The Relevance of Sports to the Development of Education in Nigeria, 1904 Till Date

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Sporting activities have been part of the culture, customs and natural living of man; they have direct relationship with plans, purposes and goals of human beings. Sports have existed with education since primitive times, when man developed skills like hunting, handling of weapons, tests of strength, endurance and courage. This paper examines the relevance of sporting activities to the development of education in Nigeria, since colonial era-1904 till date. Sports like football, soccer, badminton, handball, volleyball, tennis, swimming and athletics have corroborated teaching and learning activities at all levels of education be it informal, formal and non formal education in Nigeria. Historical research methodology in education was used to carry out and analyze data for this paper using archival materials and oral interviews as primary sources while textbooks, journals and internet materials were used as secondary sources. The main focuses of the paper are: to examine the concepts of sports and education, the place of sports in the educational policy and curriculum in Nigeria, advantages of sports to education and nation building, challenges of sports in education and offer suggestions for the improvement of sports and education in Nigeria. The findings of the study revealed that; sports was formally introduced into educational curriculum in Nigeria as physical education in 1904 by the British administration, sports promotes physical health and fitness, recreational activities, relaxation prestige, economic status, identifies talents, abilities, impart skills, encourage socio-cultural relationship which enhances unity among the populace. The forum to benefit from sports usually come at grassroots, school inter-house sports, and inter-schools competitions and association forum. Challenges of sports include inadequate funding, mismanagement of funds, lack of integrity, inadequate personnel, dwindling infrastructural and sporting facilities, inadequate training and medical facilities. It is recommended that, if all the above challenges are properly addressed, sporting activities will project Nigerian education more for overall development both nationally and internationally.

Keywords: relevance, sports, development, education

Introduction

Sports and education are seriously interwoven one promotes the other. One is also embedded in the other as sports forms parts of education, so also education provides forum by which different aspects of sports manifest its practices and activities.

Sports have been part of the existence of man, a form by which man exercises his or herself and belongs to a profession like farming in the garden of Eden. Man utilized sports to satisfy his aesthetic needs, relaxation and healthy living. It came to a point when the crude and haphazard way of practicing sports was formalized.
Therefore in 1904 Nigeria under the British Colonial administration included sports into the education curriculum as Physical and Health Education, which today form part of the subjects offered at Primary, Secondary and tertiary levels of education in Nigeria. According to Johnson, F., Sylvester, O. and Adesanmi, A. (2010) “Physical Education became part of Nigeria curriculum activities when the colony of Nigeria was taken over by the colonial master, which necessitate physical activities as defense methods for Nigeria. It was included for its recruitment of police, armed forces, school curriculum activities and so on”.

The quotation above corroborated the fact that sports as part of the day-to-day living of Nigerians have been in practice before the colonial era, but that it became formalized and included in the education curriculum at the taken-over of colonies by the British government.

This paper will now focus on the concept of sports and education, the place of sports in the education policy and curriculum in Nigeria since 1904 till date, advantages of sports to education and nation building in Nigeria since 1904 till date.

**Concepts of Sports and Education**

Sports are the various activities which man engages in from childhood to adulthood which promote the acquisition of mental, physical, spiritual, aesthetic, emotional and educational well being to make the individual contribute meaningfully to the development of the society.

Sports are divided into the following categories: athletics, gymnastics, individual/dual sport, team sports, rhythms dance, martial arts and combative sports. There are other types of sports like: football, volleyball and so on.

Aspects of sports are designed and translated into subject as Physical and Health Education which forms part of education curriculum in Nigeria.

The following are the objectives of sports: physical fitness, social efficiency, skill acquisition, emotional stability, life career, cultural development and mental development.

The concept of education on the other hand is the systematic process of acquisition of knowledge, skills, abilities and information through informal formal and non-formal teaching and learning. In order for the body of knowledge to be acquired to be properly organized, synthesized and formalized, educational contents are divided into subjects which are in turn developed into curriculum for ease of teaching and learning at various educational levels.

According to Osokoya (2014) “an effective way of defining education is to relate it to culture. Thus, the sociologists define education as the process of cultural transmission and renewal”.

The above conception of education, combines education from different aspect of life, be it industrial, literate, non literate, economic and agricultural levels because each society has a cultural background which also combines together to form basis for their educational attainment.

In Kolawole (2006) according to Dasylva (2006: 11) “Education is knowledge acquisition, its process and means which a society evolves for the purposes of impacting its values and morals, and in pursuance and attainment of its collective vision, aspirations and goals”.

