

REAPPRAISING PHYSICAL EDUCATION/SPORTS CURRICULUM IN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS FOR FUNCTIONALITY AND SELF RELIANCE: ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

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Abstract

Education is a veritable instrument for national growth, productivity and economic prosperity of any nation. Educational aims and objectives are accomplished through well articulated and implemented curriculum in different subject areas in the school. This paper contends that the present curriculum in Nigerian schools are outdated and need to be reappraised to meet up with the rapid changing society we find ourselves in. Physical education/sports curriculum in primary and secondary schools in Nigeria need reappraisal to include entrepreneurial studies. Recommendations were made on the way forward.

Introduction

Functionality relates to something being useful and practical. Hornby (2001) described functionality as something being very suitable for a the purpose it was designed. On the other hand, self reliance means being able to do something for yourself and not depend on other people. Self reliance gives one the freedom to be oneself. It is a strong belief that one is capable of successfully dealing with the challenges of life, taking guidance from oneself.

When these two terms are applied to formal education, they mean that the curricula of primary, secondary and tertiary education levels should be able to equip the learners with the survival knowledge, skills, and competencies for effective living in the Nigerian society. That is, that graduates of primary and secondary schools will have acquired, through the courses of study, the rudiments of the operational abilities needed to be self reliant. The whole idea is to enable learners to use their hands, heads and value the dignity of labour for self reliance. This is only

when we shall claim that our educational system is functional, that is being useful and practical.

Given the fact that only a minute percentage of Nigerian youths are opportuned to benefit from higher education (beyond the secondary school level), as less than twenty percent of Nigerians who applied for admission into the tertiary institutions after secure admission each year (Mkpa, 2007). There is then strong need to strengthen and revitalize the primacy and secondary levels of education so that even if the graduates do not eventually proceed to higher institutions, they can still be self reliant and function as useful members of the society. For this to be possible, it is absolutely important to identify and confront the challenges to qualitative primary and secondary education in Nigeria. This may equally involve reappraising the present school curricula, by identifying areas of need and ascertaining how to make it functional in the present dispensation.

The Place of Primary and Secondary Education in Nigeria

The realization of the right to education requires that young people should be given the opportunities necessary for the acquisition of knowledge, skills, attitude and values which will enable them to lead happy, satisfying, productive lives as individuals and discharge their social and civic duties for the betterment of life in the society. Realizing the importance of education, Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights made the following assertions about education:-

- Everyone has the right to education. This shall be free at least in elementary stages.
- Elementary education shall be compulsory while technical and professional education shall be made generally available.
- Higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.
- Parents have prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

In Nigeria, chapter II, section 18 sub sections 1 -3 under Fundamental objectives and Principles of State Policy states as follows:-

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.
3. Government shall strive to eradicate illiteracy and to this end, government shall as and when practicable provide:
 - (1) free, compulsory and universal primary education.
 - (2) free secondary education (FRN, 2004).

The secondary school education should emphasize general, prevocational and vocational education. It is at this educational level that the foundation is laid for the cultivation of generation of manpower resources of every country. Therefore the quality of manpower produced in the areas of science and technology, government, commerce and industry, education agriculture and all aspects of human endeavour can be determined or measured by the quality of primary and secondary education in the country. This assertion is true because if the foundation is weak at this lower level, we cannot reasonably anticipate a solid intellectual and professional output at the tertiary levels.

There are many Nigerians for whom primary or secondary education is the terminal contact with formal schooling. Such persons who

for several reasons cannot proceed to higher education often fall back on the knowledge and skills they had gained from the schools for socio-economic and political survival in the society. The extent to which they make progress depends on the quality of formal education received (Ejide, 2006). It is therefore important that the primary and secondary education should be made functional and qualitative so as to make the learners self reliant. Educational policies and objectives are accomplished through the implementation of sound curriculum.

The Need to Reappraise the Physical Education Curriculum for Self Reliance

Physical education is that phase of the formal education process which uses the media of sport, games, dance and exercise for the physical, mental, social and emotion development (Umedum, 2007). It is anticipated that a well organized and properly directed physical education and sports programme can make significant contribution towards the individual's social, mental, emotional and physical growth. According to Umedum (2007), a well planned and executed physical education programme provides physical activities which will accomplish the following objectives:-

- (i) Physical development: to ensure adequate growth and development of the skeletal, muscular, nervous, respiratory, circulatory systems.
- (ii) Mental development: physical education affords the participants opportunities to make as many judgments as possible in game situations, to show why regular exercise and sports participation are essential to good health.
- (iii) Social development: it helps to develop desirable social traits as co-operation, sportsmanship, respect for dignity etc.

