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Eradication of poverty in Nigeria through physical education and sports

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A B S T R A C T

This paper is a treatise on how physical education, Recreation and sports can eradicate poverty in Nigeria. The paper begins with introduction and proceeds to examine the concepts of physical education, Recreation sports, poverty and poverty eradication. The objectives of Physical Education and eradication of poverty in Nigeria were highlighted. Presented also were some of the roles of physical Education, recreation and sports in poverty eradication. Efforts were also made to outline some implications of physical education, recreation and sports for poverty eradication.

Introduction

While ill-health, political instability, unemployment of our youths, and even inflation may be the greatest concerns of many Nigerians, my utmost remarks are oriented to the fact that physical Education, Recreation and sports are very essential to poverty eradication in Nigeria. They help to reduce if not eradicate the above concerns. Physical Education is a natural aspect of life and living. The pre-historic 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. As a result of labour-saving devices, sedentary pursuits and security, the need has arisen for some type of planned programme whereby individuals may realize

the physical benefits that were once a part of a person's daily routine as well as many emotional, sociological, psychological and intellectual benefits. And also recreation if well structured. In combination with other factors has the potentialities of contributing to the acquisition of those human fundamental needs which include among others the social and physiological needs, Sports as all aspects of physical education is no more seen as a pre-occupation of social dropouts but a veritable instrument for earning a living, national and international politics and unity. Poverty is said to be pronounced deprivation in well being. "To be poor is to be hungry, lack shelter and clothing, to be sick and not cared for, to be illiterate and not schooled (World Bank

2001) specifically, the areas which the study intends to discuss include:

1. The concepts of physical education, recreation, sports, poverty and poverty eradication.
2. Objectives of physical education and eradication of poverty in Nigeria
3. The Role of physical education, recreation and sports in poverty eradication.
4. Implication of physical, education, recreation and sports for poverty eradication Concept of Physical Education.

Physical Education as an integral part of the total- education process is a field of endeavour that has as its aim the development of physically mentally, emotionally and socially fit citizens through the medium of physical activities that have been selected with a view to realizing these outcomes. Physical education programme is made up of a variety of activities and all of them are based on the fundamental human movements. Certain criteria should be followed which include:

- (a) Individual programme should include the level of development, interests and need of individuals.
- (b) The Nature- the programme of activities should be formed without undue strains. They should be within the scope of individual capabilities,
- (c) Facilities and equipment- the activities should be those for which the needed facilities and equipment can be easily obtained.
- (d) Variety -the programme should provide a wide variety of activities for the following groups which include adults, children and the sick. Physical Education can be seen as the ability of a person to carry out his daily tasks or activities without undue fatigue and still has

ample reserved energy to enjoy leisure time and still meet up with the unforeseen emergencies. Physical Education is a profession which uses knowledge about human movement in the service of man (Bucher, 1979).

Concept of Recreation

Recreation can be conceptualized differently by people according to their level of exposure and understating. Recreation is a basic human need and appears to be a part of daily living which is concerned with the pleasant and constructive of leisure time. Laoye (1976) sees recreation as any changes from ones daily work and an activity to be done during any free time. Recreation to him could be in form of rest, reading, playing a game or sports. Recreation has always been recognised as essential element of the lives and culture of all people of every race, nation and creed. Nwegbu (1978) states that a nation which does not use its leisure hours properly may begin to retrogress instead of progressing. Individuals all over the globe have at one time or the other spent their leisure hours in constructive and worthwhile manner by engaging in activities such as music, dance, games, sports and painting including other arts. Nwegbu (1978) hence categorized recreation as active like basketball, passive like watching television and creation like the works of arts.

Concept of Sports

Sports are seen as a group of activities that are governed by rules and regulations and possess history and tradition. In Webster's New Oxford Dictionary, (1959) sports means any activity requiring more or less vigours, bodily exertion and carried on, some time as a profession according to

some traditional forms or set of rules whether outdoor or indoor. Sports are made to be dynamic social forces in our culture. Generally, sports has a direct influence upon these factors which create personality, happiness, satisfactions, balanced growth, creativeness, competition, character, mental capacity and learning, freedom, physical condition, social condition, attitude and emotional stability. Sports are that activity one engages in for exercise, amusement, fun, and entertainment.

