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A study of role of games and sports in national integration and international understanding

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Abstract

National integration is not a simple issue rather it is a slow and steady process. It will remain a dream and distinct goal to achieve National integration unless concrete steps are taken to foster it. The rise and fall of a nation depends upon the extent of the development of a feeling of nationalism in its citizens. Hence this feeling needs to be nurtured, cultivated and strengthened by all possible ways and means. In modern society it seems that sport is one of the most important and effective means to achieve this great task.

As India is a big country the inhabitants of which belong to various communities and groups. The cultural patterns of all these communities and groups are different. It is obvious to have different ideals, values, customs traditions, ways of living, eating and dressing in different communities and groups. This is true that India represents a wide variety of peoples. There was no time when one language was spoken throughout the country never was the time when all the Indians followed any one religion these diversity is often lead to mutual tension and then unfortunately towards National disintegration. Strength of the nation depends on the degree of homogeneity of its people which again depends upon the acceptance of common standards and values. Therefore, the need and importance of National integration cannot be over emphasized.

The scope of sport is very vast it includes all those activities and experiences which prepare the individual to engage himself for his own good and for good of the society of which he is an integral part. Participation in sport create a climate that would help to create feelings of oneness. It acts as anti dote to separatistic and divisive forces. It broadens the outlook, fosters a feeling of togetherness and nationalism and a spirit of sacrifice and tolerance so that the narrow group interest are submerged in a larger interest of the community. It also includes a feeling of love and regard for the history, culture, religion, language and traditions of the nation. Therefore, importance of participation in games and sports and it's role in promotion of national integration and international understanding needs to be analysed. The present paper is focused upon to have an analytical study of how participation in games and sports could be instrumental in promoting National integration among its citizens.

Aim: The principal aim of this paper is to highlight the role of games and sports in promoting national integration and international understanding.

Keywords: National integration, nationalism, culture, religion, tradition, co-operation, community, communism, casteism, provincialism, cast and creed

Introduction

Meaning of National integration

The dictionary meaning of the word 'integrity' is the state of being whole and undivided, upholding territorial integrity and national sovereignty. The word has its origin in French word integrite or latin word integritas meaning integral and integrate.

Unity is really an important aspect among people of a nation as it promotes peace and love in the society. Unity among citizens of a nation is very important because only United people can effectively raise their voices against evils which are prevailing in the society. Only United people can provide a stable, sensible and accountable government which in turn can be instrumental in fighting against problems like casteism, regionalism and communism etc.

National integration is not a simple issue rather it is a slow and steady process. It will remain a dream and distinct goal to achieve National integration unless concrete steps are taken to foster it. The rise and fall of a nation depends upon the extent of the development of a feeling of nationalism in its citizens. Hence this feeling needs to be nurtured, cultivated and strengthened by all possible ways and means. In modern society it seems that sport is one of the most important and effective means to achieve this great task.

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The scope of sport is very vast it includes all those activities and experiences which prepare the individual to engage himself for his own good and for good of the society of which he is an integral part. Participation in sport create a climate that would help to create feelings of oneness. It acts as antidote to separatistic and divisive forces. It broadens the outlook, fosters a feeling of togetherness and nationalism and a spirit of sacrifice and tolerance so that the narrow group interest are submerged in a larger interest of the community. It also includes a feeling of love and regard for the history, culture, religion, language and traditions of the nation.

Good national feelings need constant care and inspiration by precept and by actual action of interaction. The growing mind of the youth is quick in absorption of good ideas and readily adapts itself to new ways of life. Sport have inherent potential for the realisation of this novel cause they provide the youth the feeling of common interest and sense of belonging to a worthy national community.

Sport propagate the feelings of nationalism and help in creating a new generation of individuals with the feelings that the differences based on caste, community and religion have no meaning. Faith in love and peace in purity in the feeling of goodwill and brotherhood serves to a great extent towards humanity. Sport provide a common platform where sports persons from different regions, religions and faith speaking different languages having different customs and traditions intract with each other in a harmonious and congenial atmosphere where they forget all their differences and emerge as a homogeneous group. Such type of thinking, insight and mental approach can play positive role in National integration. Sport help in creating such an understanding and can play a very decisive and pivotal role in bringing about national integration.

Now a days the results of cultural crisis, social turmoil and discord are becoming more and more apparent and these are damaging the concept of national unity. Not only this certain distinct tendencies are also developing day by day that are in hindering the process of national integration. Casteism, communalism, provincialism, different languages, social differences, economical differences, lack of appropriate leadership and suitable educational programs and artificial lifestyles are threatening the process of national integration.

Participation in sports and physical activities needed much required oxygen as on one hand sports and games unfold and develop the innate qualities of the individual, on the other hand they serve as a spearhead for the silent social revolution to bring about a designed pattern of the society. Such a society will have a homogeneous thinking for attacking its problems. Sports and games help in the development of such

an insight and attitude in the individuals that they rise above their own selfish and narrow interests and try to find out the values and ideals of other's culture. They do not look down upon any culture and ways of living of others but have a feeling of respect for all. This feeling avoids all kinds of conflicts and promotes fellow feelings and cooperative attitude which eventually lead to National unity and in turn to National peace and brotherhood.

