knowledge of Sports, Fitness and Health

Knowledge of fundamental movements, fitness, and sports that embrace the physical education curriculum, knowledge of principles of sciences that provide the foundation for teaching physical

activities, and awareness of crucial health information and safety instructions are required to be addressed at an early age, to understand and appreciate movement education. Education will not be complete within the four walls of a classroom. There are an immense number of values, skills, and constructs learned in the playground, which adds to the completeness of an individual. Besides, the benefit of sports and physical activity participation is another domain of knowledge, which signifies the participation in physical activity as an essential factor for growth and development. The effect of fitness awareness on physical fitness and healthy habits among the visitors in public parks was studied by Nazeer et al.(2016), and revealed fitness awareness had significant positive effects on physical fitness and healthy habits.

Interdisciplinary knowledge of related subject areas enables the students to understand the structure and purpose of the activities in the physical education curriculum, and help them to evaluate and interpret the characteristics and performances in sports. Knowledge and awareness of health-related physical fitness, physiological and psychological effects of physical activity, and role of movement education on culminating values and life-skills will help the students and the general public to develop a positive attitude towards participation in sports and physical activities.

Attitude and Approach to Sports

The attitude towards sports and physical activity reflects how the youth perceive sports at the outset, with respect to their own participation in sports/ fitness activities or their attitude towards those participating in sports (Joseph & Ramachandran, 2018). The predominant attitude of the academic community and parental perspective of children participating in sports were not promising traditionally in Indian societies. Women participation in sports and physical activity is often discouraged by parents and teachers, as they consider it to be immoral in certain contexts. However, a progressive change in this so-called perspective is underway, may be with the advent of globalization and commercialization in sports. The increased number of sports leagues, marketing, and media sports culture, a change in the public attitude for sports has brought about enhanced sports participation and sports promotion.

Further, there is a need to establish a rich culture of participation in sports by total community involvement in campuses and outside to bring about a promising culture of active living and healthy lifestyle. It is also important to educate the youth and the public on the immense benefits of physical activity and fitness with an intention to effect a change in their attitude to improve participation in sports and physical activity.

Participation in Sports and Physical Activity

Sports provides an indispensable provision for the joy of life, efficiency, and health from childhood through to old-age, and hence it shall be one of the most important goals of any civilized society to encourage all the citizens of all the age groups to participate in an optimum amount of physical activities (Bierstedt, 1982). The inclusion of activity in the routine life is challenging and dynamic and takes a lot of effort and will to sustain for a period of time. That is why it is necessary to include sport education in the curriculum so as to provide it in a systematic and progressive manner. Stimulation and support from sports organizations, peers, teachers, administration and the family are also needed to this end. To a large extent, social factors and changes in working and living conditions during the course of life determines one's interest in sports activity (Bierstedt, 1982).

Active participation in sports during early childhood is believed to influence adult involvement in sports significantly. Youth sports programs need to be planned critically considering their contribution to lifetime sports participation. A positive modelling of youth participation in sports may results in remarkable change in the attitude and approach of youth and public in an appealing dimension, which would eventually create an awareness on its benefits for a lifetime physical activity and sports participation. In addition to the cultural modelling of active sports life, the efforts made by the sports federations and organizations in terms of providing adequate sporting infrastructure and training facilities would immensely attract the youth and older population to active involvement. Community sporting events have a great deal of contribution in building social and cultural value for sporting endeavours.

The policy makers and government organizations have indispensable responsibility

to bring in policy reforms and practical implications to put in the practice of regular physical activity catering to the mass youth population from a younger age through the educational system and active community intervention programs.

Hardy et.al. (2010), suggests that the factors like cost, availability and access of training facilities affects children's participation in sports, and parental time commitment associated with children playing organized sports are influenced by decisions of the parents about their child's participation. Further, initiatives which can promote access through reducing expenses and increasing variety, particularly for lower-income communities and those in rural and regional areas like sports libraries which allow children to borrow sporting equipment may be a potential strategy to defray costs associated with organized sports that provide children with an opportunity to try a range of sporting activities at lower cost.

Sports Followership

A critical understanding of Sports Followership is less developed in the context of the sociology of sports. Sociological analysis of the sports follower role by Smith (1988) included topics like socialization into the sports fan role; the beneficial consequences of sport spectating, both for the individual and society; and a discussion of the traditional criticisms of sport spectating. He was convinced of the upshot that following sport is a worthwhile leisure pursuit that enhances an individual's quality of life and has a cohesive effect on society.

Andrei Markovits has worked on sports culture since the 1980's, in which he focused on the larger group of 'sports followers'. He concentrated more on the sports fans, viewers and supporters as opposed to the first-hand participants. According to him, a fan sports blogger who consume sports media and produce sports media contributes their own narratives by publishing online sports news is a relatively new fan presence. Viewers of television sports programmes are heterogeneous, and their motives for watching sports vary considerably. "Some might be interested in watching sport of good quality, while others are mainly interested in cultivating their favourite teams or athletes" (Solberg & Hammervold, 2008, p.96).

Sports followership, viewership and spectatorship are terms used interchangeably,

although have some differences, are all contributors of creating an enhanced sporting culture in a community and benefits the total sports sphere. This would either promotes active living or leads to an improved sporting culture.

Conclusion

Sports consumption, irrespective of its intentions- targeting the elite sports performers or the mass sports beneficiaries- would in a larger way promotes a positive culture of sports with all its pluralism in any said society. Therefore, it is essential to develop all aspects of sports consumption behaviours by broad-basing the prospects of sports like increased knowledge and awareness, positive attitude for sports participation, active involvement in sports, and increased sports followership and spectatorship.

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