

INHIBITING FACTORS TO THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHERS (PETS) IN THE UNIVERSAL BASIC EDUCATION PROGRAMME IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

In Nigeria, physical education has gained a suitable niche in the education system after a checkered educational history. The paper chronicles factors capable of challenging the effective teaching of physical education in the on-going Universal Basic Education Programme of the Federal Government of Nigeria. The need for this is based on the Universal premise that primary education is the bedrock, the foundation, the pillar and the first realistic step in education of a child. If the initial orientation on which the whole system of education is dependent becomes faulty, the remaining educational levels would be compromised. The article therefore pinpointed and discussed challenges to the effective teaching of Physical Education in Primary School Curriculum Models; All comers teach physical education in primary schools, lack of adequate facilities and equipment, physical education teachers welfare and condition of service etc. It is hope that these crepancies would be corrected in order to bring about a successful Universal Education Programme in Nigeria. The paper suggested ways through which the effective teaching of physical education in primary education could be made effective in current dispensation of the UBEP.

Introduction

Several attempts has been made by subsequently government in Nigeria to affect the lives of its citizenry positively. One of such attempts is the introduction of free and compulsory Universal Basic Education (UBE) Programme, which was officially launched on September 30th, 1999 with the overall aim of improving the literacy level of Nigerians. In specific terms, the programme, according to the implementation guidelines has as its objectives the following:

- (1) Developing the entire citizenry a strong consciousness for education and a strong commitment to its vigorous promotion.
- (2) The provision of free Universal Basic Education for every Nigerian child of school-going age.
- (3) Reducing drastically the incidence of drop-out from the formal school system (through improved relevance quality and efficiency).
- (4) Catering for the learning needs of the young persons who for one reason or another have had to interrupt their school through

appropriate forms of complementary approaches to the provision and promotion for basic education.

- (5) Ensuring the acquisition of appropriate levels of literacy, numeracy, manipulations, communicative and life skills as well as the ethical, moral and civic values needed for laying a solid foundation for life-long learning.

This could be said to be the right step in the right direction hence in Nigeria elementary education happens to be the bedrock and the first realistic step in the education of every child. It therefore implies that education at the primary school level should be taken with all seriousness if the objectives of education at all levels must be achieved. The National Policy on Education (NPE, 1981) deposited that the primary school level is the key to the success or failure of the whole system of education since the remaining are built up on it.

The question that arises therefore is that if the success or failure of the other levels of education is a product of the primary school level, what then should be done to constantly sustain the effectiveness of education at this level? In response to this question, the paper posits that the success of education at this level (primary school) is dependent on the availability of teachers who are devoted, committed and competent in their area of specialization (Adepoju, 1999).

Statement of Problem

There is a growing advocacy for the production and employment of quantitative and qualitative teachers to man the educational system especially the primary and secondary schools in Nigeria (Oluchukwu, 1988, Tahir, Umar and Buri 2000). This demand for more teachers in schools in Nigeria indeed encapsulates specialists in physical education.

Coincidentally, physical education happens to be one of the subject being offered at the primary school level and going by the aforementioned factors it thus implies that physical education at the primary school level should be taken with all seriousness for the objectives of physical education at all levels of our educational system is to be achieved.

This is necessary because if the initial orientation is faulty; the remaining educational levels would be compromised. It therefore means that for stakeholders to realize the aims and objectives of physical education at all levels, the first step in the teaching of physical education must be correctly ordered.

Consequently, it is intuitive to say that the effective teaching of physical education is to a large extent dependent on the quality of teachers handling the subject. Apparently, it should not be out of tune to state that it is only the dedicated, competent and professionally trained teachers that should teach physical education because the peculiarity involved necessitates it. In actual fact this claim needs not be over flogged because it agrees with National Policy on

Education (1981) position that no educational system can rise above the quality of its teachers. In an explicit manner, Bucher (1979) explained that, it is when adequate and qualified staffs are secured for the operation of physical education programmes that the subject would be considered as worthwhile and capable of stimulating learner's interest. In other words competent and professional teachers would be needed for the teaching of physical education at the primary school level if the field shall contribute to the effective implementation of the Universal Basic Education Programme.

Militating Factors against Teachers of Physical Education Effectiveness in Primary School:

There are many situational and psychological factors that may frost teacher's efforts at being effective in his/her work. Among these include;

(1) Non Placement of Physical Education on the Primary School Curriculum Modules

Sequel to the effective contributions of physical education to the effective implementation of the UBE Programme, the curriculum planners must ensure that physical education takes its rightful place on the primary school curriculum. In a study carried out in former Bendel State now Edo and Delta States in 1984, the researchers discovered that most of the schools involved in the study had planned physical and Health Education curriculum (Ofeme 1984). However, the situation is different in Akwa Ibom State. Field observation made by these writers between 2000 and 2008 revealed that the "ready made" primary school curriculum modules prepared under the auspices of the National Policy on Education (1998) did not include the subject of physical education. The non-inclusion of physical education curriculum in primary school curriculum module, from which the teacher draws the subject matter he intends to disseminate educational information, may bring about inefficiency on the part of the teacher. This might even be the reason why some school administrators treat physical education with sordid disregard.

