

CONSTRAINT TO TEACHING AND LEARNING OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORTS IN NIGERIA

Dr. Sani Muktar Bichi

Department of Human Kinetics and Health Education
Faculty of Education

Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria

Email:- hajjisani@yahoo.com sbmuktar@abu.edu.ng GSM 08039651967

ABSTRACT

This paper attempt to examine constraints to teaching and learning physical education and sports in Nigeria. It examine the concept of physical education and school sports, principles of physical education and school sports programmes, types of school sports activities, objectives of physical education and school sports in Nigeria. Also, physical education and school sports at different educational levels i.e. at both primary, secondary schools as well as at tertiary level. Facilities and equipment were discussed, conclusion and recommendations were also offered as follows: School Sports training and organization and physical activities should be made mandatory in primary, junior and senior secondary schools in Nigeria, the curriculum for primary, junior and senior secondary schools sports programmes and organization and physical activities should not just include school sports motivation but also competitive sports.

INTRODUCTION

The joy and honour in the teaching profession is not debatable, since this has been known all along from time immemorial. Aristotle is quoted by Bucher and Koenig (1983) as saying that "those who educate children well, are to be honoured more than who produce them, for those who produce children give them only life, but those who educate them give them the art of living well".

Education is a process of change or modification of the individual from his/her own reactions and interaction with the environment to make him/her accept and be accepted into any society in which the individual finds himself/herself. This change or modification is in the area of physical, emotional, moral, social and intellectual. The imparting of knowledge alongside all these domains makes the individual a "whole" or "a living human being". One subject through which this aim of education is formally accomplished is physical education Ladani (1994).

Physical education according to Wuest and Bucher (1999) is an educational process that uses physical activities as a means to help individuals acquire skills, fitness, knowledge and attitudes that contribute to their optimal development and well-being. This educational process is an ongoing process of learning that occurs throughout the lifespan of the individual. According to Kirchner and Fishburne (1995), the aim of physical education is to produce individuals who have good health, (physically fit) acquire attitudes such as honesty, sportsmanship, fair play, courtesy, desire of physical activities, acquire knowledge in physical education and movement skills.

The importance of physical education as a subject to the development of manpower of a country has long been recognized and therefore almost every country in the world has physical education on its educational curriculum and in Nigeria is no exception. In Nigeria, the teaching and learning of physical education, runs across the whole educational sectors, that is (6-3-3-4) system of education. Physical education is a core subject at primary schools and junior secondary schools respectively and is a course offered at the tertiary level of education Ladani (1994).

Concept of Physical Education and School Sports

Ladani (1994) stressed that the establishment of more secondary schools and teacher training colleges contributed tremendously to the spread and development of physical education and modern sports in Nigeria. Through this Nigeria began to see the value and joy of taking part in Physical Education and sports, and their increase participation met with greater support by both British and Nigerians. This led to great excitement among schools and has thereby enhanced learning at that level in those good old days. The situation is no longer the same today. Since the scrapping of teachers training colleges in the country about two decades ago, physical education and sports have experienced a gradual extinction in our schools system. There are no longer committed teachers to handle the teaching of physical education and sports in the schools coupled with the complete absence of facilities and equipment for the teaching of physical education and sports in most schools in Nigeria.

According to Biki and Nuhu (2010) the spread and development of sports got a boost through the Christian missionaries. On arrival, the missionaries established schools all over the country, particularly in the southern parts of the country. As these schools were established, British physical education syllabus of 1918, 1927, 1933 and sports were also introduced to the schools. Competitive track and field athletics were introduced into Schools in Nigeria through the Empire day celebration usually held every May 24th to commemorate the birth of Queen Victoria. Bitrus (2005).

Bitrus (2005) said that, at the secondary school level, less attention was given to sports. He said apart from the few sporting activities experienced by students during physical education practical lessons which is no longer applicable in most cases, no attention is given to either the students or teachers for sports. This was attributed to inadequate or complete absence of fund allocation for physical education and sports at the Junior Secondary Schools level, poor attitudes of teachers towards physical education and sports, and poor state of facilities and equipment for teaching physical education and sports.

Bitrus (2005) described as pathetic the situation where by little money is given out for sports only during independence or Children's Day celebration for the grassroots schools as far cry from what is happening in other parts of the world in respect to school sports. In Nigeria organization of school sports is the sole responsibility of the coaches, games master or physical education teacher who is usually assigned by the Head Teacher of a school and sports unit. He may not necessarily be a specialist but chosen on the basis of interest such an individual may have for sports. This is in contrast to the findings reported by Trudeau and Shepherd (1980) in one of the studies which revealed that students taught by physical education specialists perform better academically when compared to those handled by non- professionals.

