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BUILDING A TOTAL MAN: THE ROLE OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORTS

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ABSTRACT

The paper looked at the attributes that unite to build a total man and saw that physical education and sport could play a dominant role. Some misconceptions about physical education were highlighted. The dawn of physical education as an academic discipline and the role played by the Nigeria Association of Physical, Health Education, Recreation, Sports and Dance (NAPER - SD) to make the subject examinable in secondary school certificate examinations were discussed. The attributes of a total man were discussed under the Bloom's (1956) Taxonomy of Educational Objectives. It was posited that physical education and sports have boundless opportunities to be utilized in building a total man. It was concluded that a shift of emphasis from the "bookish" learning to a worthwhile balanced and functional education which caters for the all round development of the students is desirable. It was recommended among others that physical education should be made compulsory in all tiers of education and the extant policies in respect of sports in institutions of learning should be enforced by the appropriate authorities.

Keywords: Myriads, Associated learning, Despicable, Lucrative, Myth, Facets

INTRODUCTION

When the NUGA (Nigerian Universities Games Association) Council came up with the Theme "Building a Total Man" for the 2008 NUGA games hosted by the University of Nigeria, Nsukka the author saw the timeliness of the theme consequent upon happenings in the country at the time. There was youth restiveness coupled with hostage taking in the Niger Delta as well as kidnapping in many parts of the country. Of late, Boko Haram, an Islamic sect which says that "Western Education is Evil" has added another dimension to the spate of insecurity in the nation by sponsoring series of bomb attacks on public buildings as well as churches. In all these, one is sure that those involved in

these despicable acts definitely are mainly youths. The need has arisen to proffer solutions to these heinous crimes perpetuated by the youths and the writer sees physical education and sports as useful tools to douse the tension created by these youths.

This discourse starts by identifying who a total man is. From the writer's perspective a total man should be one who is physically, mentally, morally, social and emotionally stable. These are all attributes addressed by Bloom's (1956) Taxonomy of Educational Objectives which he classified under cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains. The building of a total man thus would be predicated on the schools in the training process. One could discover after a careful and critical observation of the training process, that majority of our youths pass through secondary and tertiary education without availing themselves of the most important aspect of the educational developmental process which can only be offered through physical education and sports (Alagbu, 2011). He posited that most of our youths lack the vital social, emotional, physical and sports skills, which will enable them manage their leisure time well after graduation from school.

MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORTS

Physical education and sports have come a long way from the colonial era to date. In the colonial era retired military physical training instructors functioned as physical educators in the schools. Their role was basically to use physical activities to instill discipline in pupils quite similar to the experiences of the child in Ancient Rome and Sparta (Mgbor, 2002). According to Ojeme (1984) physical education was regarded as having no academic contents and was, therefore, taught and practised as after school games or athletics.

These problems contributed in no small measure to the negative perception and attitude of society toward the discipline which has lingered on till date. Even some "highly" educated Nigerians hardly appreciate what is done in physical education. This, according to Mgbor (2002), has resulted in identifying it with all sorts of funny tags such as running and jumping, jumpology etc in academic communities and that it is meant only for those who have nothing serious to do. This negative impression stems from the low rating of the subject relative to other subjects at the secondary school level. Secondary school leavers and by extension their parents view physical education as not challenging enough as to offer lucrative jobs as in other disciplines like engineering, medicine, accounting, etc (Keinde, 2011).

Morankiyo (2005) opined that people have negative attitude towards physical education and that the generality of Nigerians do not know or even understand what the subject is all about. He averred that this negative posture seriously affects the teaching of physical education at both the secondary and tertiary levels of education. Consequently, parents do not even encourage their children to offer physical education as a course and the students are not motivated to study the subject (Keinde, 2011).

An opening for the study of physical education as subject came with the establishment of a Teacher Training College, (St. Andrew's College, Oyo) in 1896 where physical education was made compulsory. The college offered a four year programme leading to the award of a Grade Two Teachers Certificate (Fafunwa, 1975; Ladani, 2002; Taiwo, 1980; Ukeje, 1966).

