

Incorporating Physical, Health Education and Sports in Nomadic Education Programmes in Nigeria

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Abstract

The paper begins with the background information about the nomadic and migrant fishing community and how they have contributed to the economic and social development of Nigeria for over ten centuries. But much impact was not felt on sports participation like the disabled sports. A portion of this paper, presents a review of the efforts made so far on nomadic education, the place of physical and health education and the challenges the subject encountered. The paper recommended that since movement is part of nomads' life, physical and health education and sport programme would be of much benefit health-wise. All levels of government and stakeholder should organize nomadic competition.

Keywords: Mbororo, pastoral, fulbe, physical, health, sport

Introduction

The nomadic population comprises of the pastoral nomads and the migrant fishing communities that constitute a significant proportion of Nigerians. These special groups of Nigeria are predominantly illiterates and are typically disadvantaged and so, they are described interms of what they do not have. For instance, they do not have access to food (balanced diet), clean water, health care, clothes or shelter and basic literacy skills. Their children do not have access to basic education. Young female nomads do not have the cultural freedom and right to marry who they want to marry. No wonder Aderinoye, Ojokheta and Ologede (2008) were quick to add that Nigerians nomads, therefore arguably need a better understanding of their socio-cultural predicament, which many consider as less developed. There nomadic population of Nigeria currently make up approximately 6.8 percent of its total estimated populations of 184 million people (Federal Ministry of Education, 2016).

To address the educational backwardness of this special group in Nigeria requires programme that addresses their particular needs and circumstances of nomadic population. To see to this, the former Minister of Education Professor Jubril Aminu initiate a programme in 1986 tagged Nomadic Education Programme (NEP) after a series of workshops.

The Federal Government's concern over the education situation of the nomad population in Nigeria gave birth to the establishment of an advisory committee on nomadic education in

1988, which led to the creation of a full-fledged National Commission for Nomadic Education Policy in 1989. The members of the commission were those who had deep understanding of the way of nomads and their problems. The commission came into full operation in 1990 with the Headquarters in Kaduna. The first Executive Secretary was Prof. Ardo Chima Ezeoman.

In view of the fact that the National Commission for Nomadic Education Policy had less emphasis on Physical Education and sports programmes, this paper tries to discuss the justification for the inclusion of physical, health education and sports in the curriculum for nomadic education. In fact, nomadic education curriculum and its implementation should be developed to suit and encourage the nomadic group to take part in physical education and sporting activities. This can be of immense benefit to the nomads and the society at large.

Overview of Normadism in Nigeria

Pastoralist Background

For long the pastoral nomad have often been seen as one whose subsistence is based upon domestication of animals. Pastoralism is strongly associated with the presence of grass lands and tends to exist in complex relationship with hunter-gatherers. African pastoralists are very unevenly distributed, occupationally specialized pastoralists principally are dependent on camels, cattle and sheep are virtually confined to areas north of the equator in semi-arid regions. The agro-pastoral communities, which own cattle, sheep and goats, also occur in the northern region. The examples of pastoral nomads are the Abaddeh Bakhtian of Iran, Finns, Tuareg's, Moken, Nrazig of Tunisia, Hephallities, Turks, Khazars, Magyars, Moors, Mongols etc (Ikwuegbu, 2016) in Nigeria there are about 10 million nomads in the country (Moda, 2005). They are made up of 5.3 million of the fulbe or fula, 1.01m Shawa, 32,000 Koyam, and 15,00 Darkbuzzu. They contribute the largest quantity of beef, milk, hide and skins etc. Early views on nomadic pastoral societies are that they are group of people who by virtue of their occupation or way of life move from one place to another with their families and are regarded as being brave, independent, fierce men, with their herds, and not having deal with constraints and frustration of their settled and civilized living people (Awogbade, 2001).