Finally, one could see that the two concepts sports and education are interwoven and closely related. This is because sports translated into Physical and health education in the curriculum, forms part of the content for systematic process of teaching and learning which develops a child to adult and builds him or her up to become a responsible member of the society.
The Place of Sports in the Education Policy and Curriculum Development in Nigeria Since 1904

Sports have taken very crucial place in the education and day to day activities of the people of Nigeria since pre-colonial era. However it was formally introduced by the British colonial administration into the school curriculum in 1904. Since then sporting activities have been embraced at school inter-house sports, inter-school competitions, career progression through the teaching and learning of physical and health education, recreational clubs, football and other games associations at local, state, national and international levels.

Education policy according to Osokoya (2014) “denotes the determination of major objectives, the selection of methods of achieving these objectives and the continuous adaption of existing policies to the problems that face a government”.

Kolawole (2006) “mean all the processes of constructing and implementing curricula”. It involves a consideration of the issues like procedures to follow, contents implementation and method of evaluation of the subject matter.

At this juncture, one can see that curriculum development in any educational endeavour aims at achieving or implementing educational policies which is targeted towards solving some national problems to achieving success in every areas of nation building.

Sporting activities were remodelled into a subject as Physical and Health Education and included into the educational curriculum by the British government for muscle training among the military men and the police; the main reason was for the physical fitness of the soldiers so that they can be able to properly defend the country during wars.

In 1904 the Board of Education in England and the Department of Education for Scotland introduced Physical Education into the syllabus of the elementary schools to take care of school exercises. The syllabus was revised in 1909 and 1911. It was introduced into the curriculum to include teacher training colleges. The training was then based on Swedish type of gymnastics. The syllabus was equally revised in 1919 and 1933. Emphasis at these times was on enjoyment and recreation and physical exercises. In the 1933, curriculum provision was made in the scheme of work for teachers and instructors of physical education, to prepare lesson notes which took care of some aspects of sporting activities like camping ball games, athletics and gymnastics. This same curriculum was adopted nationally.

The place of Physical Education in the school curriculum took a new turn around this time with the recruitment of trained personnel by the provision of the educational objectives in the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria chapter 2, section 18 (1 & 2) which states that:

1. Government shall direct its policy towards ensuring that there are equal and adequate educational opportunities at all levels;
2. Government shall promote science and technology.

Furthermore, the Nigerian constitution on foreign policy objectives in chapter 2, section 19 equally buttress the contribution of sports to nation building and international unity. It stated that “The state shall promote African Unity, as well as total political economic, social and cultural liberation of Africa and all other forms of international co-operation conducive to the consolidation of universal peace and mutual respect and friendship among all peoples and states, and shall combat racial discrimination in all its manifestations”.

Sports and games in the form of Physical and Health Education and various national and international competitions have been able to achieve to a certain extent some of the Federal Government educational and
foreign policy objectives stated above and this has gone a long way in promoting education, national and international unity among divers multi-cultural settings.

From Britain, in 1952 some physical education books were published and used by primary schools. In 1954 a formal Physical Education syllabus was introduced into the western region by M. H. J. Ekperigin. Mr. C. O. E. Nwegbu published a book on Physical Education Athletics and Games and Physical Education Handbook for Teachers Training Colleges in 1957 and 1958.

Initially Physical Education was not taught in Secondary Schools in Nigeria, but later development brought about the teaching of the subject in both Junior and Secondary Schools as part of the subjects slated for both internal and external examinations like the West African Secondary School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) and National Examinations Council Secondary Schools Certificate Examinations (NECO SSCE) in Nigeria. Currently Physical and Health Education is already part of the core courses in most tertiary institutions, especially the Universities and it is being offered and awarded certificates up to Ph.D. level.

The recent recognition and integration of sporting activities in the education policies and curriculum development was further enhanced and promoted by the National Policy on Education which was first published in 1977 and reviewed in 1988, 2004 and 2013.

According to Okediji (2012) the National Policy on Education is the government’s method of realizing national objectives and goals and this can be realized using educational tool. Education generally is based on curriculum formulation and appropriate implementation which are based on the following philosophy:

- The inculcation of national consciousness and attitudes for the survival of the individual and the Nigerian society;
- The training of the mind in the understanding of the world around;
- 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.

From the above, one could see that the objectives and importance of sports or Physical and Health Education has been properly taken care of in the National Policy on Education which serves as the major document guiding educational advancement in Nigeria till date.

Advantages of Sports to Education and Nation Building in Nigeria Since 1904 Till Date

Sporting activities have so many effects on educational development and nation building in Nigeria. Some of the effects are physical, physiological, psychological, economical, emotional and social in nature.

For instance, traditional sports in Nigeria plays vital role in integrating the citizens in certain cultural rites and ceremonies. It gives them sense of belonging, engender unity and co-operation among peer-groups across the country; such sporting activities include wrestling, boxing, acrobatics, Ayo, horse racing, climbing, throwing and swimming. Sporting activities feature during festivals, initiation ceremonies into a society of choice, harvesting of crops etc.

