

The Existing Problems and Development Tendency of the Popular Sports in China

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Abstract. In recent years, the popular sports in our country has been presenting a growth momentum. There are more and more people prefer taking exercise, and forming a nationwide body-building fervor. However, the development of popular sports in our country is slower and suffering many problems as compared with western country. Started from the development status of the popular sports in our country, this paper analyzed its achievements and existing problems, and made expectation on its future development, so as to provide positive reference to the development of the popular sports in our country in the new century.

Introduction

“Popular sports” is also called as “social sports” or “mass sports”, which is a general term of mass sports activities that widely carried out in society, and a physical fitness exercise involved by the whole people. Based on the principle of citizens’ free will, it aims to promote physical and psychological health, strengthen physique and prevent and treat disease. As an important part of the sports cause in our country, popular sports is closely related to living standard and health care quality of all the people, and is one of the important symbols of material civilization, spiritual civilization and political civilization in the modern society. At present, the research on sports sociology has been generally valued by all countries in the world. Analysis on the status and existing problems of the popular sports in China is of great significance for improving the research level of popular sports, and further promote the comprehensive, healthy and harmonious development of popular sports in our country.

The achievements of the popular sports in our country

Law sports promoted the development of popular sports

Sports Law of the People's Republic of China was unanimously approved in the 15th plenary session of the 8th NPC Standing Committee in August, 1995, which marked that Chinese sports work entered a stage of administration by law and managing sports by law. It laid an important foundation for the development and advancement of the popular sports in our country. After that, the central government successively introduced laws and regulations of *Outline of the Nationwide Body-Building Plan*, *Professional Standard for Instructors of Social Sports*, *Measurement Standard for Chinese Adults’ Physical Fitness*, etc. Thus, higher standards and requirements relating law were proposed on the popular sports in our country, which further promoted the healthy and ordered development of the popular sports.

The number of people involving in physical exercise was increased

With the increasingly improvement in people’s living standard, people pay more and more attention on good health and a long life, thus the number of people involving in physical exercise was increased. The proportion of urban and rural people involving in physical exercise was 34.3% and 35% in 1996 and 2000 respectively, and 44.7% in 2007, with a significant increase of 10.4% and 9.7% respectively. Physical fitness was accepted by more and more people, but there was still certain gap in sports population as compared with the developed countries. According to statistics, sports population in Canada was about 40% in 2007, 40% and 45% in Denmark and Norway respectively, and about 43% in New York, which was far ahead of China. Therefore, the nationwide body-building sports in China need to be further developed and strengthened.

The scale of elderly physical exercise was expanded

With the increasingly improvement in people's living standard, the average life expectancy of Chinese population has been gradually extended. According to the detailed data aggregation of the 6th nationwide census of State Statistics Bureau, the average life expectancy of the Chinese population in 2010 was 74.83 years old, with an extent of 3.43 years old as compared with 10 years ago. The aged population over 60 years old reached to more than 130 million, over 10% of the total population, marking China has become an aging country. As the elderly has more urgent demands on health, and they have much spare time, thus the number of elderly people involving in physical exercise is larger than other age groups. According to the sampling statistics of 2001, about 63.3% were elderly people among the people having exercise in the morning and evening, and they have become the major group in the popular sports team.

Exercise items in popular sports are various

Chinese sports are of long standing and can be dated from the savage and wild times of the prehistoric era. With the development of human social production, improvement of human culture and increasingly advancing of living standard, various sports, such as archery, wrestle, strike, even all kinds of sports balls and health care sports, as well as sports equipment relating to the modern sporting events were emerged accordingly and developed rapidly. With moving of times, the sports quintessence, such as martial art, equitation, fencing gradually became popular. In the modern society, people pay highly attention on health care and preservation, thus the sports forms changed fundamentally as compared with the historical sports. The sports events that preferred by the common people include gymnastics, yoga, dance, long-distance running, jogging, free exercise and walking, body building exercise, social dance, etc., which are the major forms of popular sports events. Besides, the entertaining and amusing events, as well as the sports with literature, art and music further promoted the healthy development of the popular sports.

Consuming exercise became a fashion trend

With the improvement of people's material standard of living, people's economic condition was greatly improved as well. Many fashionistas and white collar workers suffered heavy pressure in work and physical load running, but they have no time to take physical exercise, thus some consuming exercises, such as swimming, tennis, golf, skating, bowling became the major choices for them in spare time. These exercises gradually became a fashion trend and hot sports in focus in the sports consumer market.

Sports tourism in holiday boomed

The long holidays on May 1, and October 1, etc. in our country brought great opportunities for the development of sports tourism, and it became a kind of fashion trend that many people prefer to travel on holidays to release their pressure. In recent years, people's consumption idea has become gradually mature, and pure tour and sightseeing in the past developed into physical exercise, and passive sightseeing became active physical exercise as well. Riding, cross-country by walking, mountain climbing, rock climbing, fishing, drifting, skiing, etc. were favored by successful people, and gradually became hot sports in tourism. These new fashionable body-building forms were favorably accepted by the public gradually.

Existing problems of the popular sports in our country

People's misunderstandings on sports

The masses only have superficial understanding on sports, and generally regard sports as an expensive industry. They only take sports as funding, but ignore the value it brings. Sport industry is in severely inadequate accumulation in science and technology, talents, number of assets and related systems, which thus damaged the activeness of sports operators. These misunderstandings seriously hindered the development of the popular sports in our country.