The socio-graphical composition of the pastoral nomad is a man and his wife living together but it can also consist of any large group, permanent or mobile. Structurally, the nomads dwelling are very rudimentary, usually erected in less than two hours. Their shelters are erected using available tree sapling, foliage and portable components. A base camp is often created from which herdsmen venture out with cattle corral placed behind the settlement.

The Artisanal Migrant Fishermen Background

Enaibe and Imonivwerhai (2007) see migrant fishermen as the ethnic, religious, social and professional groups of people that move from one place to the other (at community, national or international boundary levels) in search of a means of survival. Their movement is anchored on the season of the year and the tide which influence their migrating and transient lives. The migrant fishermen always migrate with their family members. They move along the creeks and lagoon coastal areas in search of fish which they can sell for food, storage and money. A typical riverine environment, according to Ikwuegbu (2016) is endowed with

natural resources, such as fish, crabs, shrimps, oyster, periwinkle, sea animals, natural holiday resort centers, birds, gravels and sand etc. No wonder, Tawari (2002) was quick to add that the Nigerian migrant fishermen are responsible for 95% of fishes caught and sold for consumption nationwide. The migrant fishermen include the Ijaws and Ilaje in Delta State, Ogun State, Lagos State, Rivers State and Akwa Ibom State. The fishermen have gotten the skills of swimming, diving, and paddling, which made them successfully operate in the rivers.

The fishermen live in three different homes depending on the season of the year.

1. Between December and January, they live in their various homes, doing community work.
2. Between February and June, they live in the deep seas, fishing because at this time, fishers migrate to the deep sea areas.
3. Between June and November, they live in fishing creeks, busy with on-shore fishing activities.

Although there are other type of nomads referred to as the migrant farmers who leave their traditional homes and go to live in their farm land and areas for most part of the farming season. They build temporary houses in the farm area or near to the farm land, while their traditional homes and houses remain permanent. They are found in all states of the federation in Nigeria.

Main Goals of Nomadic Education Programme

The Nomadic Education Programme (NEP) took off in 1990 with main goals namely to:

- a. Integrate the nomads into the main stream society through the provision of relevant and functional basic education; and
- b. Improve the survival skills of the nomadic through the dissemination of modern techniques of animal husbandry for the nomadic pastoralists and new fishing techniques for the migrant fishing communities (Tahir, 1998, FME, 2010). To achieve these goals, the following objectives were outlined from primary education for the children of the nomads.

General Objectives of Nomadic Education Programme

- a. Expose the nomadic child to the elementary forms of modern education.
- b. Enable the nomadic child take part in the development of his immediate environment and the country in general.
- c. Make the nomadic child able to improve his living conditions thus eliminating the hardship and constraints of his/her life. Help him or her to modernize his/her techniques of herdsmanship or animal management or fishing as the case may be.
- d. Assist the nomadic child develop rapidly and fully both physically and intellectually to cope with demands of the contemporary world.
- e. Develop the initiative in the nomadic child and stimulate in him scientific and analytical modes of thinking (FME, Education Sector Analysis, 2003).

Definition of Terms

- i. **Nomadic:** It is a type of ethnic or socio-professional group that is totally or partially dependent on the husbandry of one or more species of domesticated animals.
- ii. **Pastoralistics:** These are group of people who depend for their livelihood on the management of ungulates which obtain their nourishment primarily from natural vegetations and in so doing their daily and seasonal rounds are determined by the needs of their animals for food, water, protection.
- iii. **Ruga:** A set or group of nomad communities.

Forms of Nomads

They are of three types, the total nomads, semi nomads and ranching nomads. Its forms are fulbe or mbororo, koyem and shuwa Arab.

