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THE ROLE OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORTS IN ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This paper examined the role of physical education and sports in achieving sustainable development. It examined contributions of physical education and sports in to social and economic development. Literature affirms that the way each individual lives is a major factor for the health and fitness of that person. Again, there are individuals that earn a living through sports. It is only when individuals are physically fit that they will be productive. Based on these and many more, it was recommended among others that, since individuals can be gainfully employed through sports, government should develop functional physical education and sports programmes that will assist individuals to contribute to social and economic development of the nation as this will offer ample opportunities and create economic opportunities.

Keywords: Physical Education, sports participants sustainable Empowerment

Introduction

Modern man faces a more rapidly changing environment than his forefather. Though, most of the occurring changes were brought about by man himself, hence, the difficulty of adapting himself to the changes and to the new situation of developing a functional strategy for the individual education and sports development competencies. Omoruan (1996) opined that physical education is that phase of education which deals with development and adjustment of individuals through a carefully planned and coordinated programme of physical activities and related experiences. He further stated that, physical education is primarily concerned with the quantitative aspect of human behavior and in its well-developed form, is an integral part of the total makeup of the society.

Adedeji (1996) asserted that the non-challant attitude of people towards less strenuous physical activities in our educational and sports domains, the lust for money, abundant leisure, inconsistency in sports policy, lack of continuity and inadequate physical education ideologies, religious intolerance and ethnicity have confronted man with myraids of mental, emotional, physical and social strata that man has less time to protect anything that can provide comfort for the entire population. The solutions to these problems are proper planning and reflection through education. In order to achieve the desired result for purposeful living, man must be an active participant in various forms of physical education and sports endeavours than those found in the offices or classrooms.

Bucher (2002) has identified physical education and sports as the process of education that concerns activities, which develop and maintain the human body. Likewise, Honey Bourne, Hill and Moors (1996) have described physical education and sports as the formal inculcation of knowledge and values through physical activity experience. It a life that contributes to socio-economic and political development of any nation. Education through the school helps towards self-actualization of individuals in the society. Education is life-long process designed to provide skills, knowledge and information for personal and national sustainability. It provides for every citizen information skills and knowledge capable of paving way for national socio-cultural and economic development. Education is one of important and primary agents of social transformation and development in the society. Therefore, education for sustainable development is a dynamic and continuous process (Fafunwa, 2014). Nigeria as nation is blessed with human and materials resources. The human resources especially the athletes and administrators if they are well managed can be harnessed to assist the country to compete favourably with other nations around the world. Sports is major tool that can be used to realize the noble objective of sustainable development. In view of the invaluable roles of sports in ensuring national sustainability that will attract opportunity from investment other which can also boost our economy in terms of increased for our nation's sportsmen from local, and international investors. The term 'development' has also been explained as the gradual growth of something, so that it becomes bigger or more advance. Kaber and Roger (1995-2001) made

the same statement that empowerment serve as the importance of collective action; they argued that individual action may bring about significant normative changes at the community level which can be accurately described as empowerment, depending on social process involved. These are used in this work to mean, the ability to develop physical and mental competencies that can help an individual to meaningfully contribute to societal advancement and self.

The way each individual lives is a major factor for the health and fitness of that person. Even though heredity plays a major role to a large extent, health and fitness are acquired characteristics. Again, food eaten, as well as the amount of rest obtained, physical activities engaged in and other health practices that follow play important roles in determining human well-being.

In line with this, it could be said that, the amount of physical and recreational activities engaged in by an individual is proportional to the health and physical fitness of that individual which determined the functionality of the person to be empowered economically and socially meaningfully in order to contribute meaningfully to the advancement of the society in which they live.

