

REGENERATING PHYSICAL EDUCATION FOR SELF-RELIANCE AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

This paper discusses the concepts Physical and Health Education as it relates to regenerating Physical Education for self-reliance and national development. The paper establishes that, physical fitness is a sure way for attaining self-reliance and national development. Other issues raise in the paper that can promote self-reliance and national development are: Youth development programmes, unity through sports, abundant food production by youths and promotion of love, friendliness and peace. The paper concludes that, only Physical Education can help one to identify himself, his potentials, understand, accept and improve one's self.

The core objectives of Physical Education are efficient movement abilities, healthy knowledge and behaviours, which any nation should passionately educate its citizenry on, not only for education sake but for laying a solid foundation for their over-all well being. This would encourage them to function as responsible, healthy, patriotic and productive citizens. According to Ikeonu (1991), Physical Education seems to have been recognized by several nations as possessing civil and social values generally accepted as a means of instilling nationalistic and patriotic spirits. Many nations have incorporated Physical Education into their school curriculum to cultivate qualities such as physical fitness and skills required for national preservation and development.

Concept of Physical Education

According to Moronkola (1995), Physical Education is a part of total education process that ensures advancing vigour, strength, endurance, stimulation of organic growth, promotion of social efficiency and teaching of attitude towards recreation and leisure time activities through individual and team sports theory and practical activities for development of an individual.

Bucher and Thaxton (1980) noted that Physical Education connotes training the physical as well as educating people about their body and the need for it to meet present as well as future challenges and provide healthy services for national development. It needs not concern itself

only with physical activities but also with communicating to the public the biological impact of physical activities on the body. Summarily therefore, Physical Education is the education through the physical, and for efficient human movement and general well-being.

Physical Education is a discipline that cuts across all other disciplines especially the general education. "It is education for the development of a whole man". (Howley and Frank, 1977).

Concept of Health Education

Runswick and Davis (1976) defined Health Education as the process of giving information which leads to a modification of attitude, new points of views, from which change of behaviour in respect of health is derived.

Lucas and Grilles (1977) pointed out that when a health worker successfully imparts information in such a way that the recipient is motivated to use that information for the promotion, protection, maintenance or restoration of his family or community's health which leads to self reliance and national development. Health Education is tool or a process by which teachers and education authorities provide effective health teaching for their students.

The Objectives of Physical and Health Education

The objectives of Physical and Health Education according to Moronkola (2007) and Samuel (2010) include:

1. To develop a man physically, mentally, socially, spiritually,

morally and emotionally for self-reliance and to be able to contribute to the affairs of the nation for national development.

2. To instill in people the need for a healthy life for quality living that will ensure high productivity.
3. Changing people's attitudes from negative to positive ones.
4. Changing people's undesirable behaviour to desirable ones.
5. Making people realize the need for preventive diseases rather than spending more time and money for treatment and
6. Encouraging people to continue with their local ways of life that promote health through awareness creation.

Physical Education for Self-reliance and National Development

As stated earlier, Physical Education seems to have been recognized by several nations as possessing civil and social values generally accepted as a means of instilling nationalistic and patriotic spirit as well as cultivating qualities such as physical fitness and skills required for national preservation and development.

Uche (1991) stated that in Sparta (Greece), the general philosophy and aspiration of government was to defend the state; as a result of that, it was mandatory for every citizen to undergo military training and every citizen served the state as a soldier. To prepare the youths for military life, the aim of education in Sparta was to develop strong, healthy aggressive

youths to withstand the hard discipline of military life. Physical Education activities were used to achieve this objective. Also in Sparta the aim of physical education was to produce a “man of action” possessing brute strength, physical endurance, unflinching courage and military skills. That is why any child born with any form of physical disabilities was either thrown away into the valley to die of cold or was given to the slaves to cater for until he grew, and was used as a servant. The reason for this was that, this disabled or unfit might not be able to contribute to national development nor be self-reliant.

According to Moronkola (2007), physical fitness contributes greatly to self-reliance, and self-reliance also can lead to national development because the individual will have his roles well played in the affairs of the nation.

Howley and Frank (1977) quoted William Shakespeare as saying that

“the affairs of the nation should not be entrusted in the hands of those who are not physically well because the attention of such a person may be drawn to his health most of the times while the affairs of the nation suffer leading to national underdevelopment and because of not being self-reliant their contributions to daily growth of the nation may be zero”.

Physical Education is the discipline that cuts across all other disciplines, especially the general education. It is education for the

development of the “whole man”. According to Adeniyi (2007), Physical Education promotes friendliness, peace and love as it encourages team spirit, spirit of socialization, forgiveness, obedience to rules and regulations. When people are friendly and love one another, they will be better disposed to promote the interest of one another and those of the community and the nation at large.

Samuel (2010) stated that Physical Education for self-reliance and national development can be achieved through youth development programmes. The National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) is a programme that has brought about national integrity and national integration brings about national unity, peace and security.

Physical Education for self-reliance and national development can be achieved through sports. Through physical education youths are trained to become professional sports men and women of proven integrity who are not only well paid but are quite comfortable, self-reliant and are contributing to the development of their nation.

Physical education as a symbol of unity. Sports bring peace and unity to people of the whole world. Umedum, Okafor and Azubike (1985) stated that, the ancient Olympic Games which started in 776 BC was banned in 393 BC by Emperor Theodosius I. According to him, it was a pagan festival. However, in the late 19th Century, it was revived by a Frenchman called Baron Pierre de Coubatin and the name was changed from ancient Olympic

festival to modern Olympic Games in 1986. According to him, it was only through the Olympic Games that the peace, unity and security of nations of Middle East and Eastern Europe was promoted.

The authors continued that, also in Nigeria, after the Nigerian Civil War, ended in 1970, the country was disintegrated. However, a Nigerian sports lover named Jerry Enyeazu when he went to Germany and watched the German National sports festival called "Spartakide" where all the citizenry of that country showed love, peace and unity throughout the festival period, decided to emulate the gesture. When he came back from Germany, he organized the 1st Nigerian national sports festival in 1972, where all the then 12 states of the Federation once again had the opportunity of coming together and this renewed the spirit of peace, love and unity in the country.

Physical education has that potential that can produce physically fit and healthy men and women who can be self-reliant and can contribute to the development of the nation in general. According to Udoh (2000) when a nation possesses physically fit men and women, her agricultural potentials are assured as the able bodied men and women will be used on the farms to produce food for the existing generation of Nigerians who acknowledge agriculture as the mainstay of her economy need. A hungry nation is an angry nation, and anger portends conflicts which do bring insecurity to life and

properties of citizens which in turn brings about underdevelopment to a nation.

Conclusion

Physical Education assumes the responsibility for helping one become more realistic in assessments of qualities related to the physical self and then helping one to improve in all aspects of one's physical, mental, and social growth. Physical education activities help each individual to identify himself, his potentials, understand, accept and improve oneself. Perhaps, no other discipline offers greater opportunities than the physical education programme for self revealing opportunities.

Self-reliance brings self development, and this in turn produces national development as one plays his assigned roles in the national scheme of things.

Recommendations

After a full discussion on regenerating physical education for self-reliance and national development, the paper comes up with the following Recommendations:

1. Government should establish awareness and recreational centres where youths will be enlightened on the need to keep themselves physically fit so as to be self-reliant and contribute to national development.
2. Exercises and recreational activities should be encouraged among our youths as a means of attaining physical fitness which in turn will

- boost their morale for self-reliance and national development.
3. Sports industries should be adequately funded by the government and made functional all the time for continuous training of our youths not only for recreation alone but for the development of spirit of sportsmanship.

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