Dilemma of Education in Africa: The Roles of Play, Games and Sports as Agents of Positive Change

By

DR. LARO IBRAHIM ABUBAKAR

Department of Kinesiology, Health Education and Sports Administration,
Kwara State University,
Malete, Ilorin

Abstract

People across the continent of Africa a*re of the belief that there is the need for positive and an all round development. Despite this assertion, there exist problems, sagacity and paucity of intents in our educational and general system of living. These negations otherwise known as dilemmas need active actions for positive development. Though, Development as a concept, according to Experts is elusive and may be difficult to come by. However and regardless of the mixed feelings and views, an all round Education that is not peculiar or specific to a particular area of knowledge or group people is required to eradicate or minimize the global dilemma. Hence, the collaborative roles, functions and efforts of all the contributing agents and factors which of course include people, places, events and activities. From the perspective of applied psychologists, this paper is out to examine how play, games and sports including the participants could exhibit definite and decisive inputs for better Education in Africa and indeed globally.*

There exist problems not only in education but in all aspects of human living and activities, Shelley and Demand, (2009). The authors went further to say that because of problems, there is decrease in productivity and lower morale. These according to them may be the general cause of decay. The authors are of the views that here is no minor problem since problems generally affect not only the system but the operators of the system. Therefore prompt attentions is the key issues, for instances establishing a standard for behaviour, for productions, for action, for feelings and etc.

In the words of Micheal (2010), to ignore standard is an invitation to problem that would ultimately metamorphosed into dilemma. According to him, a strict discipline procedure helps to correct bad situations. This process could come in

varieties of ways and means, it does not attach condition to where or whom it may come from.

Similarly, Fernada (2009), Dilemma and problems are summarized and are used interchangeably, and according to him, there is no problem that would not have solution and strategies for solving them either through the problem itself or through different change agents. According to him, the solutions could be through the creation of employee handbook that includes policies on behavioural expectation and consequences for breaking those policies. Fernada (2009) is of the that Policy topic often includes punctuality, attendances, using time off, safety procedure and dress code, all these by the perception of the author comes under participations in sports, games and play.

Since play, games and sports according to Igbanugo (2001) are some of the knowledge areas that are gaining rapid momentum among academic disciplines in a constantly changing world, solutions to problems in education and other areas of life endeavour will manifest richly in sports, play and games through the following steps: setting a good example for teams and followers who always look up to leader no matter what, therefore sport, play and games offer roles model that are worthy of admiration. Because of this, the leader must be careful to display sport-manlike attitudes, so as to instill respect for authority and official. At the same time, extension of culture and courtesy to the member of other cultures, societies and teams would be ensured.

Participation in sport, game and play is not about winning (Ajayi, 2001). Therefore this spirit when learnt would allow participants transfer it to the larger world of admitting faults, wrongs and defeats. Thereby creating the possibility and avenue to correct mistake or to offer the apology through revamping of drills and character. Other steps towards better development of education include non toleration of bad behaviours, insisting of participation to improve culture and society as a whole. There should be show of appreciation and respect for law and integrity of constituted authority and policies, both during participation in sport and games and even outside the realm of sports

Researchers in the field of human behaviour generally belief that socialization of quality education through plays, games and sports like other fields of practical knowledge occurs in an environment where people influence each other to improve knowledge and understanding so that the expected behaviour and standards are set and individual learns to comply with them. Similarly, an interaction between change agents and other stakeholders in the process of role mastering are generally learnt through participation in sports and games, therefore, there is the need for its inclusion among facets of learning across all the levels of education attainments.

Agents of Change

Agents of change have common mission, vision and goal. The goal is to empower peoples' activities for positive development. The mission could come in form of counseling because people would like some aspects of their life to be different through the creation of positive differences in life actions and activities. The processing of positive change equally manifest in the desire to botain such positive action through making solid connection, skill acquisition and making of time to be worthwhile regardless of age and status and either as an individual or in group. All these according to authorities on change agents, really manifest in sports, games and play. Agents of positive changes in the general Education of Africans involve stakeholders like the non-governmental organizations, the government at all levels, professionals, parents, marketers of educational products, religious leaders and organizations, teachers as well as the students. The general rule of these stakeholders, are seen in such area like counseling, formulation of policies, financing of programmes, implementation of policies, participatory roles and in a nut shell, change agent are cause actions for positive development.

Play

Play is an activities carried out within the leisure for the purpose of pleasure and self expression. A play tends to be active and carried out in the spirit of competition, exploration or make-believe. Play is not merely a means of distractions but an important phase in the spontaneous growth of a child, allowing him to exercise harmoniously all his physical emotional and intellectual qualities, so as to improve quality of his/her Education.

Play according to Loy of Kenyou (2008), serves as agent of positive change because it stands within the realm of satisfying needs, it is controlled by rules and demands absolute order. Similarly play is concerned with good because it has its own ethical values. If all these traits of play are geared towards education a better result would be achieved. For instance when one is exhausted, tired or worn out, play recharges ones energy for renewed work. And because man is perceived as to be an active dynamic creature with the need to find outlets for renewed energy, play when engaged in, is believed to influence factors such as physical fitness level, physiological and anatomical structure, physical and social settings so as to achieve a senses of accomplishment, self work, self esteem an self concept all geared towards better Education.

Active participations in play, helps in the sharing of attitudes and habits through the wish for new experiences, the wish for participations in group enterprises,

the wish for security, the wish for responses and recognition from others and the wish for aesthetics, all these put together create changes and strategies to learn good values, norms, attitudes and belief through a systematic doctrine and analysis.

