



## ABSTRACT

*This paper examine the contributions of democracy to the development of physical education in Nigeria the act of governance brought about by democracy has led to the formulation of national Policy on education and the National Sports Development Policy , this has raised hope for the growth and development of physical education.. However negative factors that still affect the development of physical education programs include the lack of full implementation of the National Sports Development Policy, poor teacher salaries, lack of instructional facilities and the much emphasis on teacher development. It is recommended that*

# DEMOCRACY AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION' CHALLENGES AND THE WAY FORWARD

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## Introduction

Nigeria has been under several years of military rule since the country gains its independence from the British colonial master, before and after the independence there have been several attempts to reform the educational system with the view to enhance the general development of the country. Today, increasing awareness of the importance of education to the upliftment of the individual and societal standards has awakened in people and nations a conscious effort at devoting their meager resources to acquiring qualitative education (Michael O, 2006). This is because of the realization that the success of any nation is greatly hinged on the quality and effectiveness of her educational sector. Education itself has been seen as an instrument per excellence for effecting national growth and development for a sustainable economy. It is regarded as a panacea to all political, social and economic ills of the developing nations. Education is the vehicle for improving the quality of life of individuals in a nation as well as the society's growth and development; it is the greatest instrument for change and national development. Education has come to be seen as the major mechanism for the upliftment and integration of the youths and citizens of a nation at large into the social, economic and political fabrics of the society

The Federal Republic of Nigeria, (2004), asserts that no nation can achieve economic, social and technological progress and self – sufficiency without a good system of education to sustain its achievement: However, what makes a good system of education depends on the quality of teachers available in the system. According to Ibukun, (2004), the quality of human resources in form of teachers, often dictates the extent of the effectiveness of



*there should be sensitization and diversification of physical education curriculum and the full implementation of the National Sports Development Policy.*

educational programs. In order to achieve any socio-political, economic and scientific development in a country, there is the dire need for qualified teachers who are equipped with the desired knowledge, skills, competence, commitment, and who are empowered to perform their tasks professionally. The National Policy on Education gave credence to this, when it asserted that, no educational system can rise above the quality of its teachers. Hence, there is the need to always appraise the nation's system of teacher education with a view to ensuring adequate supply of quality of teachers, in the right mix, to man the various levels of the educational system in the country.

Conceptually, Education is Overview as a process of discovering the hidden talents of individuals, providing experiences that nurtures, trains and causes these innate potentials to develop optimally. There is no other field of study whose objectives mutually concords with the above overview like physical education. As an integral part of general education, Physical education teaches varieties of physical activities and sports education in our school, the basic objective of physical education is the overall development of the child physical mentally emotionally and intellectually.

Physical education helps the child to discover his potentialities at the same time it serves as the basic foundation that deliberately attempts to introduce the fundamental of physical fitness and sports, from the rudimental stage of the primary education, through the secondary schools to the tertiary institutions. Laoye, (1981), noted that at all the phases of the academics physical education provide continues teaching and learning that is directed at all round development. Also Omerua, (1991), observed that Physical activities have been part of Nigerian education since pre-colonial times but the push for physical education programs in the schools did not start in earnest until the Nigerian political independence in 1960. Though the physical educators in Nigeria are doing their best given available resources; the discipline still suffers from basic problems. The education sector was neglected by the military administration in place which accounted for many issues.

The term "Democratization" is originally a political term; it is one of the most commonly used terms in the political science lexicon. It simply implies embedding democracy to its core in a society. Its processes require that all limitations to the effective practice of democracy are removed. Democracy entails participation, equality, equity, justice, rule of law etc. in relation to education, democracy entails equal and equitable provision of education to all the citizens of a particular society regardless of their social status, religion, ethnicity, tribe etc. in democratization of physical education refer to t the making of physical education programs accessible to all irrespective of class, religion, ethnic or political affiliations or other discriminatory factors (Ezeanya and Stanly, 2015 ) several factors are responsible for the democratization of physical education.

#### **The democratization of education**

Article 26 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that everyone has the right to education and that education shall be free, at least at the elementary and fundamental stages. The



article also stated that education at the elementary stage shall be compulsory and that higher education shall be made equally accessible to all on the basis of merit. Here, education is seen as a right, just like the right to life, freedom of speech, association etc. Thus, this made it obligatory for the government to make education accessible to all its citizens especially at the fundamental stages. The declaration shows the increase demands for education and in order for government to meet up many schools were established. Thus resulting in the increase participation in the physical activities, as the school playground serves the needs of both the students and members of the various community.