Different aspects of sports, physical and health education have varying benefits to human endeavors and existence. For instance recreational activities are minor exercises which people engage in to relax their muscles and emotions after stressful labour and daily jobs. These activities like gardening, knitting, weaving playing ludo or cards, singing, dancing, reading or writing for pleasure, add enjoyment and longevity to the lives of the participants and in turn promote abilities and skills which is a major objective of education. According to Badmus (2009), “Recreational activities create the following benefits for the people,
Provides fun and enjoyment;
Promotes social and cultural integration;
Reduces tension and emotion;
Widens one’s outlook and horizon;
Develops basic skills needed in games and sports;
Helps in the correction of metabolic disorders, dietary disorders and postural defects e.g. diabetes, obesity and scoliosis.”

However in order for the above activities to maximally help the health, social and economic living of man, the following factors must be put into consideration in the choice of recreational activities: interest, age, status, fund, body somatotype and religion.

There are other games and competition in which Nigeria is a part like the modern Olympic games inaugurated on 23rd June, 1994 by Pierre De Coubertin, football competitions like African Cup of Nations, World Cup, female soccer. All these have the benefit of encouraging and promoting understanding among member state and nations, give open door to travel to member states and countries, encourage social interaction, give further exposure to other people’s culture, promote healthy competitions which aid all round development, acquire more skills in sporting activities, which encourages intimate relationships among youths and further the course of advertisement and mass media.

Awosika (1992) in the Journal of Nigeria Academy of Sports Administration stressed the advantages of sports to education and stated that “Sports today, be it soccer or any other game has cut across all barriers; ethnic, religion or racial and has served as a symbolic dialogue in developing the youths. Great Countries of the world have used sports to develop their youths which science, religion and politics have failed to achieve”.

He further emphasized the importance of FIFA to the education of Nigerian Youths and said “the hosting of the FIFA under Twenty World Soccer Championship will serve as an agent to imbibe in the Nigerian youths, norms, values and moral habits, which will incarnate them into most desirable elders of the future society”.

The above quotations established the fact that sporting activities develop the mind of the young citizenry to adapt and integrate them into a full responsible adult of their country which also serves as the main objective of education.

Nigerian youths have participated more in soccer competitions both locally and internationally and have projected the economy well in the comity of nations. For instance, the country participated in the sports competition of common wealth of nations in 1950 and also participated for the first time in Olympic game.

According to Lowe et al. (1978) cited by Onifade (1992) in the Journal of Nigeria Academy of Sports Administration, commenting on role of sports says, “Sports has become a social phenomenon of modern times in all ramifications of education, politics economics, arts, the mass media, foreign policy, ideological propaganda, political ideology and diplomatic relations. Success in sport also has an impact on a country’s prestige, status and respectability as well as being an instrument of patriotism. Countries also use sport to revive severed relations or strengthen existing ones.”

Sports competition generates income to the Nigerian government, promotes Spirit of patriotism among players and unity across the country and other nations of the World. Morray (1978) according to Awosika (1992) supported the above and said, “When individuals from the same country (of multicultural backgrounds) perform, especially in international competitions under the same banner, it goes a long way in promoting unity and national awareness.”
Moral upliftment. Participation in sporting activities inculcates certain disciplines into the youths which re-shapen and mould their lives and result in rational and good behavior and formation of appropriate habits and good characters.

Finally from all the above, one could see that sports have played a very vital role in the education of Nigerian children, youths and adults in moulding, imparting skills, knowledge, understanding, character formation, generating income and career opportunities, creating international exposures, encouraging unity and spirit of patriotism to be able to participate in various sectors of the economy for the development of the society.

The Pictures on the Next Page Further Buttress Some of the Advantages Highlighted Above Concerning Sports Activities in Nigeria

Source: Google images.
Challenges of Sports in the Development of Education in Nigeria Since 1904 Till Date

Sports or Physical and Health Education like every other aspect of education in Nigeria have faced diverse challenges, constraints or problems. Some of such challenges are inadequate funding, mismanagement of funds, lack of integrity, inadequate personnel, dwindling infrastructural facilities.

Inadequate funding. The financing of education in Nigeria since the colonial era has been a major problem, because the budget allocation for it was usually small compared to the amount needed to fund it. Most states in Nigeria up till date have not been able to meet up with the minimum of 26 percent that the United Nations organization recommended for education vote in the budget. It is based on this under estimation of education in the yearly budget that sporting activities and Physical and Health Education suffer at all levels of education in Nigeria. The case even becomes worse during economic recession. Onifade (1992) commented on the above and said, “.... Government subventions are not enough anymore to run sports successfully. Financing sports has become a big problem to the agencies responsible for it in Nigeria.” He further cited Adeoti (1986) who argued that “the revenue from sports are no longer adequate to run sports in Nigeria and that the era of enough grant has gone.”