Implementation of Nomadic Education Objectives

To achieve the objective, the National Commission for Nomadic Education was mandated to implement the nomadic education by putting some strategies in place that will strengthen access to basic education at both the pastoral nomads and the migrant fishermen across the nation. These include:

Infrastructure

These are nomadic schools. They are of three types, the schools according to NCNE (2003) in Aliyu (2015) are fixed/permanent, the temporary and the mobile collapsible schools. The nature of the school is determined by the type of its structure. It was reported by (NCNE, 2003) that, the majority of the schools have fixed structures and operate the normal five school days a week. The schools open from 7:00am to 12:30pm to provide time for herding by the boys and selling of milk and other domestic works by the girls. In some cases the mobile collapsing structures for the pastoral nomads and the boat school for the migrant fisher folk operate morning and afternoon shifts to allow herding and school. The schools which are mostly located in remote areas and near the riverine communities, are characterized by low enrolment, few classes and teachers.

Curriculum in Nomadic Schools

To make the programme meaningful, the curriculum for conventional schools was adopted, which addressed the educational needs, aspirations and peculiar circumstances of nomadic population. Furthermore, instructional materials were adopted, developed and copies produced in these areas; namely English Language, Mathematics, Primary Science, Social Studies, Health Education, Handcraft, Islamic Religious Knowledge and Fulfilde Language.

Teacher Training

Another stride of the programme is the training of teachers. According to the Education Sector Report of the Federal Ministry of Education (FME, 2003), there are about 5000 teachers and 204,000 pupils, giving a ratio of 1:42 in the nomadic schools in Nigeria. The scheme selects young people from nomadic background and trains them as teachers at Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE) and grade II certificate level, who are later posted to their communities to teach in nomadic schools. No physical education teachers were included.

It is noteworthy, that the training of nomadic school teachers was undertaken by the University of Maiduguri, Port Harcourt and Federal College of Education, Yola. It was further reported in FME (2003) in Aliyu (2015) that the Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto produced the curriculum and materials for teaching and learning of the pastoral nomads. Also, the University of Jos and Port Harcourt undertook further research on Nomadic Education of the migrant fisherfolk.

The outcome of these strategies according to Moda (2005) has increased enrolment and retention of pupils in nomadic schools. The innovation has also led to steady progression of pupils from one class to the other. In the same vein, nomadic pupils have favourably competed with pupils from conventional schools in the gifted examinations as well as state and national common entrance examination.

Inculcation of Physical Education and Sports Programmes

A critical examination of these nomadic groups in Nigeria showed that they are predominantly illiterates, their nature had deprived them the opportunity of going to school. They move under very harsh climate (intense sun and bitter cold), made prey of tse-tse flies, mosquitoes, snakes and other wild beasts, his physic reflect the hostile realities and agitation around him. Although he is a harbinger of nutritional values, he is ever malnourished. With no one to cook for him he eats intermittently and depends largely on wild fruits. Sometimes games come his way but because he is ever on the move, he sells them off at paltry sums, being not in a good position to stroke a fair bargain. The children born to him suffer the same fate and his wife is often deprived of nuptial love. With all these absence, modern amenities are clearly beyond his reach, good roads are constructed without him in mind, or medical facilities for his family, himself and his herds. No wonder Amadi stressed clearly that it is an undeniable fact that the nomads in Nigeria are by no means a poor group. They possess rich herds that are convertible to cash, what the nomad in his early twenties possesses may amount to millions of naira, while his counterpart in the University cannot boast as much. Except for the occasional outbreak of disease, the nomad is economically empowered. He makes no pretense about it and is ready to fight on for his survival. Therefore, education of the right type is no doubt the best fighter. Relevant to this paper are basic education, health education, physical and sport activities. The blue print for Universal Basic Education (UBE) in Nigeria which include primary, junior secondary and nomadic education must be all round education not only that it will expose the nomad not only to reading and writing but will develop their talents in area of health, physical and sporting activities. The nomads' children will also achieve the objectives that come from sports and games like spirit of sportsmanship and leadership in physical fitness.

Along the same line issues dealing with planning, nomadic education especially in cooperating physical education, health education and sport development should consider the following relevant.

1. The type of physical, health and sports development curricular designed for the nomads in meeting good food, water and health care and other basic necessities of life like electricity, clothing, shelter etc.