An extraordinary shortage of sports fields and facilities

According to the statistics, there are 615,700 various sports fields supplied for popular sports in China and 50.8 sports fields are shared by 100,000 people averagely, and only 44.1% stadiums are opened to citizens. There is an enormous gap in sports fields in China as compared with western countries, as we only owns a few sports fields and most of which are closed. Chinese people often have physical exercises on highways, streets, parks, riversides, lakesides, downtown squares, and so

on, which is lack of security and unable to form as an industry, much less in form as mass sports.

Physical exercise population is of an aging trend

With people's increasing pursuit of good health and long life, the population having physical exercises is gradually increasing as well. However, it can be seen from the population structure participating in physical exercises that 63.3% are elderly people of over 60 years old. Age imbalance is very prominent, presenting an aging trend. It can be found from the age distribution that the participating frequency in physical exercise among young and middle-aged people is relatively lower, for example, 75.5% people of 20~29 years old had exercises less than twice a week (including twice), while 50% people of over 60 years old had exercises five times or above a week.

Physical exercise intensity is insufficient

Due to the fierce social competition and increasing mental stress, people attached special attention on health care. The popular sports in our country are also based on the starting point of sports & health. The sports events include shadowboxing, folk dance, walking, jogging and playing musical instruments, etc., the exercise intensity of which are lower than that of the confrontational sports, thus the body bears lower load. The population of participating in sports of moderate intensity and high intensity only accounted for 7.74% and 8.84%. People in western countries often choose confrontational sports or competitive sports events of relatively strong intensity, which are more effective in body building due higher exercise load.

Popular sports are separated from competitive sports and school sports

Due to historical reasons, competitive sports has been in a leading prior position in the sports development fields in China, while the functional organization, personnel allocation, policies and systems and funds supply during the implementation of the popular sports have been in disadvantageous position. Therefore, the development of the popular sports and social sports lagged far behind the competitive sports. Beside, competitive sports are often carried out in closed venues, while the sports venues in colleges and primary and secondary schools do not open to the society, thus the closure, separation and isolation of these venues hindered the development of the modern social sports.

The sports activities in rural areas and economic less-developed areas are incomplete.

Rural areas and economic less-developed areas are weak in economy and social development in our country, and which fell further behind the developed area or cities and towns in politics, economy, culture, etc. At present, urban residents has entered the developmental stage of "fairly well-off" and "prospective fairly well-off", while less developed areas and rural areas still stay on the survival level. Therefore, the sports development in economic less-developed areas and some remote rural areas extremely fell behind. According to the sampling survey, only 3.4% peasants have exercises frequently, and there is even no physical exercise group in some rural areas.

Future development trend of popular sports in China

Scientific sports

Scientific popular sports refer to normalize and regularize the popular sports according to scientific laws, so as to scientifically instruct the implementation of the popular sports activities. With the establishment and gradually complete national physique monitoring system in our country, and the masses' increasing demands on nutrition, hygiene, living habits and sports activities, scientific instruction on sports activities and scientific body-building will become people's common demands. At present, the popular sports in our country stay in blind status, and methods of scientific body-building haven't been completed popularized. People-first principle must be adhered to highlight sports' essential functions. With the continuous social development and reform, and corresponding perfect management system, popular sports cause is in harmonious development.

Green sports

"Green sports" refer to the sports carried on places filled with sunshine, fresh air, natural landscape and away from noisy cities and polluted air. "Green sports" focus on environmental awareness, environment protection and care for nature during carrying sports activities. It includes mountain climbing, rock climbing, golf, beach volleyball, bicycle, dugout canoe, swimming, etc. These activities are not only conducive to body building, but also to mind and body relaxation, realizing maximum value.

Diverse sports

With the continuous development of traditional sports events, the newly-developing events are rising rapidly and endlessly, some of which are thrilling and exciting, becoming a new major highlight and forming diverse trend in the popular sports in our country. Traditional sports events, such as football, volleyball, basketball, table tennis, tennis, golf, skating, skiing are gradually replaced by the newly-developing events, such as mountain climbing, rock climbing, bungee jumping, bicycle, hiking, skateboard, diving, beach volleyball, taekwondo. The newly-developing events attracted various consumer groups and promoted the popular sports to a prosperous and booming trend.

Leisure sports

With the development of market economy and the improvement of the material and cultural living standard, people's health consciousness is constantly strengthened, and the demands for health care are increasing. It is a common pursuit for people to prolong their life and improve their life quality. People started to have exercise in nature to integrate into nature, and enjoy the pleasure brought by nature. This kind of exercising way integrating with health care, leisure, entertainment and body-building will gradually become an important part of people's daily life. It is bound to be the major form of popular sports.

Conclusion

As an important part of the sports cause in our country, popular sports are related to the improvement of our physique, healthy level and life quality. It is an important symbol of progressive civilization in the modern society. China has a long history and unique national sports culture, especially since the reform and opening up, sports has been developing rapidly and we have won many awards in international competitions. However, the development of popular sports in our country still relatively lags behind as compared with western countries. Therefore, we should not only pay attention to the achievements we've obtained but also the backwardness and deficiency in the popular sports in our country. We should strengthen the management and investment in popular sports and gradually improve the level of the popular sports, so as to become a world sports power as soon as possible,

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