In recent times the world has assumed a great significance for the common man which perhaps it had never before. No doubt that the efforts for creating a "World community and World citizenship" were made by a few people or few countries time and again. But as a matter of fact International integration can be developed by developing and international understanding only. International understanding means world citizenship i.e. as if all human beings are the members of the world family. Such a feeling is largely concerned with international goodwill and contributes for the good of whole humanity.

In other words one can say that international understanding indicates love, sympathy and cooperation among all the people of all the nations of the world. This feeling of internationalism implies awareness of human beings as members of a single human society, irrespective of natural and Geo political boundaries and other differences internationalism is a feeling that the individual is not only a member of his State but a citizen of the world.

The international understanding is essential because the world of sorrows, cold wars, conflicts and competitions needs to be converted into a world of smiles, coexistence and cooperation. Without such understanding international integration is impossible and the future of humanity is at stake. Therefore, almost all the countries of the world now a days are realising the need and importance of better understanding and friendship among all the nations of the world. We have to promote global perspective among younger generation so that good will and friendship are developed bringing about peace, freedom and happiness to the whole mankind.

Games and sports can play a vital role if all people all over the world wants to enjoy a full measure of personal liberty, freedom and dignity and natures bounty then younger generation has to necessarily participate in games and sports. Participation in Games and sports develop those social skills which are necessary in creating international understanding. These skills are the abilities to evaluate and use constructively the differences of opinion, ability and personality shown by any group; ability to differ from the opinions of another person without disturbance of personal relationships; ability to arrive at a consensus on a controversial matter; and the ability to play the role of either a leader or a follower. Such skills are of great value in developing a feeling of international integration.

Sports and games encourage the development of healthy social attitude so as to lay the foundations of improved international understanding and cooperation. Sports persons also learn to observe and appraise the conduct of men critically and objectively in every sphere of life irrespective of their nationality.

Participation in games and sports brings all the nations of the world closer and it results in the formation of strong bonds of international brotherhood and fellow beings. It helps in developing mutual love and friendship within all the nations bringing peace and prosperity in the world. Games and sports

strive for world peace by removing racial prejudices by organizing international competitions where players from different nations meet and exchange their views so as to promote goodwill and harmony among them.

The games and sports also inculcate liberal, tolerant and all-embracing Outlook among the players of different nations there by developing attitude favourable to international understanding and brotherhood. Sports and games help in establishing contacts between different communities and nationalities and help in producing a well integrated personality skilled in the art and science of human relations, who are conscious of wide variety of behavioural patterns in the world to which they have to adjust.

They help in improving their own communities and nation, meaningful relationships to the world community. There are great possibilities of strengthening the process of international integration if we can arrange short and long term sports camps where players from one nation may live, play and adjust with players of other countries. Exchange of sports teams between the countries could be profitably undertaken as an aid to promote International integration. Games and sports have been and are instrumental in their own way in promoting and strengthening the process of international integration and goodwill, and international understanding which is more positive and more effective.

Review of literature on the topic reveals that the real benefits and advantages that flow from participation in games and sports towards National integration and international understanding are as follows:

Promoting feelings of togetherness

The members of sports teams feel the sense of belongingness to one nation. While participating in international competition they are representing the whole nation and this will promote in them sense of security, mutual respect, understanding and regard for each other.

Promoting sense of responsibility

Sports and games arouse in the minds of participants a sense of responsibility to their community and to the nation. It create in the minds of the young a rightful pride for their country promoting a sense of discipline. The term sports and games itself implies a disciplined endeavour, sense of discipline is inherent in sports and games for sports persons self-discipline becomes a habit of life and such individuals tend to follow the rules and regulations and remain discipline even when faced with grave provocation.

Developing liberal attitudes

Common thoughts and common actions lead to common attitude and neutral dispositions games and sports enable the individuals to develop attitude by harmonizing healthy blend of sentiments which will go a long way in the process of national and international consolidation.

Promoting International brotherhood

World brotherhood is undoubtedly the most important achievement of international competitions and the comradeship born out of this common zeal for sport which is the main ingredient of international integration.

Inculcating appropriate values

Games and sports inculcate among the participants the values of life like love of justice, Love of truth, appreciating the

contributions of others, cooperation, friendliness which are essential for international integration.

Promoting secularism and religious Tolerance

Sports persons try to understand and appreciate the values, ideals and qualities of other religions, cast, customs, traditions and ways of living of other athletes. They develop religious tolerance and respect of religion of others which is necessary for national and international integration.

Creating a Habit of thinking

Participation in games and sports unables the youngsters to develop a habit of independent thinking the varied situations that they have to face during practice and competition provide them ample opportunities to think, analyse and act rationally and not to develop prejudice against any cast, creed or culture.