2. The type of sports facilities can be put in place for the nomads for recreation or expertise in different related sports like football, lawn tennis, basketball, wrestling and snookers facilities.
3. And how these groups of pupils compete in different competitions like other pupils in the conventional school and under age group competition? This could be done through interschool sports competitions within the schools.

Justification for Physical, Health Education and Sport Competition among the Nomadic Pastoralists

The teaching and learning of physical health education by the nomads in Nigeria is not something to write home about due to certain challenges. They have no fixed domicile, forms of learning environment, resource person in the field, ecological factor, structured facilities to suit the mobile learning system and the likes.

Consequently, solutions to these challenges are implaced through new technological sports devices that will suit their mobile nature. Also, different sports devices to put disabled into various games are the answers to the nomads. Movement is a natural process of living and concentration of a child’s education is on movement. Some of the mbororo cattle fulbe and fishermen people are always on the move, it implies tapping the fundamental movement in physical education to develop sport. This in-built life style movement should be well tapped sport wise. Later evaluate their natural movements to competitions, which they will love and joyfully participate in. The curriculum designed should address the fundamental objectives of the nomadic programme.

Oyemisi (2009) designed a detailed analysis of tables on how physical education both in practice and theory can achieve the physical fitness level. This can be adopted also for the nomads. The curriculum is modified to cater for health, sociology, morality and mental alertness, self-reliance, sport and professionals, long life sport and sport business of the participants.

Table 1: Physical Education Practical

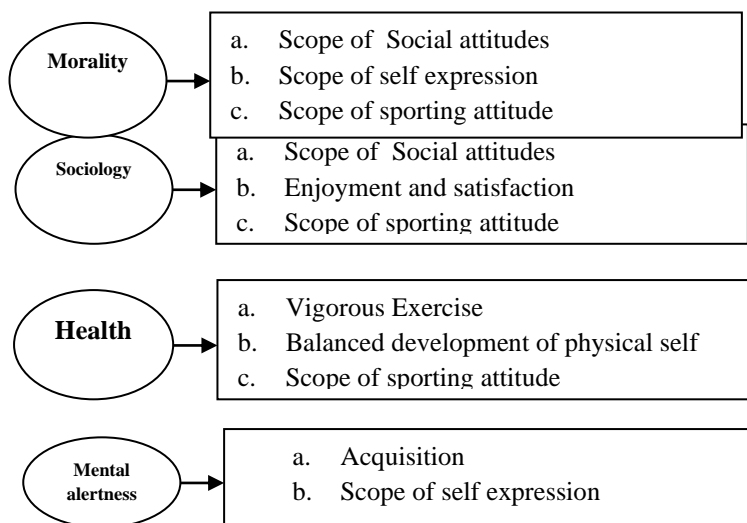


Table 1: Showing distribution of objectives and the general aims of physical education in theory classes (adopted by Oyemisi, 1989).

Table 2: Physical Education Theories

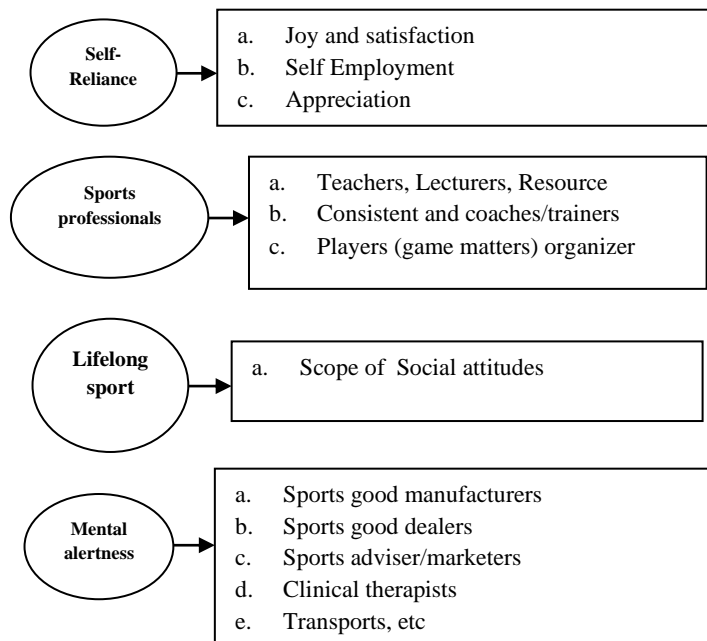


Table 2: Showing distribution of objectives and the general aims of physical education in theory classes (adopted by Oyemisi, 1989).

