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Physical education: a veritable instrument for quality education for all Nigerians

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A B S T R A C T

The topic "Physical Education: A Veritable Instrument for quality Education for All Nigerians" is well chosen in the light of what is contemporary in Nigeria's Educational scene. The concepts of quality education and Physical Education were defined, as well as Physical Education objectives highlighted. The issue of rationale of Physical Education and sports for quality education was outlined, while the Physical Education and its functional roles for quality Education were well addressed. Finally, implications of Physical Education and sports for quality education were explained.

Introduction

It is a known fact that Nigeria is one of the underdeveloped countries in the world and also one of the heterogenous nations struggling to achieve quality education for all her citizens. Since her independence in October 1, 1960 no other national problems that have disturbed the country and her leaders so much other than the national unity and quality education for all.

Undoubtedly, the British philosophy of education had controlled Nigerian education for over 100 years without a clear definition. It was only the national policy on education of 1977 that spelt out Nigerian own way of achieving five important

national philosophy and objectives. The policy is aimed at achieving national development-using education as the tool. This may explain the reason why education in Nigeria under the policy has been restructured into the 6-3-3-4 system. Hitherto, what the country inherited from the colonial masters was not a nation in its true sense, not a socially just one; but a nation where emphasis placed on education was for a white-collar job.

The general importance- of physical education in a given nation is not widely discussed in the literature. And we forgot that physical education is a constant on-

going activity in all nations. Physical education is a natural aspect of life and living, the prehistoric men developed motor skills because it was necessary that they should do so in order to survive.

Now civilization has brought the need for an organized physical education programme. It is concerned with all the experiences which come to man through movement. From earliest time, physical education has played an important part in man's life. By and large, man has to be a master of complex physical skills in order to survive. According to Laoye and Ackland (1981) no individual is able to get through the day without relying on certain skills and basic movements, which have been learned as a result of deliberate effort and practice.

Education itself according to Peters (1981) is the transmission of what is worthwhile to individuals to make them knowledgeable and contributing members of the society. Quality education means more than this. It includes the direct relevance of education to the specific individual and specific society. Concepts of Quality Education and Physical Education Quality education refers to that type of education that equips the learner with the right knowledge, skills and competence which can make him take good care of himself and *The* contributes to the development of his society (Ezeh, 2003a,b). It is education that helps the society where it operates to solve its problems using the knowledge and skills it gives.

Good (1959) defines 'quality/functional education as education for which there is an anticipated application, which thus assumes that the learner has immediate meaning, transferable into action for his learning activities. Okator (1992) in the same vein states that quality education connotes that level of education a citizen needs to function

effectively in the society. It is a kind of education that makes one who has received it functional, self-reliant and not dependent on people or government for survival.

Having been aware of the brief history of physical education in the past and its gradual shift from the unorganized to organized programme of physical education as a result of civilization, it is now necessary to look at the definitions of physical education. Voltnier and Essinger (1967) defined physical education as the process by which changes in individual are made possible through the movement experiences. This definition emphasizes the role of physical education which has been acclaimed through the ages.

Bucher (1979) defined physical education as the process of education that concerns activities which develop and maintain the human body. Physical education is also seen as an integral part of general education which aims at complete development of an individual physically, socially, morally and also intellectually.

Physical education is also seen as the process of education that concerns with big-muscle activity and the benefits that may be derived there from and with its combination to the health and growth of the individual.

Defined in a very broad way, physical education as an integral part of the total education process is a field of endeavor that has as its aim the development of physically, mentally, emotionally and socially fit citizen through the medium of physical activities that have been selected with a view to realizing these outcomes (Laoye and Ackland, 1981). A conjectural guess would leave one with the fact that physical education is a field of study of the education family. It shares the same central

educational philosophy with other courses. In education and the like, because it has similar methodology in teaching and instruction. Physical education uses an action agenda in achieving its set aims and objectives hence its main-language is movement (Eze, 2001a,b).

To decode the objectives of physical education further, it is through this language of movement that the four aims and objectives of physical education can be attained. These include:

Physical development, mental development, Emotional development and Social development.

Through meaningful programme of physical education the gradual attainment of all these four objectives result in a well educated individual having well integrated body and soul, and who is socially and emotionally acceptable. Physical education fosters the development of character, the acquisition of knowledge and skills and ability to take one's place in the society.

It is easy now to see how physical education can facilitate quality education. The objectives of physical education outlined above indicate that these are different kinds of education that can help Nigeria achieve her needs and; aspirations or what one may also rightly call national goals, by the achievement of the four aims and objectives of physical education. Rationale of Physical Education and Sports for Quality Education

The following principles have been identified which describe the rationale on which physical education and sports be based in. These are:

Physical education/sports are national concern. Physical education provides the

common defense. Physical education requires sound basic education.

Physical education provides the skills and knowledge valuable in day-to-day living.

Physical education provides continuing education for youths and adults. Sports as a unifying factor; Sports as a social force; Sports as a big business; Sports role as identity recognition; Sports and physical fitness (Eze, 2002), Physical Education and its Functional Roles for Quality Education for all.