Games

Generally speaking, games are part of the society and are embedded in the culture of that society in which they are found. Authorities have confirmed tha games participations is based on trust, confidence and assurances which are necessary ingredients for realizing one potentials such as pattern maintenances integrations, adaptation and goal attainments. All these when harnessed, helps to improve quality of education form of activity or competitions whose art Is determined by physical skill, strategy and chances that employ singly or in combination all efforts towards proper actualizations of general education development, not only in Africa but across the globe. He went further to state that participation in games provide basis for controlled action against violence and aggressive behaviour which ultimately addressed good educational agenda and desirable habit. Similarly and according Sage (2009) games participation is a veritable vehicle for acculturation and are therefore engaged in to serve that purpose as agent of positive change of our education and social cultural dilemmas, especially those games, sports and play activities that takes place during Festivals, Marriages, Anniversary, Burials, pre and post farming seasons and in honour of gods. Just as culture springs from leisure or spare times, games as a concept for positive change are activities of leisure that collaborate together for good education and status elevation

Sport as Agent of Positive Changes

Coackley (2008) defined sports as an institutionalized competitive activity that involves the use of relatively complex skills by the individuals whose participation is motivated by combinations of instinctive satisfactions that are associated with the activity itself and external reward obtained through participation. Therefore, sport is a concept of ideas that are dependent upon different angles from which people see it or are connected to it. Sports have now come into cognizance of the total educational process, hence the concept of a sound mind in a sound body.

From the time of primitive man to the present day, participations in sport have held a prominent place in lives of the people and virtually in all major civilizations. In the olden days, people participate in sports and games for reasons than other protection against enemies. The dominant roles of sports as agents of change are seen in the goals and perspectives of general education agenda and because of its spontaneous activities and less subjectiveness there is decrease in dilemma, less liability and greater responsibility for activities during participations, there are diversion of thoughts towards better goal achievement in education and general development. Sports as an

institutionalized concept provide basis for exemplifications and definite guidelines for further realizations of set goals through symbolic dimension, technological scope, organizational dimension and education scopes. Through participants in sports, there is exhibition of acceptable behaviour which assists in the promotion of conformity to the societal rules and regulation as well as acceptance of the playing.

Power of Sports as Positive Agent

Sports can have a great impact on people and society. According to Sage (2009), watching sports such as Olympic Games and the soccer/football world cup inspires people with excitement. Playing sports can give people joy. Some people work as professional players, while some people work in areas which are related to sports. Beside these positive and well known effects of sports on people and society, sports play very important roles in social changes in many areas of the world in many aspects, for instance, peace building, health promotion, educating youths, social inclusion, and promotion of living conditions.

Similarly, Nixton of Jewreton (2010) confirmed that sports are also used as a tool for promoting human health, according to them many researchers have reported that common health problems and diseases such as obesity, mental illness, cancers, diabetes can be prevented or risk of getting them can be lowered by experiencing proper amount of physical activities. In addition to this especially in developing countries, sports provide opportunities for health education. As it is well known, spread AIDS is a very serious issue and resulted because of the lakc of proper health education. Many organization gather youths so as to play some sports together because sports help people to develop close relationship very quickly and which in turn makes it easier for them to talk about serious issues such as how to protect themselves and others. In this case, sports provide people the opportunity of physical fitness, and health and general education.

Sport can have positive impacts in society. What have to be considered is how to utilize sports and for whom and in what situations we are trying to make changes. By doing so, perhaps it will be possible to foster a better society through the power of sports and expand the positive impact of sports on people and society at large.

Conclusion

Play, games and sports basic functions can be said to include appropriate pattern, consistent maintenances, proper integration, good adaption and better goals attainment. It is no secret that millions of people now see participation in these activities as outlet for release of tension, anxiety and stress. According to findings, the end results ultimately are basic factors for general development of good personality and appropriate programme agenda of all life activities. Education and acquisition of

knowledge inclusive because it is only when there is less stress, less problematic dilemma would vanish. The need to accept these three concepts of play, games and sports as agents of positive changes are seen in the following role model. Outlet for release of emotion, affirmation of identity, means of social control, as change agents itself and as a source for collective consciences through search for common goals and appropriate success that would wipe out the dilemma affecting our educational development in the continent of Africa and indeed all over the World.

References

Ajayi, M. A. (2001). *Winning games with sports psychology.* Ibadan: Codatt publications.

Caillois, N. Y. (2001). Goal attainment through sports participation. *Journal of Sports Medicine and Physical Fitness.* 34: 421-430

Coackley, J. S. (2008). Sports as social institutions. *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation and Dance,* 71 (1), 61 – 69.

Fernanda, G. (2009). *Becoming agent of changes in society.* Ilinois: love frost publishing.

Igbanugo, V.C (2001). Changing pattern of physical education and sports. *West Africa Journal of Sports Science and Health Education* 20(1) 11-19.

Loy, J. W. & Kenyon, G. S. (2008). *Sports, culture and society*" London: Macmillian Company.

Micheal, H. (2010). *Building character in the youth and young athletes.* www.LSB/Mancheseter.com/MBA retrieved21/10/2012.

Nixton, J. E. & Jeweton, A. T. (2010). *Introduction to physical education.* Philadelphia: Saunders College Pub.com.

Sage, G. H. (2009). Powers and ideology of American sports champions. Illiniois: *Human kinetics Books,* 12-24.

Shelley, F. & Demand, M. (2009). *Dealing with bad behaviour in work place.* www.LSB/Manchester.com retrieved 21/10/2012.