Principles of Physical Education Schools Sports Programme

If a programme is to be successful and which will meet the required objectives, certain principles must be observed as indicated by Onifade (1995). They include:-

- The welfare of the participants must be seriously considered such sub-factors as age, skill acquisition, level of development, interest, psychological, sociological and physiological needs must be considered. This will help to design an appropriate programme for each group.
- The time scheduled for the activities to take place and the strains and stress that may be involved should also be considered.
- There must be opportunity for everybody to take part in such a programme regardless of skill level, physical and mental handicap and regardless of scholastic achievement. But when it comes to extramural where other schools are involved, skill level could be considered. If there will be modification in the programme, it should be gradual and should be implemented after thorough evaluation of existing policy.

Types of Physical Education and Schools Sports Activities

As stated by James (2004) organized schools sports competitions usually involve the following:-

- **Team Games/Sports:** - Football, Volleyball, Basketball and Handball.
- **Dual Games/Sports:** - Badminton, Tennis, Table-tennis, Squash.
- **Athletics** (Track and Field Events).

For extramural, there should be agreement among the participating schools on the number of sports to compete for this is because the amount of facilities and equipment will vary from school to school (Ladani, 1987).

Objective of Physical Education and School Sports in Nigeria

According to Akinsanmi (1987), the following are the objectives of schools sports:-

- The provision of every student with an opportunity to participate in his/her favourite type of competition, exploring and enjoying the association of others who may be new to him/her.
- Affording better health through satisfying physical experience.
- The development of feeling of cooperation and loyalty to group.
- Creating avenue for the development of the spirit of sportsmanship and honesty as regard to rules,

officials and opponents. The attributes developed in the field of sports are important in moral education.

- An opportunity to enjoy hard, clean competitions in the individuals desired activities.
- It affords ample opportunities for the wise use of leisure thereby reducing the rate of crimes and juvenile delinquency.

Constraints of Teaching Physical Education and Sport in Nigeria.

- **Type of Curriculum of Physical Education and Sports at Primary School Level.**

The history of sports among primary schools in Nigeria is hardly separated from the history of physical education in Nigerian primary schools. According to Ladani (2008) the period between 1842 to 1882 was particularly important in the history of education in Nigeria because it was then that literacy education of the western type was effectively introduced to Nigeria by Christian Missionaries. Ladani said the Christian Missionaries developed a variety of educational institutions including teachers' training colleges.

He further said that each mission emphasized more on the aspect of programmes that help to propagate the gospel, therefore, there was no uniformity in curriculum and as a result physical education and sports had no place in the curriculum (Ladani, 2007). Ladani also revealed that competitive sports came to primary schools through the empire day celebration. Empire day was an annual event which was designed to mark or commemorate the birth of Queen Victoria of England. In preparation for the empire day celebration, all schools in each district spend several weeks in practicing sporting events so that they could perform very well when they meet with other schools in the district. The sporting events during this celebration include: 100 yards (100m), 220 yards (200m), 440 yards (400m), 880 yards (800m), one mile (1,500m) race, high jump, pole vault, catching the train, three legged race, egg and spoon race, sack race, and a host of others. Each school in the district stood as a unit of competition and when an event is mentioned or announced, each school having competitors for such event would send their representatives.

There were two categories of competitors initially senior and junior. Open fields in the largest school in the district headquarter was used for the arena. There were no tracks for races but pegs were used to form an oval arc which served as the 220 and 440 yards tract depending on the size of the field, therefore, no school or district produced a standard field. Hence it was difficult to have authentic standard of performance of school children at that time. Similarly, most of the equipment used were improvised and were therefore sub-standard (Ladani, 2008).

This situation continued with improvement at attendance of independent in 1960, through to the 1970s however, decline set in toward the end of 1970s. Today, primary school sport is no longer a serious issue in school sports, particularly in the northern part of Nigeria. Bitrus, (2005) Teachers was of the opinion that in primary schools level are careless about sporting activities and give less attention to sports. Apart from the few sporting activities experienced by pupils during physical education practical lessons where it exists, no attention is given to primary school sports.

This according to Bitrus (2005) is due to lack of adequate funding for primary school sports, poor attitude of teachers toward physical education and sports, and poor facilities and equipment. The researcher, however, noted that occasionally or during independent or children's day celebrations funds are being made available for primary sports. In primary schools, management of sport programmes is the sole responsibility of the games master who is usually appointed by the head teacher. He may not necessarily be a specialist but chosen on the basis of interest such teachers might have for sports activities. The games master is normally assisted by a Games Prefect and Team Captains for each game that may exist in such school.

