

GLOBALIZING THE PHYSICAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION CURRICULUM: TOWARDS EXPLORING THE FRONTIERS OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

This paper discusses globalization as it relates to physical and health education curriculum in exploring the frontiers of national development. The paper begins by examining the concept of globalization. The relationship between physical and health education in a global system was also described. Also, the contribution of sports vis-a-vis physical education curriculum to the overall development of our nation was stated. In conclusion, the paper recommends that physical and health education should be made compulsory not only in the junior secondary school but also in our senior secondary school curriculum.

Introduction

There is no gainsaying the facts that skill development can be achieved through a variety of sports and physical education programmes. Emeahara and Ananomo (2008) observed that sports and games which are the major tools of physical education form great parts of human behaviour. Through a well directed physical education activities, young people develop skills which they can use during their leisure time to improve their social, emotional and mental health. Major sports include athletics, football, and cricket amongst others.

Ajala (2005) view health education as multidisciplinary in nature. Its content is largely derived from medicine, public health, and the physical, biological, and social sciences. Its scope is broad, covering such diverse areas as the nature of disease, the complexity of nutrition, effects of radiation, community health services and many more.

The concept of globalization had now focused attention on sports more than ever before in the last decades of the 19th century. Adegbesan and Ekpo (2004) opined that Globalization as a result of information technology applications has changed the focus of sport in a way that physical, psychological and biological processes now lend themselves to technological intervention which influences sports and the teaching of physical education outcomes.

The Concept of Globalization

Globalization is viewed as a century's long process, tracking the expansion of human population and the growth of civilization that has accelerated dramatically in the past 50 years. Globalization, since World War II, is largely the result of planning by economists, business interest, and politicians who recognized the costs associated with protectionism and declining international economic integration (Wikipedia, 2008).

Emeagwali (2004) posited that globalization (that is the ability of many people to move from country to country) is not new. In African, it was initiated by the slave trade and given impetus by colonialism and Christians missionaries. Globalization has however, continued to engender enormous debate, controversy, protests and demonstrations that are sometimes violent. The reactions to the concept of globalization and its application to human development have been significantly more pronounced in the relationship between the developed rich western world, and the poor developing countries (Anyakoha, 2003).

Globalization can be seen as a revolutionary trend which is systematically restricting interactive phases among nations by breaking down barriers in the area of culture, commerce, communication and several fields of endeavour (Olaifa, 2004). Ajala (2003) opined that the world has become a global village such that human action cut across international boundaries.

Globalization is now seen as the latest phase of capitablization and heir to the 19th century British colonial ideology which imposed itself on the non-western world, particularly the nations of sub-Saharan Africa, including Nigeria. Kanu (2003) noted that the concept of development can be

seen to be culture and contest bound. It can refer to the process of attaining to a higher status characterized not only by technological and industrial advancement evident in increased harmony, cultural vitality, moral and physical health and individual self-actualization.

Globalization should serve as a clarion call to stakeholders in our educational system. We need to re-examine and re-orientate our “educational focus” to the basic principles of Nigerian culture as evident in the practice of education in indigenous (Pre-European) Nigeria societies. According to those principles and in the context of globalization, there is need, as shown by Kanu (2003) for;

- i) Increased access to qualitative education for all;
- ii) Making education responsive to the needs of Nigeria society; and
- iii) Reviving and popularizing indigenous educational agents and institutions.

Physical and Health Education in a Global system

Omikunle (2004) opined that the concept of physical education and sports takes on a new meaning after considering the word “education”. The word “physical” refers to the body and is often used in reference to various bodily characteristics such as physical health. It refers to the body as distinct from the mind. When the word “education” is added to the word physical and physical education and sports is used, reference is therefore being made to an educational process concerned with activities which develops and maintain the human body.

Emiola (2008) in his Inaugural Lecture Titled “All Work and All Play: The Health Assurance in Exercise” stated that the WHO definition of health appeared in the preamble of its constitution in 1948. The definition suggests that health goes beyond the mere avoidance of disease and extends to how one feels and functions physically, mentally and socially (U.S. Dept. Health & Human Services, 1996).

Ajala (2005) observed that health education, whether it occurs in a community, school, clinic setting or place of work, is an interactive process in which target populations are active participants, rather than passive recipients. Ajala (2005) also noted that health education in schools is essential to enable students to acquire the knowledge and skills to promote health.

The word education came originally from the Latin Verb *educere*, which means to draw out (Obemeata, 1996). An adequate definition of education must be one that projects a global and universal perfection of the concept by incorporating all the phases and epochs of human history and civilizations or cultures- the pre-literate, literate and post-literate.