Democratization brought about freedom of association this gave rise to the formation The National Association of Physical Health Education and Recreation Sports and Dance (NAPHERSD) the physical education professional association. It should be noted that while physical education forms part of the early education government fails to recognize it as an academic subject as it was referred as physical training from the beginning. Ojeme, (1991), explained that the initial hurdle faced by NAPHERSD includes being recognized as a learned professional association and convincing the government to recognize physical education as an academic subject. In 1970s NAPHERSD witnessed tremendous growth in membership and in June 1984 was recognized as a learned professional association by the federal government.

Another factor that contributed to the democratization of education in Nigeria was the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's EFA (Education for All) goals. In 2000, the International Community met at the World Education forum in Dakar, Senegal, the forum took stock of the fact that many countries were far from having reached the goals established at the World Conference on Education for all in 1990. They re-affirmed their commitment to achieving Education for All by the year 2015 and identified six key measurable education goals which aim at meeting the learning needs of all children, youth and adults by 2015, the goals are: 1. Expand early childhood care and education; 2. Provide free and compulsory primary education for all. 3. Promote learning and life skills for young people and adults. 4. Increase adult literacy by 50% 5. Achieve gender parity by 2005, gender equality by 2015. 6. Improve the quality of education. The points made above and some other factors contributed to the rapid growth of educational institutions. The growth in educational institution is accompanied with corresponding increase in the development of physical education as it forms an important part of the school curriculum.

### **Democracy and policy formulation on physical education and sports**

Colonial physical education and sports in Nigeria were closely linked with military formations in the country. Another area where sporting activities were noticed in the colonial era was in the quarters of the colonial civil servants who participated in such sporting activities mainly for leisure. The involvement of Government in the development of sports started after the independence, the Military and leisure nature of physical education that characterized the colonial era constitute a major delay in the formulation of any comprehensive policy for sports this view was also held by Ojeme, (1992), that the slow march of sports towards having a codified policy could be attributed to the leisure based philosophy of participation. It was when competitions came in and it became clear, the latitude which can be gained in victory that various nations particularly Nigeria started thinking of any enduring sports policy. The march towards the formulation of a sports development policy in Nigeria started when sports was brought more into focus and under government direct control at the ministerial level with the attainment of independence. The post-civil war values of sports mostly in its ability to forge national unity and enhance patriotic spirit led to the upgrading of the National Sports Council in the early 1970s to the National Sports



Commission with some measure of executive. Democracy is therefore among the several factors that positively influence the rapid growth and development of physical education in Nigeria; this is because democracy brought about the emergence of government through popular ballot on the belief that there will be improvement in policies and programs across various fields, physical education inclusive. The greatest role played by democracy in the development of physical education in Nigeria is the Policy formulations. The National Policy on Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria 1977, 1981); was a document adopted by Nigeria's government to guide the administration and practice of education in the country. In this policy the Nigerian government clearly stated that physical education would be emphasized at all levels of educational system. This policy provision tremendously helped NAPERDS to grow and develop and made physical education a core subject in Nigeria's primary and secondary schools educational system.

Also in 1988 the Nigerian Federal Government developed a document to guide sports development for the nation. The National Sports Development Policy (Federal Republic of Nigeria 1989) outlined specific expectations in sports development by various units of the Nigerian society such as the Local State and Federal Government, educational institutions, Clubs and Voluntary organizations. This policy was well conceived and indicated that the government was aware of the role of sports had in the development of the nation (Michael O, 2006).

The introduction of the national festival came as part of Government policy of enhancing unity among Nigerians and as a step toward the development of sports. During the maiden edition many state sportsmen, their athletes and coaches and sports administrators from among the students and physical education teachers, the national sports festival has given the light for the development and growth of physical education as sports education in our schools.

