

## SPORT AS AN INSTRUMENT FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

ALOR ROSELINE<sup>1</sup>

DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION  
EBONYI STATE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, IKWO - NIGERIA<sup>1</sup>

NWALI CHINWE<sup>2</sup>

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN KINETICS AND HEALTH EDUCATION,  
FACULTY OF EDUCATION, EBONYI STATE UNIVERSITY,  
ABAKALIKI – NIGERIA<sup>2</sup>

---

### **Abstract**

*The focus of this paper is sports as an instrument for community development. The paper buttressed that any community that are not centered on sport may not yield a meaningful result. Sports definitely have a place in the achievement of community goals and its aspirations. The paper therefore discussed the importance of sports, social benefit as well as its health benefits. Some suggestions were made to enhance participation of sports by community in order to enhance their well being. The suggestions include but not limited to encouragement of communities by the government to organize sports for all ages carrying out sports in all sectors or nation-schools, work place, markets and so on to educate communities on the need to engage in sporting activities.*

**Key words: Sports, Instrument, Community and Development.**

---

### **Introduction**

It is a world-wide accepted fact that muscular activity is required by our physical bodies. Thus, muscular exercises are needed to remain fit. Some countries of the world adopted this philosophy. For example, in China, a 4-minute programme was introduced to promote physical culture and improve health. Sport is a social agent that brings different people of different background and religion together, enable the community for active participation in various games regardless of their ethnic, social and religious belief (Uzoalor, 2007) Bowtell (2006) stated that sport contribute to community identity serving as a focal point for engagement, pride and achievement. The diversity of sports and sporting activities including social sports and physical recreation makes it an ideal medium to reach men and women from every age-group, culture and social-economic background. Sport is a popular focal point for strategies that underpin government policy for community development and social inclusion. A community of unhealthy young men and women cannot develops because a healthy body, is a healthy mind. The concept of community may be considered in terms of a social unit in which there is a common life among the people composing the unit: functioning and reasonable harmony in

promoting the common interests inherent in society.

### **Concepts and Definition of Terms**

Stolte (2004) defined community as a common cultural heritage, language and beliefs or shared interest. Development according to Eke (2013) as an assumption of growth and expansion. Therefore community development is a process whereby community members come together to take collective actions and generate solutions to common problems. It is also a process designed to create conditions of economic and social progress for the whole community with its active participation and fullest possible reliance upon the community initiatives. Community development helps to build community capacity in order to address issues and take advantage of opportunities, find common ground and balance competing interests. On the other hand, Olumba (2009) stated that sport means "disport" which means to divert oneself. It carries the original meaning of people diverting themselves from the rigours of daily routines of life by playing some physical activities. On the other hand, Coakley & Pike (2009) opined that sports are activities played by people for internal and external rewards. This means that participation in sports involves a combination of two sets of motivations, one is internal satisfactions associated with expression and the pure joy of participation. The other motivation is based on external satisfactions associated with displaying physical skills in public and receiving approval or material rewards in the process. Today, sports are more than fun. It involves activities that have recorded histories and traditions stressing physical exertion through competition against the background of laid explicit rules, roles and relationship. This implies that today's sport is competitive, highly organized and regulated. Therefore it is highly rational and goal directed in all development of the individual and community as a whole.

### **Importance of Sports in Community Development**

Sporting events have played pivotal roles in communities around the world throughout history. Today, contests pushing physical limits are more popular than ever before. As interest in health and longevity continues to rise, and government and businesses continue to see sporting events as sound investments. It is not about winning, its about helping to build stronger, healthier, happier and safer communities. Community that participates in sports develop strong social bonds, and people who live in them are generally healthier and happier than places where physical activities is not a priority.

Sports immense effect on culture is especially evident among those who may not enjoy playing or watching sports. These people often know the names of key players, and they may still take national pride in Olympic medals. No matter your individual involvement, sports generally provides everyone in a society with some form of shared story and shared goals sport has a unique power to attract, mobilize and inspire. By its very nature, sport is about participation. It is about inclusion and citizenship. It stands for human values such as respect for the opponent, acceptance of binding rules, teamwork and fairness; all friendly

sporting revelry adds to the excitement of sporting activities. Physical activities like snorts, whether for recreational professional or educational purposes, are merely about fitness or victory; above all they are essential building block of a prosperous and healthy society. Sporting events bring disparate people together by strengthening ties and celebrating the common ideals of fairness, sacrifice and hope. The important of sports in society extends to those who make career in sports in other ways than playing on a professional team. It empower, inspires and motivates individuals keep kids away from television or computer screen. The important of sports to communities extends beyond sport for sports sake. It play a role of bringing communities together, having a social and cultural impact, developing social capital and reducing crime and anti social behaviour. It also enhances cognitive functions, improving memory behaviour, concentration and academic achievements.