Prior to 1949 there was no tertiary institution that provided opportunity for Nigerians who wanted to specialize in physical education. The myth was, however, broken by late Harding Ekperegin who in 1949 left Nigeria to attend the University of Loughborough in England where he bagged a Diploma Certificate in Physical Education after three years of study. Late Isaac Akioye became the second Nigerian to go to Loughborough. When Ekperegin came back in 1952, he began the crusade of physical education in the old Western Nigeria. This marked the beginning of a new dawn in the

development and recognition of physical education as a subject in the school curriculum in Nigeria (Oduyale, 1983).

THE TURNING POINT

The establishment of the then Nigeria College of Arts, Science and Technology in 1952 at Zaria, Ibadan and Enugu boosted the development of physical education which in 1957 was added to the courses offered. The College at Zaria laid the foundation of physical education as an academic discipline. The programme lasted for three years and successful candidates amongst whom were J.C. Omoruan, J. Ade Oyewusi, Tony Omo Osagie, Awoture Eleyae, M.O. Ajisafe, A.F.A. Folawiyo and many others too numerous to document were awarded a Diploma Certificate in Physical Education (Ladani, 2002).

Physical education became more of an academic discipline when in 1960 the University of Nigeria, Nsukka was founded. Physical and Health Education became a degree course and the first set of successful students of the programme bagged the B.Sc Degree in Education (Physical and Health Education) and one of the first notable recipients is Prof. F.A. Amuchie who became a worthy father of the Nigeria Association of Physical, Health Education Recreation, Sports and Dance (NAPHER – SD) in Nigeria. Other universities started their own degree programmes as follows: University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University) in 1969, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria in 1973, the University of Ibadan in 1976, University of Benin in 1978 and the University of Lagos in 1978 (Ladani, 2002). Nearly all Nigeria's Universities now have Departments of Physical and Health Education or Departments of Human Kinetics and Health Education.

The tireless efforts of Late Harding Ekperegin, J.A. Enyeazu, T.A. Erinle, I.A. Akioye and others led to the formation of NAPHER – SD in 1966 as a profession. Since then, members have struggled to ensure that the subject is examinable in both WAEC and NECO School Certificate Examinations.

HOW PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORTS CAN BE USED TO BUILD A TOTAL MAN

Earlier on, it was stated that the total man is one who is physically, mentally, morally, socially and emotionally stable or alert. Physical education and sports can be relied upon in our efforts aimed at building a total man through the development of the aforementioned traits or characteristics as follows:

1. Development of Physical Fitness and Physical Skills

This aspect comes under the psychomotor domain. A person is physically fit if he possesses the ability to function effectively in his daily chores without undue fatigue and yet has enough reserve energy for leisure activities. This objective is one of the unique goals of physical education. The attributes of organic fitness include muscular strength, muscular endurance, muscular power, flexibility, speed, agility, balance, co-ordination and cardio – vascular endurance. Activities that can be used in developing these systems include hanging, jumping, running, throwing, leaping, climbing and carrying. The activities should be vigorous enough to stimulate the various organic systems. It is only when the youths of any nation are fit and healthy that they can contribute their quota of effort to the pool of labour for national development (Nwegbu, 1978).

Skill is the correct way of performing an activity following the proper techniques and sequence. Generally, it means the development of body control and co-ordination so that the individual may perform with grace, ease and efficiency. Development of physical skills concerns the various skills of sports, dance and gymnastics (Barrow, 1977). Physical education and sports, according to Nwegbu (1978), provide opportunities for pupils to develop the basic movement skills such as walking, running, jumping, skipping, leaping, hopping, bending, stretching, throwing, catching, pulling, lifting, sitting and standing.

The psychomotor objective also has implications for the health and recreational phases of the programme of physical education. Skills acquired will to a large extent determine the use of leisure time. Physical education and sports provide boundless opportunities for the acquisition of motor skills necessary to make our lives worth living.

