

THE ROLE OF SPORT AS A METHOD OF SOCIAL EDUCATION

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In the old times when the determining factor in battles was the physical strength of each fighter, sports played an important role when preparing for war. Considering this fact, sports were used to be defined as follows: « A type of disciplined and collective game based on competition and rivalry, which also develops warrior spirit in the participants. » This old definition of sports has changed over the time, and sports has timed into a variety of activities, done individually or in teams, with or without using various types of equipment. It also has become a very practical tool to develop cultural relations or decrease political animosity between nations. However, sports is also used as device to make propaganda for political interests. Due to this fact, some social scientists consider sports an important weapon in old years.

The real meaning of sports can be analysed only by concentrating on societies. For sports to exit; people must live as a group in the form of a society. So, sport and physical training cannot be studied without a deep look in the characteristics of a society.

Considering that sports aim to train someone mentally and physically, it can be described as a method of education; since education is also a continuous process applied on younger generations to develop their capacity and improve their positions in the society. Such a discipline which includes physical and mental training, may be considered the most important thing in a person's life. Education improves one's usefulness for society and turns him or her into a more productive individual. This, it plays a direct role in the economic welfare of a society.

Since sports was also mentioned as a type of education, it also has a significant part in the economic development of a society. Best results in all types of education are achieved through a good use of available resources. Considering that sports is an essential part of human education, it should be given priority over other areas when providing resources for education. Sports also assist other areas of education to get better results by training the individual on self-discipline and teamwork.

Another similarity between general education and sports is that both make the participants get familiar and be aware of the common and uncommon areas between different people. Sports is a game of logic and possibilities, and it also aims to male people more creative and ready to compete in all areas of life. Thus, in addition to the social economic welfare , it also helps one to gain individual economic benefits by giving him or her the capacity to work harder.

By encouraging teamwork and improving the sense of responsibility in people sports helps build a more organised society consisting of energetic, hardworking individuals, too. It helps uncover the hidden capabilities of certain members of the society, and delays the loss of some physical and mental characteristics in people as well.

Sports has a very supportive role in both preparing the individual for life and helping him or her pressure the characteristics he or she gains. Since continuous sports related activity delays or prevents the loss of areas.

Sporting events also promote co-operation and together among individuals or groups. Possible causes of loneliness and social problems which result due to the monotonous working conditions of today can possibly be eliminated by involving in some type of sportive activity so; enough time and required equipment must be provided in all working fields to increase the productivity of workers in a society. Team sports promote cohesiveness in working groups and also helps socialisation of each member of the team.

Social environment plays an important role in the types of sports done in society. In addition to cultural traits, social environment can be described as the physical conditions that exist around one's living and working spaces. For instance mountain and winter sports are not likely to be done in a region which is not mountainous. However the rate of participation of people in sports in a society does not solely depend on these social environmental factors, people who are members of the same society and have the same environmental conditions might have different amount of interesting each type of sport.

In addition to social factors personal abilities and racial characteristics are important in participation in sports. For example Japanese are more involved in areas in which strength and speed is important.

It is also true that although the individuals who take part in sport activities may change by time, especially in team sports; the existence of event continues as long as there is interest. An example could be a sport club. Though players in a club can stop doing that particular sport the club stays active continuously.

When the above are kept in mind, one principal seems to prevail among the numerous advantages of sports. Through interactions between individuals and groups sport promote peaceful relations between people, as well as develop and educate the participants in social terms. Sporting events should never be seen as an arena for conflicts or fighting between societies. History has proved that co-operation and social unity between nations have always been beneficial for human kin and sports plays a major role in building this type of an atmosphere.

In parallel with these facts Turkish Armed Forces consider sports an essential issue in the development of its members. Starting their first day in military all officers and enlisted personnel as well as the conscripts are introduced to high physical standards. Personal fitness is constantly emphasised, and ample time and resources for regular workout are provided in all units.

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Turkish Armed Forces teams in various sports take part in several local or national amateur tournaments and leagues. Military schools participate in many individual and team events against their civilian counterparts.

Several Armed Forces members are chosen for Turkish national teams. Civilian athletes joining the military are given the opportunity to continue their workouts regularly.

In addition to taking part in civilian tournaments, Turkish Armed Forces organise sporting events in all areas within itself. These tournaments vary from friendly games between smallest units to competitions between different branches of service.

At the same time, Turkish Armed Forces put a lot emphasis on international competition. Armed Forces teams participate in international sporting events such as Military, Naval and Aeronautical Pentathlon, Sailing, Cross-country, Wrestling, Parachuting, Orientating and Handball which are also in CISM's programme.

With all these activities and more Turkish Armed Forces provide all of its active personnel with ample opportunity to do all types of sports and thus develop themselves in individual and social terms.