Providing rich experience

Sports persons from different states and countries exchange their views and discuss techniques while interacting with each other. Games and sports promote social and emotional interaction and seeds of long lasting friendship sprout and thrive.

Removing fear and Distrust

Sports competitions help in changing the international rivalry into friendship. Consequently fear distrust and frictions fade away in the festive, relaxed and friendly atmosphere of the tournament. World seems like a vast home.

Preservation of worthwhile Heritage

Sports and games help in securing saving and preserving social and cultural history of the nation the inculcate National and human values forming attitude of respect for National culture National history and natural traditions there by paving way for national integration.

Developing social potential and breezing cultural gaps

Games and sports have a potential of creating a new social order, a new ideology of operation rather than conflict and distrust this helps in promoting better social adjustments and solving various social problems breaking barriers of cast and creed sports and games provide platform for meaningful social interaction they provide ample opportunities to participate and mix together with participants having different views and professing different face they come to know the ways of living of people in different parts of the country so has to create better understanding and thus breaking barriers of cast or creed.

Sports and games games at posting and increasing respect and affection for those belonging to other cultural and ethnic groups itradicates the prejudices persurities differences etc. that arise out of cultural differences they provide a powerful medium to achieve the high ideals of inter cultural interest standing they provides such wholesome experience is and programs which developed the understanding of others cultural patterns believes and ways of living development of such understanding will promote corporation and through a process of give and take a cultural synthesis will take place.

Inculcate habits of law obedience

Sports and games demand strict obedience of rules governing them and adherence to code of conduct for the players.

Obedience of law becomes a habit which in turn assist the process of national and international integration.

Crossing language barriers

In sports and games persons speaking different languages participate and are able to communicate with each other thus breaking the language barriers, and removing communication gaps.

Broadening mental horizon

Sports and games through varied experiences promote in the younger generation knowledge, skills and foster those attitude which help in the process of national and international integration.

Breaking racial barriers

In international competitions persons belonging to different countries participate irrespective of their nationality colour or rays thus the racial barriers are broken leading to International integration.

Promoting feeling of patriotism

Sports teams comprise players professing different religion belonging to different cast and creed but while representing the nation they do or die together for the nation this promotes a feeling of patriotism and strengthens the process of national integration.

Bringing the communities near

Sports persons from different communities are drawn closer to each other during sports competitions and gradually common interest and mutual understanding grows between them. They harbour kind and friendly feelings for one another the heterosinity of caste, creed, religion and regionalism ultimately fuses into the unity of common purpose resulting into a homogeneous community.

Spreading the message of peace

Sports competitions are open to one and all and all participate with the spirit of sportsmanship they forget the political rivalry of their Nations even the white colour of Olympic flag symbolises peace the games does spread the message of peace which is necessary for international integration. Transmission of worthwhile culture: Sports and games arouse, sustain and perpetuate interest in the change and growth of cultural process and transmit the same from one person to another and from one generation to another which help in the process of national and international integration.

Promoting emotional integration

Sports and games can build emotionally integrated citizens with a refined sense of nationalism well adjusted to the time and remove Anti National and narrow outlook to foster emotional national integration.

Conclusion

Our nation is composed of many religious and cultural beliefs but are unified by certain emotional forces this is the process of National integration. The main objective of the National integration is to encounter all adverse forces, tendencies which are posing threats to the nation.

National integration is a complex concept and has many social, religious, political, regional and economic dimensions. In order to foster National integration the nation

needs to promote ideological unity and awareness about national interest and common national objectives among the people who holds divergent views on political, religious and other issues.

Our nation observe 19th November the birth day of our former prime minister Indira Gandhi as national integration day with the soul objective of promoting unity, peace, affection and brotherhood among people. The words of Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru seems apt and true here that the 'Indian state is based on the principle of unity in diversity'.

National integration is not possible without having an understanding of the character of the nation. Communal harmony cannot be established unless we intrinsically believe in the validity of different beliefs and approaches. When these factors are taken into consideration it can be realised that National integration is a complex problem but by participating in sports the issues like casteism, regionalism communism, socio-economic differences, secularism, religious tolerance etc. may be handled in a much better way. Over the period of time people all over the world have recognised the importance of participating in sports to bring peace, prosperity, feeling of nationalism, removing fear and distrust, promoting International brotherhood, secularism and religious tolerance, creating habit of positive thinking, broadening mental horizon, crossing racial and language barriers, developing social potential and sense of responsibility among its citizens which inturn promotes national integration and international brotherhood.

For building up a new generation of man and women committed to the process of national and international integration an appropriate training and motivation of the individuals is imperative. All this is possible through the medium of sound programmes of games and sports which act as a dynamic charging force. No doubt that playgrounds are the laboratories of the society where socially useful actions can be molded, refined and human approach to life can be practised.

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