Kanu (2003) observed that education is both time and context defined. Ancient Romans who built the greatest empire the world ever knew put little score on literacy but looked upon school education as a diversion from the Latin word for school-*Ludus*-is the same word for game and diversion.

Exploring the Frontiers of National Development through Sports and Physical Education Curriculum

According to the World Book Encyclopedia (2002) curriculum generally refers to the teaching and learning experiences provided by a school. But educators use the term in a variety of ways. Curriculum may refer to the subject matter taught or to the sequence of classes students follow. It may also describe a school’s planned educational programme or the educational experience of students.

Futuristic views on curriculum are not many but by and large they take off from some of the best ideas offered by theory and research that are increasingly tried in schools today. In particular these pivot on creative thinking processes applied to learning; feeling and sensitizing students’ understanding of themselves and learning; states of consciousness and their relation to students’ handling of their learning environment; creative development of individuals in periodic stages; and socio-cultural shaping influences (Khatena, 2000).

The World Book Encyclopedia (2002) also noted that most private and specialized schools have curriculum similar to those of public schools. However, these schools usually adopt a specialized approach to subject matter depending on the character and function of the school. For example, some private schools add a significant religious orientation to the overall curriculum.

Also, some special private schools design curriculum to meet the needs of particular groups of students/pupils, such as physically challenged, intellectually gifted, and talented athletes. A few of the schools which focused on grooming sports talents are the Pepsi Football Academy, the Football College built by the Kwara State Government, and the Wasimi Sports Academy initiated by Engr. Segun Odegbami.

Adelaja, Ojo and Olujimi (2005) posited that European incursions into the country and their experiment (style of education) need to be re-introduced. At the inception of schools by the missionaries in the country, in 1840, games and sports were part of the schools' curriculum with pitches and facilities not only built but also well maintained. The importance of sports and games was to ensure that the students had balanced and sound education while taking cognizance of some talents that could be developed as seen in later years.

The dimensions of sports in modern societies have expanded with ever increasing momentum. Omikunle (2004) opined that the freedom to develop physical, intellectual and moral power through physical education and sports must be guaranteed both within the educational system and in other aspects of social life. Onifade (2003) rightly observed that sports have become a world wide or social phenomenon deeply rooted in the young and the old.

Crifade (2003) also stated that sports touch both sexes and really all ages and almost all institutions in the society. Sports today have become one of the most significant aspects of contemporary society. The pervasive nature of sports makes it an unparalleled social phenomenon of modern times with far reaching implications for health, education, politics, economics, arts and the mass media, as well as international diplomatic relations.

Egwu (2004) describes sports as the modern day diplomacy. He stated that with all the noise about NEPAD or the Nigeria led conference on Dafur in Abuja, the number of times one national anthem was played in the Olympics to the hearing of billions of people watching across the globe got more world wide attention. Even Obikwelu's silver medal finish in Athens 2004 games put Nigeria more in the spotlight as he was still recognized as Nigeria's Obikwelu who runs for Portugal.

Despite these evidences in favour of physical education and sport, many parents still perceive sports in schools as a waste of energy and resources, forgetting that the like of Segun Odegbani, who was a great footballer in his time, is an engineer of repute. Adokiye Amaesimaka, an accomplished footballer and sports administrator, is a former Attorney General in River State. Even, the late Sam Okwaraji who died in active National Service was reputed to possess a Ph.D. degree in law.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Globalization is popularly regarded as a new age concept which is meant to engender development, particularly in Africa. The concept of development could be viewed from economic, political and socio-cultural perspectives. It is strongly agreed the world over that physical and health education have the potential to enable the individual person attain his or her God given talents maximally in every in every dimensions.

Students who have better health status as adults will be better prepared to contribute to the more effectively. In so doing productivity will increase and business costs will decrease as a result of a work force whose members know how to be and stay healthy. This is the justification for the inclusions of physical and health education curriculum in our school system.

In the light of the above the following recommendation is made

- i) Physical and health education should not only be made compulsory in JS 1 and 2 classes, it should also be made part of the core subjects in JS 3 and SS classes.
- ii) Physical and health education should also be included as a General Studies (GS) course in all our institutions of higher learning.
- iii) There is need for the ministries of Education, Health, and Sports and Social Development to Collaborate more in order to stem the rising tide of hypertension, obesity and stress related diseases in our nation. In addition, youth camps should also be initiated by the Government and NGOs in order to cut down on the high rate of crime and HIV infections amongst our youths.

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Globalizing the Physical and Health Education Curriculum: Towards Exploring the Frontiers of National Development

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