Mismanagement of funds. The issue of embezzlement, misappropriation of funds, wasteful expenses and misrepresentation have over the years culminated major barriers to the development of education and society through sports in Nigeria. The federal government has empowered National Sports Commission (NSC) at the federal level, sports council at the state level and other sources from the use of sporting facilities by the public, ticket proceeds and gate fee during competitions. However the issue of unfaithfulness on the part of the collectors and financial managers at all levels has hitherto put sports at a disadvantaged position to develop education and the society.

Managerial problems. There are certain managerial problems facing the field like misappropriation of organizational goals, partiality towards supporting one programme at the expense of the other or in the disbursement of funds, inability to take prompt and quality decisions, inadequate professional preparations ahead of major sporting event or school examination in Physical and Health Education. This area affects the Nigerian universities among others. Most of the sport administrators, managers, coaches, and sport personnel’s do not possess adequate skills needed for the performance of the specified assignment and management of sporting facilities.

Inadequate infrastructural facility. Some of the sporting facilities, school buildings and instructional materials in Nigeria were either not available or dwindling in quality. These have accounted for poor performances in both local and international competitions, even in internal and external examinations.

Inadequate personnel. In certain courses on Physical and Health Education at all levels, there is lack or insufficient teachers and lecturers to handle the subject or courses. Sports coaches and experts are also inadequate in outdoor, indoor games and various sport clubs.

Inadequate training. Necessary workshops and seminar to supply and update global information on sports and Physical and Health Education were either not made provision for, pegged down, placed embargo-on or inadequate. In some cases because of corruption which has eaten deep into the fabrics of the system, funds meant for training were diverted or slashed down.

Low renumeration. Most of the teachers and lecturers in Physical and Health Education, facilitators, coaches, health specialists, administrators referees and club members were not properly reinforced with fat
salaries and appropriate allowances.

With the above challenges in place, the promotion of education and the society through sports will continue to be limited.


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Source: OYO STATE OF NIGERIA—BOOK OF ESTIMATE.

From the above, one can observe inconsistency in budgetary allocation. In 2007 and 2008, the amount were the same, in 2011 it was cut down to 4 million and in 2012 it was jacked up to N10m. Out of the allocated amount for each year which were still inadequate, it is likely that only a fraction would be accessed to execute sport programmes.

**Conclusion**

In concluding this paper one could realize that sports which started in a crude, customary and primitive level in the pre-colonial setting in Nigeria has graduated into the focus of the Nigerian education and has become a focus, expressed in the philosophy of and clearly stated in the National Policy on Education and Foreign Policy of the Federal Republic and has taken a prime place and become very relevant in the educational curriculum at all levels from primary to tertiary education level in form of Physical and Health Education. The various sports and games competitions have also projected Nigeria to the global community to boost the prestige and morale of the country. Though battling with challenges like inadequate funding, facilities, personnel etc. sports have contributed immensely to educational advancements, economic and political awareness in Nigeria.

**Recommendations**

The following are recommended as way forward for sporting activities and Physical and Health Education in Nigeria:

Adequate qualified personnel should be employed to teach the subject in the schools and to serve as coaches, sport administrators, referees, supervisors, facilitators etc.

Enough funds should be allocated and released as when needed to secure instructional materials and sports facilities;

Adequate medical facilities and care should be provided for those who sustain injuries, wounds and those on rigorous training sessions;

Appropriate law should be enacted and enforced to curb excesses, corruption and mismanagement of funds at the managerial levels;

There should be improved remuneration for all sports personnel at institutional, local, club, association, national, international levels;

Athletes pupils and students participating in sporting activities should be reinforced by giving them adequate and worthwhile prizes, laurels, medals and other incentives like money and other useful materials;
The schools time-table should be drawn to give appropriate time for outdoor sporting activities and exercises; Government should provide facilities for recreation and relaxation in various strategic places in the villages towns and cities; People with special talents in one game or sports should be identified in the schools or community for training and proper grooming in order to encourage them to develop their talents for the benefit of the nation; Sports specialists like teachers, coaches and administrators should assist the government by improvising instructional materials at low cost to be able to make progress during economic recessions; Other means of mobilizing funds like gate fee, voluntary donations from different groups in the communities should be explored to boost the economy of sports in Nigeria; Physical and Health Education should be made a core subject and not elective in the secondary education curriculum in Nigeria.

References