### **Challenges**

Today physical education as the basic sports education in our schools does not have the same prominence it once had; in fact the course is not taught in most Nigerian primary schools. The national sports development policy still has not been fully implemented, however as is often the case with government policies in Nigeria. According to the words of Ojeme E.O (1999) the initial interest that followed the passage of government regulation faded away. Facilities and equipment aren't available, time is not allocated in the instruction day and teachers are either in available or unsupervised. This explains why Hardman and Marshall (2000) claimed that in terms of implementation physical education policies there is great concern about this region. Several negative factors have worked against the growth and development of Physical education programs in Nigeria. These include:

#### **i. Lack of Knowledge of the Merit of Physical Education**

There is still a low level awareness among Nigerians of the merit of physical education. This lack of knowledge has led to decline in enrolment in physical education and recreation classes. Particularly in the tertiary institutions even those students who eventually enroll in physical and health education courses typically do so as a last resort, when no other viable option exist. Physical Education is perceived as a field that deals much on the developing the child physical skills and preparing him to be future athlete, or footballer. This misconception is found even among the teaching staff in the secondary schools, and among the parents who often view Physical Education as engaging only in running and jumping. Many parents are skeptical about their children offering physical education as a course and taking part in sporting activities in the school.



**ii. Emphasis on Teacher Preparation Programs**

Nearly all physical education programs in the Nigerian higher institutions are based in the school of education. This practice has dwarfed the scope of these programs and has made the unpopular. Because Nigerian teachers are so poorly paid, most young people do not choose teaching as profession.

**iii. Poor And Inadequate Facilities And Equipment**

Facilities for the basic instruction of physical education are almost nonexistent in most Nigerian Public schools, because basic facilities are needed to be successful; Physical education teachers are not making any much progress in their efforts to implement the programs

**iv. Under Staff Schools and Un-Motivated Ill Prepared Teachers**

- v.** Most schools in Nigeria particularly primary and secondary schools are poorly staffed in terms of the number of physical education teacher, and their level of preparation and motivation. Teachers in the Nigerian schools are generally underpaid and sometime are owned salaries in arrears for more than six months. These conditions have dramatically lowered teachers' level of motivation.

**The Absent of Literatures**

Michael O, (2006) asserted that Schools in Nigeria from primary to tertiary institutions lack adequate reading materials, particularly in physical education. Publishing books is quite expensive and most professionals do not receive adequate support for their efforts. For sometimes the only available physical education textbook in Nigeria has been the 1975 or 1983 edition of Charles Bucher's Foundation of physical education.

**Way Forward**

Despite the problems associated with physical education programs in Nigeria. The increasing roles of sports in the country's society foretell hope for improvement. The efforts described here can help and guide the future direction of physical education in Nigeria.

**Need for public sensitization on the merit of physical education**

The Nigerian public, particularly the policy makers, parents and children, continually must be aware of the importance of physical education programs. This will be relatively simple undertaking because in general, Nigerians are sports lovers, and physical education contributes to the success of athletes. For example parents will like their children to become professional sports stars. The government spend huge amount of money to organize professional sporting events but fail to recognized that the foundation of success in sports is a good physical education program, in the school system conferences, seminar and radio and television discussion are all useful tools in increasing awareness

**Diversification of physical education program**

Physical education programs particularly that of the tertiary level need to offer curriculum options. In addition to training teachers of physical education, and recreation, sports coaches,



administrators. Technologists, journalists, trainers and consultants must receive proper training. An urgent need exist to develop program outside the College of education that merit the need of physical education students who do not want to become teachers

### **Cooperation between physical education professional**

The need for Closer cooperation between professional in various areas of physical education, such as Health education, recreational sports and dance is critical. By working together in research activities and on curriculum issues these groups will have a unified sense of purpose and be more likely to achieve their goals

### **Conclusion**

The Nigerian educational system virtually has collapse at all level- from primary level to tertiary level-except for a few privately owned schools, infrastructures such as classrooms, laboratories, offices and sports facilities that were built, in the 1970s and 1980s, are totally in ruins due to lack of maintenance or replacement in some public primary schools children sit on the floor because there are no enough writing tables and seats. Even at the college, it is common to see hundreds of students crowded into lecture rooms designed for 50 students. Hostel accommodation designed for two university students sometimes are occupied by more than ten students, which in turn, overextends limited student support services, such as eating places, health centers, and toilets facilities. These conditions create high level of tension among students leading to increase criminal activities, such as drug abuse, cultism and restiveness.

The emergence of democratic rule in 1999 ended 16 years of military rule. With the restoration of democratic rule in Nigeria there is hope that the country's economy will improve and schools will be better funded. Nigerians like sports and there is no reason why Physical education should be neglected by any good government

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