In some instances, other interested teachers may be co-opted to help the games master. One of the greatest challenges being faced by primary school sports in Nigeria today is that most of their playing grounds have been lost to residential houses which have encroached into school plot (Ladani, 1994). The good news is that some state governments in Nigeria are beginning to revive primary school sports. Examples are the Taraba State Government which has donated trophies to be competed for among primary schools in the state in athletics and football. Lagos State Government recently in 2011 rounded off a football competition in football for primary school pupils. It is hoped that this development might awaken other state governments in the country to follow suit in the near future (Ladani, 1994).

- **Types of Curriculum in Physical Education and Sports at Secondary Schools Level.**

Physical education is not a compulsory subject in secondary schools as was the case with teachers' colleges and therefore, it was not a requirement in the secondary schools, technical colleges and vocational training centers. As a result, more attention is devoted to sports and games in the secondary schools with programmes such as calisthenics, soccer, cricket, hockey, netball, volleyball, table tennis, badminton and basketball (Ladani, 2008).

According to Ladani, (2008) sports in the secondary school is being administered by the games masters/mistresses as the case may be, and like academic it is patterned after British system of afternoon intramural or sports club programme. For the supply of equipment, each student is made to pay at least the sum of (300 or 500 Naira) each.

The games master or mistresses use to be the official authorities who decide what type of equipment to buy and facilities to be provided. However, today the principal has more powers when it comes to the handling of these funds. Even though, in most cases games masters and mistresses are responsible for the purchase of the equipment.

The problem encountered under this situation was that most of these games masters and principals are not physical education specialist.

Many of them did not even take minor courses in physical education but, because they were good in one sport or the other that they were chosen to administer sports (Ladani, 2008). Participation in sport has been an important aspect of life among students of post primary institutions (secondary schools and teachers' colleges) in Nigeria. So many sports competitions were held for this level as a result of shields and trophies donated by sport lovers who played a significant role in the promotion of sport at the post primary level.

Ladani, in his book titled: "History and Development of Physical Education and Sports in Nigeria" has a great deal of records in respect to sports/competitions at the post primary level. Space and time will not permit this research to put down the records in this work. This participation of the post primary institutions has no doubt brought about sport development to Nigeria and has also produced athletes of both national and international repute to the credit of Nigeria as a developing nation.

- **Type of Curriculum of Physical Education and Sports at Tertiary Institutions Level.**

According to Ladani (2008), higher institutions particularly the universities in many parts of the world, many faculty members looked down on sports as nonacademic and have therefore developed very negative attitude toward it.

Kabido, (2001) affirmed that during medieval period, university students sporadically played games and sports in defiance of restrictions and under threat of punishment, baneful attitude towards sports at the universities was very common among many academics who saw no value in sports, hence many of them threatened their students who took part in intramural and interscholastic sports.

Even with this negative attitude and repression, students still formed themselves into clubs and developed both intramural and inter – collegiate athletic competitions.

Similarly, what took place between Oxford and Cambridge in Europe also took place between Harvard and Yale Universities on the other hand in the United States, the individual efforts put forth by students of the University of Ibadan to organize sport gave them the confidence to cross Nigeria borders and look for a counterpart in the field of sports. What applies to the University College Ibadan now known as University Ibadan affects the University of Gold Coast (University of Ghana). This situation made it possible for friendship games to be arranged between the two institutions.

The first of the series of this game was held between 20th and 24th of March in 1951, Legon and won by the University of Gold Coast by 10.5 points to 6.5 for Ibadan (2008). Today the practice has assumed a significant change. According to Bitrus (2005) and Omoruan (1996) the Universities and other tertiary institutions have taken sport more seriously. The institutions probably because of large sums of money they get from students as sports fee, now allocate large sums of money for sport development in areas like building of facilities, providing equipment and logistics for sports as well as training programmes.

Universities and other tertiary institutions have gone further by creating departments to especially handle sports within the general administrative set up. These officers in most cases are headed by a director or sports coach with several subordinate officers serving under him. The officers include coaches who are specialists in various sports.

Staff from physical and health education department are sometimes made to work hand in hand with these sports officers in the institutions where they exist (Bitrus, 2005). Given this advantage in addition to availability of facilities and equipment, there is often a greater enthusiasm for participation in sports among students of tertiary institutions particularly the universities than at other levels. Today, the establishment of Nigerian University Games Association (NUGA), Nigerian Colleges of Education Games Association

(NICEGA) and Nigerian Polytechnics Games Association (NIPOGA), has offered tremendous opportunity to students of tertiary institutions to participate in a wide variety of sports which the students welcomed with great enthusiasm, and have participated in all the sports available in the various institutions. Series of competitions have been held among these institutions with credible records of performance.