Physical Education and the Economy

Physical Education and sports have been used through history as forms of public entertainment. For example, sports programmes were used to bring the ancient people together where they can be entertained, have fun and relax from the vigorous activities of the day. Sports were never commercialized as they are today. Sports have now been commercialized today for the fact the people now generally participate in sports in order to earn a living. Sports have been put on the radio and television for commercial purposes. Whenever sports take place today, commercial activities are always on the increase. Sports are one of the fastest growing industries in United States, and it intertwined with virtually every aspect of the economy. Physical Education and sports are everywhere, accompanied by the sound of a cash register ringing incessantly.

Economic Empowerment and social Development

Government involvement in physical education and sports in the early 80s has been justified for the purpose of promoting national and economic

development. Today, the problems confronting nations, particularly a developing country like Nigeria is beyond what could be left in the hands of the government done.

Through sports, many corporate bodies have taken up the responsibilities of sponsoring teams to competitions, and is also undertaken by private organizations on television and radio for advertisements and public viewing of live programmes. Thousands of Nigerian youths earn their living through sports, Nigerians playing football, basketball, table tennis, athletics, etc. abroad have tremendously reduced cases of unemployment. Most of these sports talents earn millions of dollars per week.

Kanu heart foundation has tremendously helped to save the lives of many Nigerians and Africans with Heart related problems. Millions of naira is spent annually on this project. The money comes from the earning made by soccer maestro Nwankwo Kanu through sports. Sports are powerful tool used for the projection of national image. The strength of sports in world politics is great, us the round 90s. When the international community was against the leadership of sports Nigeria was the only weapon used by the nation to gain recognition. One of Nigerian foremost footballer player Nwankwo Kanu was appointed Africa soccer Ambassador.

The world U-20 soccer competition tagged "Nigerian 99" was used to develop the Tafawa Balewa Stadium, Liberty Stadium Ibadan, Bauchi State Stadium, National Stadium Lagos, Kaduna to international standard Stadium. Also Abuja National Stadium was built when Nigeria hosted the All Africa games. All these facilities offer job opportunities to thousands of Nigerians today. Countries may spend huge amount of money to procure equipment and facilities to host either for the Olympic games, world cup Tournament, National Championships, golf Tournaments, track and field competitions etc. Although some of these programmes, according to Coakley (2002), do not monetary profit but offer other powerful economic interests to the host communities.

Huey (1996) postulated that government is always interested in the long-term economic benefits of hosting sports programmes, officials may even use the occasion for making contacts with corporate bodies looking for new sites to locate their operation; officials may also use the event to highlight and promote products made by local business

organizations thereby empowering individuals' and officials economically. The author cited example of that the government of Japan, Mexico and South Korea invested in hosting the Olympics and their contingents to the games for economic empowerment and development purpose. In many cases, the hosting of sports programmes now combine the interests of civic boosters and government officials in a general effort to enhance the local economy. If physical education and sports are not properly communicated by physical educators, all the economic opportunities that exist in physical education and sports may not be properly harnessed the practical aspect of physical education and sports may not be adequately or aesthetically drafted towards sustainable development of the nation.

Curriculum Innovations

Awosika (1992) opined that curriculum for physical education and sports should be well developed to embrace all the social and economic aspects of the subject of the subjects for the benefit and overall development of the students, it must be progressive in nature from year to year and season to season, which will assist to offer the best opportunity for students as often as possible and provide sound physical education and sports programmes for sports development.

Conclusion

It is important to draw attention on government involvement in physical education activities and the "public good", it would be for the government to promote equal economic interest of the citizens. This means that government involvement in physical education activities and sports usually reflect the interest of some people than others. Those who benefit most tend to be people capable of influencing policy makers. This does not mean that government policies always reflect the interest of wealthy and powerful people, but it does mean that they are influenced by power tussle among groups within the society.

Recommendations

Following the above discussion, literature seems to suggest that individuals can be gainfully employed through sports. Therefore government should develop a functional physical education and sports programme that could be sustained and maintained. This will give wider experience to the students and create economic opportunities.

Also, curriculum for physical education and sports should be diversified and must be progressive in nature from time to time providing the best opportunity for economic empowerment and social development of the citizenry.

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