Concept of Poverty

Poverty is a state of being poor. A poor man is always a dependent who hopes on others for the solution of his basic problems. Muman (1996) states that poverty is a condition of human existence where resources for meeting basic human needs are extremely limited or inaccessible. On the other hand, Civic Agenda (1999) described poverty as a situation of material and non material deprivation. Generally, there are three accepted kinds of poverty as stated by UNDP (1997). They are: Absolute Poverty which means the inability to provide for physical subsistence to the extent of being incapable of protecting human dignity. These include food, clothing, shelter, potable water, health services, basic education, public transportation and work. People of this level have merger income and their marginal propensity to save money is zero.

Relative Poverty Means that .there is the ability to satisfy basic needs as well as other needs.

Material Poverty Implies lack of ownership of physical assets such as land, animal husbandry, etc. Poverty is an

ailment that is often identified among developing and under developed countries like Nigeria, Ghana and many other African countries. This is so because the human and natural resources of these countries are either not adequate or are not fully developed and not properly utilized (Ohakwe, 2001).

Poverty eradication It is the means of helping to stop the sufferings of the masses who have fallen victims of poverty. Certain steps by the governments, groups or individuals could help the issue such as the Universal Basic Education (U.B.E.) programme, the empowerment of Nigerians in both rural and urban areas to become more economically productive so as to improve their life quality, the adequate supply of water, energy, educational facilities, transportation service, primary health care, etc.

Objectives of physical education

The language of physical education is "Movement" and it is through this language that the four aims and objectives of physical education can be attained.

These are:

1. Physical growth and development
2. Mental development
3. Emotional development and
4. Social development (Ackland, 1981)

Physical growth and development is concerned with the growth and development competence in body management, physical skills and body mechanics, safety skills and attitudes.

Through meaningful programme of physical Education, an individual has fine opportunities and avenue to develop

socially as well as emotionally. Gradual attainment of all these four objective result in a well educated individual having well integrated body and soul, and who is socially and emotionally acceptable. In fact, when an individual is playing a game like soccer or volley ball match and any other physical Education activity, education is taking place (Eze, 2001) these activities if well directed and practised help individual in developing their bodies and minds which serves as one of the major objectives of physical education. To crown it all, Vannier and Faith (1975) stated that the primary objective of physical education is to help the children to develop physically, mentally and socially to the highest potential so that they become well, rounded, happy intelligent society, sensitive and democratic citizens as well as adults, hence eradication of poverty.

Eradication of poverty in Nigeria

There are several important channels by which physical education as an integral part of education influence economic development and eradication of poverty. In the first place, education raises labour productivity. Weale (1992) asserted that improvement in education attainment of population would tend to be associated with the economic growth. Secondly, education and money savings may be linked positively. Buba (2001) opined that an expansion in educational opportunities will provide widespread employment and income increasing. This will increase saving through positive expectation effect on expected income, As we are aware, education is also an important policy vehicle for tackling poverty and income inequality and which will transmit into sustainable economic growth and development country like Nigeria.

According to Buba (2001) that the World Bank (1980) Development Report emphasized the importance of education in terms of influencing economic growth. It particularly stressed how human development is directly or indirectly affected by education and had led to reduction in absolute poverty. Let us not forget that physical education is education through physical means.

The role of physical education, recreation and sport in poverty eradication

Physical education contributes to an inquiring mind, an inquiring mind is essential to an individual, for the motor mechanism of the individual enables him to explore, to cruise and to see his environment. Recreation/ sports contribute immeasurably to the economy of the nation and the economic stability of countless communities. Apart from the millions of Naria spent on sports or on commercial recreation of all kinds, sports or community recreation is recognized as a strong economic factor in our national life. It makes communities more desirable places for home - owners, business investors and industrialists creates wider markets for capital and consumer goods, for services and for jobs. Adequate sporting and recreation facilities and opportunities, nevertheless are among the first considerations of industrial management in determining plant locations.