### **Social Benefits of Sport to the Community**

Sports are fundamental form of human expressions and basic parts of all cultures. This is why man's interest in sports can be found in both in ancient and modern societies. In line with the assertion, Andah (1986) remarked that throughout the history of mankind, healthy competitive sports have always served as the gateway to the nurturing of a truly forward-looking civilization. Consequently sports have become an important aspect of Nigerian culture so much so that the interest and popularity in them have affected the political, social, economic and educational fabrics of the nation. Therefore, it is widely held belief, Edward (1973), Amuchie (1989), Okunbor (1998) and Udoh (1999) that a considerable proportion of delinquency among the youth arises from lack of physical activities and sports. Needless to and one is not suggesting that more participation in sports absolves one of all criminal tendencies or that youths' criminal behaviour will disappear entirely if there were more sports facilities. However, it is reasonable to assume that if people in the community has the opportunity and encouragement to participate in active sports, probably fewer of its people would develop criminal habits. There is definitely a positive, a play element in the life of young people which can be neglected only to the detriment of both the society and individual.

The social benefits of sports arise from certain qualities which sports imbue in the sports participants. Such qualities include: self discipline, courage, endurance, self reliance, integrity, obedience to constituted authorities, fair play, tolerance, character building and team work (Amuchie, 1989). These qualities which are required in normal community life for survival and effective living and which the community must do all things possible to cherish and propagate for development purposes.

### **Health Benefit of Sports to the Community**

According to Udoh (1999) the seemingly over flogged slogan of "sports for all" suggests that sports participation is beneficial for all young and old, men and women. However, he too sited that a great variety of sporting activities which individuals and groups engage in for recreation have much wider appeal to the youths. Sports and physical exercises has been found to be very vital to health and

well being of all who experienced it, because it is motivated by the combination of intrinsic satisfaction associated with the activity itself and possible external rewards earned through participation. Regular sporting activities is associated with a healthier, longer life, and with lower risk of heart diseases, high blood pressure, diabetes, obesity and some cancers (Haruna, 2003). Regular sports participation can prevent or delay the development of high blood pressure, and reduces blood pressure in persons with hypertension, participation in regular sporting activities also reduces risks of coronary heart diseases and stroke, breast cancer and depression (WHO, 2010).

### **Conclusion**

The influence of sports is being felt in almost all aspects of society with roots ramifying deeply into the young and adult lives. Today sports is one of the most significant aspect of contemporary society because it has become pervasive social phenomenon in education, happiness and development of the people. In the light of this, the paper focused on the involvement of community in sports as an antidote to the effect of poor quality of live or a means of improving the quality of lives of community. This paper believes that if communities engages in sport, the quality of their lives will improve greatly.

### **Suggestions**

Based on the discussion, the following suggestions were made:

1. The government should provide the necessary sports facilities in the communities. This, government should do in collaboration with the user communities so that having been involved in the selection, planning, execution as theirs rather than government's. This principle will also ensure that the particular facilities provided will meet the recreational needs and interest of the community.
2. Communities should be encouraged to set up monitoring teams. Among other responsibilities, these teams will ensure that sports facilities located in their communities are not misused, vandalized or looted by unscrupulous elements.
3. Sports should be carried out in all sectors of the nation-schools, work place, markets and so on to educate community on the need to engage in sporting activities.
4. Communities should help in providing sports facilities and recreation centers.
5. Sports competitions should be organized in the community for all ages.

## References

- Amuchie, F. A. (1989). *Sport in nation building. International journal of physical education*. Spring (Germany) xv pp. 38-42.
- Andah, B. W. (1986). *Organization of sports in Nigerian universities*. Ibadan: Claverianum Press.
- Bowtell, J. (2006). *Community Development through Sports*. London: London
- Coakley J. & Pike, E (2009). *Sports in Society; Issues and Controversies*. McGraw Hill. Great Britain
- Edwards, H. (1973). *Sociology of Sport*. Homewood, Illinois: The Dorsey Press.
- Eke, F. I. (2003). *Physical and health education: Contemporary issues*. Abuja: El Dorado Concepts Com.
- Eke, F.I. (2003). *Physical and Health Education: Contemporary issues*. Global Links Com. Abuja
- Emeribe, V.C. & Achara A.S. (2002). Recreation Sports and Dance. *Journal of Nigeria Association for Physical, Health and Education*, Vol 2 No 1.
- Haruna, F. R. (2003). The role of exercise and dietary manipulation weight control in treatment of obesity. *Journal of Nigeria University Games (JNUGA) Department of Physical and Education, University of Benin*, (1), 25-29.
- Okunbor, A.O. (1998). *Recreation and sports development policy in Nigeria: The way forward JONAPHER*. SD special pp. 130-140.
- Olumba, M O. (2009). *Sociology of sports for degree classes*. Enugu: lyke Ventures Production.
- Stolte M. (2000). *The Community Matrix Making Waves*. New York:

The Ronald Press Company.

Udoh, C.O. (1999). Participation of youths in sports, health benefits derivable there from. A key note address delivered at the 12<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Nigerian Association of Sports Science and Medicine (NASSM) Oyo, Nigeria.

Uzoalor. B.G. (2007). Achieving Needs Reform through Sports. *Journal of Spoils Management and Education Research*, Vol. 3.No.I.

WHO (2010). Reducing risks, promoting health life <http://www.who.int/who/2010/en/>.