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(iv) Emotional development: to provide opportunities for developing self discipline, self confidence, self appraisal, courage, persistence.

These objectives of physical education and sports are accomplished through four major areas, namely:-

- the basic instructional physical education programme
- the adapted programme in physical education.
- the intramural and extramural physical education programme.
- The interscholastic and inter-collegiate athletic programmes.

Physical education as can be seen, contributes to the objectives of developing sound character and promoting attitudes and ideals required for effective human relationships. However, the major issue which this paper will give serious consideration is providing guidelines for broadening the scope of physical education and sports programmes in secondary schools to include entrepreneurial education for functionality and self reliance.

It is a statement of fact that the curriculum content of Physical Education as in other subjects must have been prescribed several years back. Offorma (2005) stated that Nigeria's circumstances have changed tremendously over the past years hence, the need to review the curriculum to keep pace with the changed circumstances. That the curricula for most of the subjects studied in Nigeria have remained stagnant, static and non responsive to the progression of the Nigerian society.

As Obanya (2008) observed, education through functional curriculum, should contribute to fuelling the national economy that will enhance the production of educated and well skilled citizens who in turn, are ploughed back into the economy for its development. Mkpa (2007) equally reaffirms that given the conditions and

problems of Nigerian society, school subjects need to reflect the quality of dynamism. That there is an obvious need for a compromise between the present prescribed curriculum and possibilities of flexibility clearly indispensable, if we must keep in touch with the reality of societal conditions through the curriculum. There is need for the subject matters of school subjects to be dynamic and functional. Physical education and sports in schools cannot be excepted.

There is urgent need to reappraise the present curriculum in the various subjects to infuse functionality in them. According to Mbachu and Opute (2009), a good school curriculum properly implemented would enable the citizens emerge as self reliant individuals capable of sustaining the growth and productivity of the nation. This is why Offorma (2005) defined curriculum as a vehicle through which education takes place. The new curriculum so envisaged would enhance capacity building. Capacity building, according to Mbachu and Opute (2009) involves learning by doing, learning by using and learning by interacting. It involves creative learning, problem solving and development of human skills for entrepreneurship. That is, capacity building involves acquisition of work skills and that exactly is what the present day Nigeria deserves.

Proposed Entrepreneurship Studies in Physical Education/Sports

Entrepreneurship studies in Physical Education may involve the learners acquiring skills in the area of Physical Education to enable them make money out of education. As earlier stated, this may involve broadening the present curriculum in Physical Education to include courses in the following areas.

1. Sports Marketing and Promotion

2. Purchase, Care and Maintenance of Sports equipment, Facilities and Supplies.
3. Health, Beauty and Fitness Clinic Management.
4. Coach/Trainer.
5. Recreation and Park Management Expert.
6. Dancer and Entertainment Manager.
7. Sanitation and Waste Management.
8. Health Counseling Service.
9. Sports Equipment Manufacturing.
3. Adequate funding of Physical Education department to meet up with the new envisaged curriculum.
4. Conferences, workshops and enlightenment programmes should be organized continuously on television, radio, internet on the new curriculum.

Conclusion

Education is a veritable tool for rapid national growth, productivity and economic prosperity of any nation. Educational goals, objectives and aspirations are translated into viable curriculum and implemented to benefit the citizenry. If the curriculum is faulty, the products of the curriculum will be lacking in many things. It is generally agreed that the present curriculum in schools have become archaic or old fashioned and no longer meets the aspiration of the present generation, hence the need for reappraisal.

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Challenges Hindering Entrepreneurship Physical Education/Sports Curriculum

There are many factors hindering entrepreneurship curriculum in Physical Education. They include:

1. Discrimination and poor perception against Physical Education and sports programme in Nigerian schools.
2. Curriculum content: The present physical education curriculum has no thought about entrepreneurship studies hence the need to revise it.
3. Inadequate finance: Physical Education and sports programmes are capital intensive. Under funding is the greatest problem most Physical Education departments are facing in recent times. For instance, funds are required for the provision of sports facilities and equipment, books, teaching aids, and their regular maintenance.
4. Lack of qualified staff: Entrepreneurship Physical Education curriculum require specialist staff in some areas and, at present, they are not available.

The way Forward

The following recommendations are suggested:-

1. Immediate review of the present Physical Education curriculum is necessary.
2. Retraining of teachers to meet the demands of the envisaged curriculum.

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