(2) All Comers Teach Physical Education in Primary School

The physical education teacher with NCE Certificate has specialized training that has equipped him with required skills for the teaching of physical education in all aspects of school life. Whereas, the grade 11 Teacher in primary school was given the curriculum to teach all the eight subjects in his/her class timetable as a classroom teacher. Even with the implementation of the educational policy of making NCE the minimum teaching qualification, the administrators in primary schools will retain NCE teachers without physical education combination to teach physical

education as a classroom teacher. The practice of allowing teachers in other subject areas to teach physical education will not give quality output. Hence the National Primary Education Commission (NPEC) and administrators of the Universal Basic Education Programme should with dispatch make it a policy that only NCE physical education teachers should teach physical education in primary schools.

(3) Lack of Adequate Facilities, Equipment and Supplies in Schools

Several studies have shown dearth of facilities, equipment and supplies for physical education in primary schools. (Ogungbenro 1987, Akinsanmi, 1989, Oyewusu and Ogungbenro, 1992, Akinniyi, 1994 and Ogungbenro, 1998 among others). This negative development made teaching of physical education and administration of sports difficult and neglected. Obiyemi and Abayomi (1995) have warned that for sports and physical education programmes to be successful, the desired equipment and supplies must be made available. From time immemorial, school administrators have had poor and negative attitudes towards the provision of facilities and equipment for physical education programme. The situation is so helpless that some physical education teachers in primary school don't have the space or the equipment for physical education and sport programme. The lack and non provision of facilities and equipment may make the physical education teacher neglect the teaching of physical education and where the teacher managed with what was available or improvised, the output of such a teaching may not be of quality.

(4) Teacher's Welfare and Condition of Service

In spite of the enhanced minimum wage for workers in Nigeria, the teacher's welfare package is still far below that of their counterparts in government and private sectors. It is the teacher's salaries and wages that will not be paid in time as well as other end of the year benefits. It is the teachers that would be asked to take basic monthly salary without the monthly allowances. The implication of these deplorable conditions of service is that teachers have become dehumanized and are no longer committed to the teaching profession. Their output is low because the urge or the drive to make them effective is not there.

(5) Brain Drain Syndrome:

The brain drain syndrome here connotes the situation wherein trained and dedicated teacher do frequently leave the teaching profession. It is the steady outflow of teachers from their primary assignment to greener pasture. Most Senators, House of Representative, State House of Assemblies members, Counselors, Local Government Chairmen, some

state governors even the president were one time or the other a teacher. Many journalists, business men and women, Barristers and Engineers among others were once a teacher before leaving for a greener pasture. The worst is the primary school. Many people have regarded teaching appointment as a stepping stone to higher heights, so as soon as the physical educators' status is enhanced or obtains a better offer of appointment in the public service, he opted out of the primary school system. This "wait and see" attitude will not make the teacher to be effective in his work. Despite this fact many primary school teachers preferred to teach in secondary school. The few teachers that are ready to stay put in primary school do so because it give them opportunity to make money from other sources and further their studies. In this kind of situation, the overall objectives of physical become difficult to achieve.

(6) The Nigerian Factor

This factor which is indigenous to Nigerians relates to the attitude of Nigerians to government work. Most Nigerian workers do not believe in hard work or even want to work at all (Dawodu, 1991), such set of workers have imbibed the idea of little work for fat money. The idea possibly could have gained recognition through society's acceptance of hero worshipping of the "money bags" not minding the source of such wealth. The physical educator in primary school is a member of the society and so cannot be left out of this "CRAZE" of obtaining substantial amount of money for little service rendered. In view of this, most teachers in primary school often use a greater part of their working time to engage on "private practice" at the expense of the regular work. This attitude to work definitely would make work effectiveness difficult and impracticable especially in physical education that involves theory and practical.

Conclusion

The primary school is the first realistic step in the education of individual and therefore should be correctly order by making the teaching environment of the primary school teachers conducive. The paper emphasized that physical education would contribute maximally to effectively implementation of UBE programme if government would address seriously those factors affecting the physical educator effectiveness in primary schools. This paper resolved that effectiveness comes only when teachers in primary schools with NCE Certificate in Physical and Health Education are made to teach Physical Education and not teachers in other subject areas.

Recommendation

In order to make the teaching of Physical and Health Education effective in the University Basic Education programme.

- (a) NAPER, SD and NSHA should ensure that the educational policies in respect of physical education is strictly enforced at all levels of our educational system. These two bodies should seek representation on the National Policy on Education. The realization of the above would facilitate the acceptability of physical education programme in schools.
- (b) NAPER, SD and NSHA should work out a way of sending qualified personnel to the inspectorate division of the ministries of education to assist in inspecting physical education and Physical Education Teachers at work in Primary and Secondary schools.
- (c) All the three tiers of government should make funds available for the procurement of facilities and equipment as well as maintenance in order to make physical education contribute maximally to the effective implementation of the Universal Basic Education programme.
- (d) The welfare and condition of service of the Physical education teachers should be improved upon. The Federal Government should make a categorical statement on whom to pay the salaries and wages of the primary school teachers
- (e) The three tiers of government should think of paying a substantive amount to physical education teachers as game master allowances to boost their interest in practical, thus the effective teaching and maximizing the learning of the subject in the UBE programme.
- (f) Only primary school teachers with NCE certificate in physical education should teach physical education in primary schools.

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