2. Cognitive or Mental Development

This is the intellectual aspect of development and it is closely related to the central purpose of the school – the use of the rational powers of man and Barrow (1977) asserted that if this be the paramount goal of education, it, too, must make a contribution in this area. He posited that the intellectual development objective of physical education involves several facets or areas. First, it involves motor skills and this requires thinking on the part of the individual in order to co-ordinate the mind with the muscles since the learning of a skill is not automatic but requires mental awareness, alertness and effort. Second, not only does thinking take place with respect to skill movement itself but there are myriads of associated learnings which accompany skill learning. These associated learnings take the form of rules, techniques, tactics, strategies and terminology which make up sports, dance and gymnastics. Third, an understanding of the principles of health, good body movements, and exercise as a way of life is most important. There must be an awareness of the value of good health and fitness and knowledge of how they may be developed and maintained.

Apart from the knowledge of the skills, rules and strategies of the subject, physical education can contribute to the development of the child's academic understanding by integrating movement experiences with other subjects such as science and mathematics in the curriculum. His understanding of many science concepts can be enhanced in the sports field by integrating classroom instruction with movement activities.

3. Emotional, Social and Moral Development

This development comes under the affective domain. Emotional and social aspects are related because it is only when the emotional aspect has been properly developed that the individual can make the most contribution socially. Thus, this objective prides itself with assisting the student make proper adjustments first as an individual and second as one of a group. There are the emotional needs for recognition, belonging and feelings of anger, hostility and aggression. Physical education contributes greatly in meeting these emotional needs. The feeling of anger or hostility can be satisfactorily expressed through kicking a ball, running a race or wrestling.

Social fitness relates to one's relationship with others. There are many opportunities in physical education for the satisfaction of social needs of people. There are many group or team games which require co-operation of the members to achieve the desired objective. Each player contributes his quota as in a relay team, a soccer team, a basketball team, a hockey team, etc. There is the development of sportsmanship which means being humble in victory, gracious in defeat and conceding to others their due. In sports participation, especially in extramural competitions, the social circles of the participants are widened.

Moral fitness, on the other hand, relates to the human conduct and the appreciation of the conditions that determine its being good or bad, right or wrong. It manifests itself in character. A morally fit person abhors cheating, lying and dishonesty. He is imbued with the sense of justice and fair play. Opportunities abound in physical education for the exhibition of the above character traits.

Emotional, social and moral fitness are inter – related in character formation.

CONCLUSION

This paper has pinpointed how physical education and sports could be used in the building of a total man along the psychomotor, cognitive and affective domains of education. What remains in the realization of this dream is the enforcement of the Nigeria Sport Development Policy (1989) as well as the National Policy on Education.

Our educational planners have for too long a period paid lip – service to this important aspect of the educational spectrum. A shift of emphasis from “bookish” learning to a worthwhile balanced and functional education which caters for the all round development of the students is desirable (Alagbu, 2011). Such education should center round the development of man through the mental as well as the physical components of development which physical education and sports offer.

RECOMMENDATIONS

From the write – up, the following recommendations are put forward:

- a) Physical education should be made a compulsory subject in all tiers of education.
- b) All institutions should be made to organize intramural competitions in all sports so as to stimulate mass participation in sports by students.
- c) Universities should mount post – graduate programmes to improve the worth of serving professional physical education teachers.
- d) Vice – Chancellors of Universities, Provosts of Colleges of Education and Rectors of Polytechnics should be reminded of the content of the circular letter No NUC/ES/138/Vol.XIIV.839 of 21st February, 2006 in which they were directed by the Federal Government to comply with the Sports Development Policy for Nigeria (1989). The letter reads in part:
 - (i) Institutions of Higher Learning shall set at least one lecture free afternoon for sporting activities between Monday and Friday.
 - (ii) Participation in sports shall be compulsory in institutions of higher learning in the first two years of entry.
- e) Necessary machinery should be put in place to direct heads of institutions to enforce compliance to the extant policies in respect of sports in institutions of learning for the benefit of our students, institutions and the educational system.

It is the considered view of the author that a religious observation of the above would go a long way in our efforts at building a total man through physical education and sports.

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