Something more than high good working conditions and fringe benefits is needed attract and keep workers on the job. Kraw (1971) stated that sports is a major source of business investment and income and thus an essential element in the total economy of the United States and it contributes to the economy, national park system travel on the

national economy. Today, the advertisers pay a huge sum of money per minute for advertisement during a televised championship games or sports.

In the sports goods point of view, the sale of sporting goods provides another index of the impact of sports upon our society. The sales of sporting goods have maintained pace with the growth of the total expenditure, for recreation. That is to say that sporting goods are gaining a bigger share of total recreation year by year, thereby eradicating poverty in our society.

National Use of Sports as a Business

This may be looked into in the following ways:

Professionalisation, this has come to stay in sports. We now have professionals in football/ Soccer, basketball, Volleyball and athletics. It is observed that the salaries paid to professional athletes or players substantially exceed those paid the president of the United States. If a professional athlete claims that he uses a certain brand of deodorant, a million TV. Viewers will begin spraying under their arms with this brand. Professional sports have gone "big time".

- Players point of view, players on their own part, in every soccer season we see or hear one player moving from one team/ club to another. This movement is made because of money or remunerations attached to it together with promises from other clubs.

-Newspaper point of view, the sales are high in a soccer season or other sports season. This is because of sports lovers and sports column. In Newspaper, no aspect of human behaviour receives much attention in the media as sports. Here all the people involved become financially fit.

Physical Education, recreation and sports contributing to the knowledge of health and disease. To a great degree eradication of poverty 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 their potentialities. A healthy man is a wealthy man.

Implications of physical education, recreation and sports for poverty eradication

For physical education, recreation and sports to contribute to poverty eradication there are definite implications in the next century. In other words, there must be strategies to strengthen them. The National Policy on Education (1981) listed many of these strategies in the science / physical education section. In the paper, a few of these listed strategies that have not been well implements are discussed:

1. Training and Retraining of Physical Education Teachers: Effective teaching of any subject involves among other things, effective planning and organization of the resources available for the teaching of the subject (Okwuanaso, 1998). If the available teachers and coaches are not exposed to recent happenings in the world of sports, classrooms and workshops not well utilized, methods of teaching skills not well mastered them effective teaching of physical education and coaching will not be possible. Physical Education teachers and sports coaches must be continuously trained and retrained if we expect them to be abreast with the fast changing nature of physical education and sports rules.
2. Improvement of Instructional axvd co^ctvmg -methods: 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 and coaching methods. No meaningful efforts geared towards the development of physical education and sports can be achieved without first improving the instructional phase of physical education as an academic subject in both the primary and secondary schools.

3. **Equipment and Facilities:** Effective teaching of physical education and coaching of sports is also possible when equipment and facilities in our schools, institutions, sports councils and recreation centres are adequate. Government should give special grant to these areas for purchase and repair of damaged facilities and equipment.
4. **Improvement of the Evaluation Techniques:** From what obtains in the school system today, the evaluation techniques adopted in all the levels of educational system do not seem to be in consonance with the peculiarities of the psychomotor domain (Onah, 1998). As we are aware no practical tests are conducted in the schools in physical education. Even the junior and senior school certificate examinations by states and the West African Examination Council (WAEC) respectively have no test of practicals, where at least, the basic skills in sports related activities can be assessed. This is disturbing.

Conclusion

Physical Education, Recreation and sports play vital roles in the development of an economy via alleviation or even eradication of poverty in Nigeria. They supply personnel needed in the nation's institutions, sports councils and recreation centres by

imparting skills to them and help immensely in the development of the country. For physical education to perform this role well in the 21st century, it implies that physical education teachers 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. Finally, children should be given the opportunity to go to school and avidly acquire knowledge and skills that will make them succeed in life. This will prevent them from being misguided due to poverty.

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