

EDUCATION IN NIGERIA FOR PEACE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: THE ROLE OF SPORT EDUCATION PROGRAMME

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Abstract

This paper focused on the utilization of sports education programme in achieving peace and sustainable development in Nigeria. The paper highlighted the concepts such as education, peace, and sustainable development and sports education; also, x-rayed the role of sport education programme as an appropriate tool for achieving peace and sustainable development as well as its challenges. This paper concluded that sport education is an imperative tool in actualizing peace and sustainable development.

Keywords: Education, peace, sustainable development and sports education.

Introduction

Education is said to be common property of every one, the prime creator; and conveyor of knowledge and in a facet, the most complex human endeavor (Nwonye, Arinze & Owoeye 2018). Education is to uniting nations, bringing human being closely together. In many parts of the world, civil societies suffer because of situation of violent, conflicts and war. Education is and still remains a viable tool in achieving peace and sustainable development of a nation. Galadima, (2003) described education as “an essential tool for achieving the goals, equality, development and peace.

Peace according to Sports for development and peace international working group (2008) is freedom from war or the time when war ends. It is period of calm and serenity. A nation is said to be at peace when such country is at the state of friendship and freedom from conflict (internal and external). A major index of peace is sustainable development- an approach which focuses on fundamental concerns of poverty, environment, equality, energy, transportation, healthcare, education as well as democracy.

The development of any nation hinges on the social and economic contributions of her citizens. No meaningful development can take place in an atmosphere of violence. Education and sport programme which plays a vital role at promoting community band national development (Wals, 2009 & Right to play, 2011). Sports programme facilitates the acquisition of applied skills and basic scientific knowledge. Sports for development and peace international working group (2008) described sports education programme as course and learning experiences that begin with the exploration of career options, supports basic academic and life skills, and enables the achievement of high academic standards, leadership, preparation for industry and continuing education. Unfortunately, Nigeria does not seem to give sports education programme the attention it deserves. This appears to be the reason for rising rate of unemployment and violence in the society.

Amedu (2013) & Anisiodu, (2013) maintained that unemployment leads to frustration and disillusionment which may lead to crime or drug abuse in futile attempt to escape from and forget the pains and humiliation associated with poverty and lack. This is so because they lack the necessary occupational skills that would enable them to be self employed and effectively function in today’s world of work. United nation’s inter-Agency task force on sports for development and peace (2003) viewed sports programme as a comprehensive term referring to

those aspects of educational process involving the practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupations in various sectors of economic and social life.

The neglect of sports education program in the area of personnel, financial support and facilities to encourage sport programme is robbing the nation of some contributions their graduates would have made to the economy (Nwonye, Arinze, Ayomah & Ogboru, 2018). Furthermore, affirmed that level of infrastructural development and facilities provided by the Government to a large extent, has negatively affected sports participation in Nigerian institutions. The high rate of insecurity exemplified in kidnapping, prostitution, armed robbery and violence has relationship with unemployment and poverty. It is against this backdrop that the paper focuses on sports education programme as an important tool for actualizing peace and sustainable development.

Concept of Education

In order to achieve peace and sustainable development in human society, education is a sine quanon. Education literally is an English word derived from the Latin word “Educare” which means to train, lead out, to contract out or bring-up (Anisiudo, 2013). Ogunyemi, (2018) asserted that education is a total process of human learning by which knowledge is imparted, faculties trained skill developed. Also, the Oxford advanced learner dictionary (2005) defined education as “process of teaching, training and learning in schools or colleges to improve knowledge and skills. In the broadest sense, education is any act or experience that has a formative effect on human mind, character or physical ability of an individual. It is the process by which societies deliberately transmit its accumulated knowledge, values and skill from one generation to another through its institutions (Alogwu & Igoche, 2013). Education is indeed a tool for transformation, upliftment and development of an individual. Education raises income levels and improves standard of living of its citizens. United Nations International Children’s Emergency Funds (UNICEF 2001) noted that the role of education in the world over has tended to vary from place to place and to change from time to time, in accordance with the needs of the particular age, and the circumstances of the time. All over the world today, the demand is on education that will promote peace and sustain development.