The result of participation in sports by the students in the tertiary institutions is that it has produced sports men and women who have represented Nigeria at important regional and world sporting events such as West African University Games, FISU Games, All Africa Games, Common Wealth Games, the Olympic Games and a host of other national, regional and international open championships in sports (Bitrus, 2005).

Availability and Utilization of Facilities and Equipment

One of the most important consideration in the development and promotion of comprehensive physical education and sports programmes in schools is the provision and availability of facilities, equipment and supplies. Although facilities, equipment and supplies are different in meaning, all of them are "physical things" which are needed to make something possible, or easy to do something, for example teaching physical education in schools. Arguably, effective teaching and learning in physical education and sports is in reliant upon the provision of facilities and equipment. UNESCO Charter, Article 5, urge appropriate provision for physical education and sports with adequate and sufficient material in schools and that government and non – governmental agencies should cooperate in planning and provision (Bitrus, 2005). Facilities are more of fixed and permanent items, and in physical education, examples are athletic oval, football field, volleyball and basketball courts, hockey pitches, gymnasium etc.

REFERENCES

- Akinsanmi, T. (1987). A Comparative Analysis of Intramural Sports Programme and Programming at University of Ibadan and Ife. Unpublished Ph.D Thesis, University of Ibadan.
- Biki, R. D. and Nuhu, A. P. (2010). Historical basis of physical education and as potent ways *Sahel Journal of Teacher Education*. Vol.2 No.3, September 2010.
- Bitrus, A.P.N. (2005). Perception of University Lecturers about the Governance of sport in Nigerian Universities. Unpublished M.Sc. thesis, Department of Physical and Health Education, A.B.U. Zaria.
- Bucher, C. A. and Koenig, R.E. (1983). Physical Education and Sports for Schools. Mosby Publishing Company.
- Kabido, A. I. (2001). Impact of Federal Ministry of Youth and Sports Zonal System on the Development of Sports in Nigeria: Ph.D Dissertation (Unpublished) Ahmadu Bello University Zaria, Nigeria.
- Ladani, B.A.(1987). Principles and Practice of Facility Management in Nigeria. Stillwater Publication,
- Ladani, B.A. (1994). Nigerian University Games Association (NUGA) Department of Physical and Health Education, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

CONCLUSION

Many children and youths in Nigeria today lead in active lifestyles and follow poor dietary eating habits. As a result, they put themselves at risk of contracting serious illnesses associated with physical inactivity. To help guard against these diseases and other illnesses associated with physical inactivity, it is essential that children and youth develop the skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary for participating in active healthy living. This is the role of school physical education and sports. This means that children and youth need to be physically active and educated so that, they will be physically sound throughout their lives.

It is a fact that the budgetary allocation to schools for physical education and sports programmes might not be enough, but it is equally true that, if head teachers who are responsible for the fund judiciously, there would be higher percentage achievement in the teaching and learning of physical education and sports, that what is presently being experience in Nigerian schools.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. School Sports organization and physical activities should be made mandatory in primary, junior and senior secondary schools in Nigeria.
2. The curriculum for primary, junior and senior secondary schools sports programmes should not just include school sports motivation but also competitive sports.
3. Schools proprietors and community wishing to establish schools should be made to provide sports facilities and equipment as part of the requirement for their registration.

- Ladani, B. A. (2007). *An Introductory to Sports Management*. Kaduna, Nigeria. Sunjo A. J. Global Links Ltd.
- Ladani, B.A. (2008). An Introduction to Sports Management, Printed and Bound by Sunjo A.J. Global Links Ltd, Kaduna, Nigeria.
- Omoruan, K.O. (1996). Leadership and Sports Management. African Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology and Sports Facilitation (1) 1 (1) 53-55.
- Onifade, A.O. (1995). Handbook of Physical and Health Education, Sports and Recreation, Published by S. Asekume and Company.
- Shephard, R. J., Trudeau, F. M. (1980). Habitual physical activity: Effects of sex, milieu, season, and required activity. *Journal of Sports Medicine and Physical Fitness*, 20, 55-65.
- Kirchner A.M., Fishburne G.J. (1995). international Charter of Physical Education and Sports: Article 4, Caching, Wuest, M. and Bucher, C.A. (1999). Foundation of Physical Education and Sports (13th edition), Boston: WCB/McGraw Hill.