The functional roles of physical education and sports for quality education for all may be summarized as follows:

Physical education contributes to an inquiring mind. An inquiring mind is essential to an individual, for the moto mechanism of the individual enables him to explore, to cruise, and to see his environment. Physical education contributes to the ability to speak, read and write effectively, through the various activities.

Contributing to the knowledge of health and disease, to a great degree, quality education is dependent upon the health of the citizens. The citizens' state of health -and physical fitness will determine to a great extent whether or not they succeed in realizing then potentialities. Contributing to family and community health, the physical educator protects his own, health, his dependents' health and the health of the individuals within the community where he resides. Physical education provides a programme of activity to improve the physical and mental health of the individual, his family and the entire community.

Physical education contributes to skill of a participant and spectator in sports. Sports

and physical, education activities are the important part of our culture, thereby enhancing quality education.

Physical education/sports contribute to resources for utilizing leisure hours in mental pursuits. It acts as a stimulating influence in playing upon one's mental resources for the utilization of leisure hours.

Physical education contributes to democratic living. The physical educated citizen believes in the democratic way of life and his every action is symbolic of his loyalty to its ideals. It has the tools with which to create *a truly democratic society, hence the quality education.*

In the past, the acclaimed roles of sports in the society as found in literature bothered around physical fitness development, development of character, mental, social and psychological development. However, the objectives of sports reveal that there are four broad roles of sports in any society of man. These include:

Pattern maintenance - This means that sports try to perpetuate the status quo of any given society. In other words, sports tries to maintain the culture of the society it exists in.

Integration mechanism - sports have become one of the ways in which you achieve patriotism, nationalism which may eventually lead to internationalism and world peace.

Goal attainment - sports services certain specific groups and some individual benefits, it would be physical prowess, *economic* benefits, international peace or even national fame *and togetherness via sports.*

Tension management: There is a general belief that sports releases emotional tension, lets off the steams or that it develops the spirit of give-and-take (Eze, 2001a,b).

Implications of physical education and sports for quality education

For physical education and sports to contribute to quality education, there are definitely some implication in the next century, in other words, there must be strategies to strengthen them. The National Policy on Education listed many of these strategies in the science/physical education section. A few of these listed strategies that have not been well implemented are discussed in this paper.

Training and retraining of Physical Education Teachers

Effective teaching of any subject involves among other things, effective planning for resources and effective organization of the resources available for the teaching of the subject (Okwuanaso, 1998). If the available, teachers are not exposed to recent happenings in the world of sports, classroom and workshop not well utilized, methods of teaching of physical education will not be possible. Physical education teachers must be continuously trained and re-trained if we expect them to be abreast with the fast changing nature of sports and physical education. The training and re-training of physical education teachers could be done by exposing them to various workshops, seminars and conference.

Physical education and sports training programme

For sports and physical education to be taught well for quality education for all, the training should emphasize the

complementary nature of theory and its application. It should also be interesting challenging and relevant to the future career of the trainee and should stretch his intellectual powers. At the end of this training, the trainee must be able to accept responsibility of sports coaching or teaching physical education under guidance in his particular area of specialization. The advantage of such an approach to the development of physical education and sports training programmes is that the trainee becomes inculcated with the concept that innovation is an accepted part of every worker's life.

Improvement of Instructional Methods

No meaningful efforts geared towards the development of sports can be achieved without first improving the instructional phase of physical education as an academic subject in both the primary and secondary schools. It is very necessary to enlighten the citizens, in respect of the meaning and nature of physical education. Sports and games are the outcome of physical education, and this informs the need to give attention to the instructional phase of the physical education programme.

Equipment and Facilities

Effective teaching of physical education and sports is also possible when equipment and facilities in our institutions are adequate. Government should give special grant to schools for purchase, build and repair of damaged sports equipment and facilities.

Reliable Methods of Forecasting Manpower Needs

For physical education and sports to contribute effectively to quality education for all, each country especially Nigeria needs to think out a strategy for the

education and development of its human resources. The country must have reliable methods of forecasting her manpower needs and demands because according to Harbinson, education can be socially malignant if individual citizens do not have a chance and incentive to it.

Conclusion

Good education can be used to promote national consciousness and unity and good education is the one that is qualitative and functional. Education is used by the society to achieve whatever it wants.

Physical education plays vital roles for the quality education for all. It supplies personnel needed in the nation's institutions and sports councils by imparting skills to then learners and thereby help immensely in the qualitative education and the development of the nation. Physical education and sports help in the training of the mind in the understanding of the world around and also help in the acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities and competence both mental and physical as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of the society.

For physical education to perform the role well in the next century, it implies that physical education teachers and sports coaches should be trained and re-trained; physical education teacher and sports coaching training programme should emphasize the complementary nature of theory and its application; sports equipment and facilities should be a replica of the equipment and facilities used in other developed countries and there must be reliable methods of forecasting manpower needs and demands so as to avoid training people in skill areas not needed in the society.

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