Concept of Peace

Peace is defined literally as freedom from disturbance- that is tranquility. Peace connotes the absence of conflicts, and the presence of freedom from fear of treats or violence between social heterogeneous groups. Many scholars have defined peace in various ways; the term peace according to Ugho, (2008) is a state of quiet, calm, public tranquility, freedom from war and concord of ideas among different people. It is a condition in which there is no war between two or more people. Wikipedia (2009) defined peace as absence of aggression, violence or hostility but which also represents large concept wherein there are healthy or newly-healed interpersonal, national or international relationships, safety in matters of social or economic welfare, the acknowledgment of quality and fairness in political relationships in world matters. Best (2006) described peace as the absence of war, fear, conflict, anxiety, suffering and violence. Peace involves activities that are directly or indirectly linked to increasing development and reducing conflict both within specific societies and in the wider international communities. Adebayo, (2008) explained peace from two perspectives, and came

up with two images, positive images and negative images. The positive images often included tranquility, calm, harmony, law and order while the negative images include presence of conflict, war and discord.

Concept of Sustainable Development

The technical definition of the term “development” connotes a process of enlarging People’s choices and increasing the opportunities that are available to all members of the society; base on the principles of inclusion, equity, equality and sustainability. Emphasis is on the importance of increasing the chances of opportunities for the current generation, as well as generations to come (United Nations (UN) 2003).

According to Nwonye, Arinze & Owwoye (2018) sustainable development is ‘an approach that combines the development needs and aspirations of the present without compromising the ability of the future while also maintaining ecological integrity’. This implies a development process that is equitable and sensitive to ecological and environmental issues. It depends on the initiative, resourcefulness and discipline of human beings who are the managers of developmental programmes. Also Ugho (2008) described sustainable development as a construct, which envision development as meeting the need of the present generation without compromising the needs of the future generation. Wals (2009) stated that the concept of sustainable development has become a global medium of expressing the need to depart from hitherto dominant models of development that apparently fail to balance the needs of people and plant in the pursuit of peace and prosperity. Furthermore, United Nations System Staff College (NUSSC) (2017) defined sustainable development as “a pattern of resource that strives to meet human needs while preserving the environment so that the present needs are met as well as those of the future generation. She stated that sustainable development can be conceptually broken into three constituent parts such as environmental sustainability, economical sustainability and socio-political sustainability

Sports Education

Duffield, (2014) opined that sports education programme (SEP) is an aspect of educational process involving in addition to general education, the study of technologies and related sciences and the acquisition of practical skills, attitude and knowledge. The UN (2003) defined sports as all forms of physical activity that contributes to physical fitness, mental well-being and social interrelation; including play, recreation, organized and casual or competitive sports, and indigenous sports or games. The Sports for development and peace international working group (2008) stated that the sports are institutionalize competitive activities that involves rigorous exertion, or the use of relatively complex skills or maneuvers by participants, motivated by personal enjoyment and external, such as pecuniary reward. Sports usually include a broad and inclusive spectrum of activities that are suitable to People of all ages and abilities. By its very nature, sport is all about participation, inclusion and citizenship; regardless of gender, age, ability or race. Nwonye, (2020) viewed sports education programme (SEP) as a ~~Visioning~~ **constituting four tenets:**

- A means of preparing for occupational fields and for participating in the world of work.
- An aspect of lifelong learning and preparation for responsible citizenship.
- An instrument for promoting environment, sound and sustainable development, and

- A method of facilitating poverty alleviation.

Therefore, sport is that aspect of education that equips the individual with the necessary skills that enable him participate effectively in the world of work, make him more responsible, empower him economically and self-reliant. The relevant skills acquired through sport will keep the individual busy and hence will have no room for any form of violence or social vices.

The Role of Sport Education Programme in Promoting Peace and Sustainable Development

Sports for development is the used of sports education programme (SEP) as a tool to address challenging developmental issues facing various population. Nation building or development has to be sustainable in practical terms. However, this is dependent on available resources, the ability to optimize the application of these resources beneficially as well as keeping the environment safe, healthy, stable and highly conducive. Peace is a state of calmness of a nation and the peaceful state of a nation depends solely on the cooperation of individuals that make up the state. Sustainable development according to Baha (2005) & Ebohon (2018) is the development meets the needs of the present without comprising future generations' opportunities to meet their own needs. It is worthy to note that no meaningful development can take place in a nation that is saddle with violence.