A causal observation of the two tables reveals all the areas to be intensified while teaching the nomads in order to tap the in-built movement for athletics, swimming and different games relevant to their ways or life. The nomadic pastoral/Fulbe or Mbororo, Koyenn, Shawa Arab and the migrant fishing folks have lived and contributed to the economic development of Nigeria for the past five to seven centuries (Bello, 2008). Sports participation also in no small measure is contributing to the country now that sport development focuses on grassroots levels. Fine athletes with little effort from the coaches to the athletes will be recorded from the group of nomads.

Advantages of Physical Education and Sports to the Nomads (Pastorals and the migrant fishing folks)

1. Physical education classes will be of greater potentialities for developing in nomads desirable knowledge of skills, habits and attitudes.
2. Through competitions nomads will attain a greater measure of physical fitness and motor skills.
3. There is development of competitions among the nomadic like their counterpart in conventional school.
4. Tapped talents become professionals to serve, as coaches, teachers, sports administrators, etc in their various nomadic schools.

5. Potential nomad or athletes in some games and sports will represent the country at international competitions like the disabled athletes.

Envisaged Problems in Nomadic Education as they affect Physical Education and Sports Participation

Adequate funding has been described as the backbone of all educational programmes. Funding is required for planning, controlling, organizing and for implementation of capital projects and recurrent expenditure in order to achieve educational objectives. Lamenting on poor funding Iro (2014) opined that lack of money has forced the government to rely on volunteers or unqualified teachers. The poor salaries cannot attract a caliber of staff with the commitment to educational enrichment of the nomads. Other problems of nomadic education include defective policies, faulty school placement, incessant migration of the children of the nomads, mismanagement of funds and the fear of western education with regards to their culture makes nomads parents have no interest in this area and religion taboos. Again, stakeholders who in one way or the other are gaining economically have not deemed it fit to pump or sponsor nomad's sports.

Strategies to Curb the Problems

1. The on-site-school, a type of schooling should incorporate sports facilities for nomads to practice with standard equipments.
2. The pre-service teacher scheme should include physical education specialists and coaches along with other teachers to handle the subject technically.
3. Provision should be made in the budget for sport equipment for nomadic schools along with other-instructional materials.
4. Trophies from individual philanthropists, stakeholders, should be donated for nomads-intra-mural programmes in all sports and tagged "Nomads Sports".

Conclusion

Nomads are valuable resources. The skills, attitudes and values and competence to be developed as stipulated in the aims and objectives of Nomadic Education go beyond the acquisition of rudiment of reading and writing and should include sports competition. Apart from competition at any age physical activity has dramatic effects on physiological functions of the body. Not only that, the occupation of the nomads is anchored on movement, there wandering, grazing, fishing pattern require a well-structured, coordinated and pragmatic programme of activities. The in-born variable of endurances, bravery, revering life, athletic built etc must be tapped and developed in nomads through sports. It provides also the therapeutic answers to health problems associated with the Nomads.

Recommendations

In order to promote all round educational development for the nomads, the following recommendations should be added into the school setting:

- a. The UBEC should make provision for sports facilities and equipment to all nomadic schools.

- b. Nomadic games should be introduced and budgeted for by local, state and national governments or annual or biennial bases and tagged “Nomadic Games”.
- c. Nomads should be encouraged and motivated to participate in the sports this will help in sustaining the programme.

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