Sports education programme as already discussed has all it takes to equip and occupy an individual meaningfully in the society. There is no gain challenging the fact that "an idle mind is the devils' workshop". When one is unskilled he becomes practically unemployed especially in this era of technology and accountability. Immediately this situation occurs, he becomes idle automatically, thus, embracing any form of social vices. Sports programme constitute a vital engine of peace and sustainable development of any nation. In Nigeria, sport programme was previously not seen as a vital tool to sustainable national development or for the economic development, but for school dropout. Right to play (2011) & Commonwealth secretariat (2013) argues that sport programme is also linked to human resources development and that it impacts on more than just economic growth. It also impacts on the peace and overall development of the individual and society.

Entrepreneurial skill acquisition through sport by youths in Anambra State has made them to be self-reliant which in turn has promoted peace and sustainable development of the state. (Uwa & Achugbu, 2017). Sports as vital tool for peace and sustainable development can play the following roles:

- Serve as learning and training center for translation of dreams and ideas into successful ventures.
- Build saleable or employable skills in the individual that prepares him for the world of works
- Directs towards self-reliant and sustainable means of livelihood

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If sports education programme is effectively and efficiently implemented in Nigerian schools, it would assist the nation to overcome violence, unemployment, poverty, kidnapping, etc., as it will turn its citizens from job seekers to job creators.

Challenges of Sport Programme for Peace and Sustainable Development

Sports education programme is fraught with some difficulties which have impacted negatively on the peace and sustainable development in Nigeria they include:

Lack of awareness

Lack of awareness by the general public about the importance sports education programme is also a challenge. Lack of awareness about sports education programme at various levels of school curricular is another shortcoming. (Right to play, 2011). They said that the public does not seem to understand the implication of sports education programmes in the development of the economy. Sport from play and physical activities organized competitive sports is an important role in all societies. It improves health and reduces the likelihood of diseases, is critical to child's development, it is significant economic force providing employment and contributing to national development. It brings individuals and communities together, bridging cultural or ethnic divides. Base on this, it means SEP has potentials that offer a cost-effective to meet national development and peace challenges.

Society Perception

The image of sports education programme in the country has not been encouraging; it is seen as inferior education for school dropouts or for misfit in the society. Uwa & Achugbu, (2017) observed that ignorant people tend to classify those in sports programme as intellectual misfit.

Inadequate Provision of Training Facilities and Equipment

Inadequate provision of training facilities and equipment has hindered sport education programme. Inadequate and insufficient training equipment is one of the challenges facing sports education programme in Nigerian schools. (Nwonye, Arinze, Akpojotor, Ogboru & Iwelu 2017). They stressed that about 50% of the institutions running or offering sports programme in Nigeria is yet to meet the approved standard. In many schools, basic facilities and equipment; such as courts, gymnasium, shot put, discus, javelin, are missing where they exist there is inadequate care and use of the facilities and equipment.

Inadequate Funding

This is another major factors militating against sports education in most Nigerian institutions where funds are in short supply. This is in line with Duffield (2014) who stated that funding of sport education programme is inadequate. He affirmed that financial sustainability facilitates the development of knowledge which requires innovative measures so as to ensure that pupils /students in public learning institutions are not deprived the opportunity to excel in sports activities.

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Non-Qualified Professional

Sport education still has the problem of the use of non qualified professionals teaching young people physical education in most public schools in Nigeria. (Okoh, Akpojotor & Arinze, 2012). They alluded that delivery of quality sports programme is dependent on competence of the teacher.

Conclusion

Sports education programme (SEP) is far more than a luxury or a form of entertainment. Access to participation in a sport programme is a human right and essential for individuals of all ages to lead healthy fulfilling lives. Sport from play and physical activities and organized competitive sports is an important role in all societies. It improves health and reduces the likelihood of diseases, is critical to child's development, it is significant economic force providing employment and contributing to national development. It brings individuals and communities together, bridging cultural or ethnic divides. Base on this, it means SEP has potentials that offer a cost-effective to meet national development and peace challenges. Individuals and societies will develop and environment will be created for peace. Successful sports programme is faced with challenges that hinder the fulfillment of its potentials among students. These challenges include society perception, inadequate provision of funds, lack of facilities and equipment, non qualified professionals, lack of awareness of values inherent in sports.

Recommendations

In other to actualize peace and sustainable development through SEP, the paper recommended that:

1. Adequate funds should be made available for the provision of facilities and equipment for sports skill development in schools by the Government and private sectors.
2. Enlightenment programme by Government for all in the education industry, both those in the institutions of learning and those in education ministries and all other education stakeholders to correct the negative perception of SEP by the public.
3. Regular seminars and workshops should be organized to keep teachers abreast of current development in the field of SEP and how to impact them on their students.

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