

Physical Education for Sustainable Development: Addressing the Unique Needs for Special Person

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Abstract

Physical Education is an integral part of total education, encompassing the physical, cognitive and affective development of an individual. Participation in physical education has in many cases and studies have been identified as a tool for sustainable development. Nevertheless, people with special person are not often given equal opportunities as their abled bodied counterparts. This paper is to give insight of the role of participating in physical education activities in the lives of special persons. It highlights stumbling blocks encountered by the special person. Special needs person are those who have some forms of disabilities that are capable of frustrating them in benefiting from the regular physical education programme. In this paper, it was stressed that in spite of the limitations identified with such special needs person, they still possess the ability to acquire physical education. This paper further discussed the fact that for physical education to continue to be a tool for reaching sustainable development goal; it has to be repositioned. Finally, it must be noted that disability is referenced in various parts of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and specifically in parts related to physical education, growth and development, inequality accessibility of human settlements, as well as data collection and monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals. It is recommended that as persons with special needs are increasing in our society; physical education should be made accessible to them so that they can give back to the society their own contributions for sustainable development.

Keywords: Physical Education, Sustainable Development, Goals and Special Needs Person

1. Introduction

Physical education plays a crucial role in promoting sustainable development by fostering physical, social and emotional growth. The special needs are the segment of people with diverse disabilities, which set limitations in performing certain task in a given society. For instance, individuals with visual impairment are faced with the challenges of vision. Also individuals with hearing impairment cannot understand the use of languages except through some modes such as sign language, finger spelling etc (Ugochi, 2019). Eze (2017) defined special need persons as those who have some forms of disabilities that are capable of frustrating them in benefiting fully from the regular physical education programme meant for those children without disabilities. The World Health Organization (2016) reports that disability is referred to a general term that incorporates both impairments and constructs in actively participation. The report went further to describe impairments as a body malfunction and constraint in activity participation as limitations faced by persons while involved in diverse life situations. As stated by Nixon (2007) persons regarded as disabled are termed so because they are unable to physically or mentally partake in certain activities, carry out various tasks, utilize various skills mainly because of their

biomedical incapacitation or impairments. In every society, whether formal or informal, within it, there are people that have special needs. The needs may be intellectually, physical, sensory or emotional. The needs may be multi various depending on the ability and disability that is inherent in the individuals. Some individuals are disadvantaged either as a result of additional abilities (extra abilities) or less ability, due to endowment, traits or disability based on the needs and values of a given society (Eze, 2017). Ogbonna (2014) reported that individuals with disabilities are found in every community and school system and they include those with one or more disabilities. In spite of the limitations identified with such special needs persons, they still possess the ability to acquire education and this will go a long way in making them useful. All over the universe and throughout history, the people with disabilities have continuously suffered a great deal of marginalization and discrimination. They have had their fair share of being socially and economically excluded in having active lifestyles (Ugochi, 2019). The author further stated that they are denied adequate health care services, educational opportunities, employment opportunities which in turn increases their poverty rate. This continued neglect arises not only because of negative reactions gotten from the society due to their perceived inability to be productive or

the insufficient facilities to aid them but also from the lack of will and urgency on the side of policy makers to implement laws and policies that address their human right and needs [1-5].

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) can be described as a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity. It also seeks to strengthen universal peace in larger freedom. It is recognized that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development. Physical education for sustainable development means adopting a more holistic approach to physical education with the aim of creating a better world for special person. This allows every child to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values necessary to shape a sustainable future. One way to cultivate this mindset in our special person is by encouraging sustainable lifestyle through physical education for sustainable development. Living sustainability is about changing the attitude of the special person in the way that helps transform lives into something that does not impact too heavily on their current routines [6-10].

2. Physical Education A Tool for Sustainable Development to Special Person

Physical Education is considered key tools to be utilized in addressing the recently adopted sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by the United Nations (UN) Physical Education have been widely known to cut across various barriers of age, gender, religion, race and nationality. Physical Education is truly global tools that have a far and wide reach, which make them feasible in tackling many of the SDGs. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a collection of 17 global goals set by the United Nations in 2015. The fact that physical education plays a vital role in sustainable development goals to special person in Nigeria is referenced in various parts of the SDGs. For example disability is referenced in numerous parts of the following 5 goals which is goal 4, 8, 10, 11 and 17 out of the 17 global goals mentioned. Goal 4: This is based on inclusive and equitable quality education and promotion of life-long learning opportunities for all focuses on eliminating gender disparities in education and ensuring equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities. In addition, the proposal calls for building and gender sensitive and also provide safe, nonviolent, inclusive and effective learning environment for all. Goal 8: This is to promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all, the international community aims to achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men including for persons with disabilities and equal pay for work of equal value. Closely linked is Goal 10 which strives to reduce inequality within and among countries by powering and promoting the social, economic and political inclusion of all, including persons with disabilities. Goal 11: This would work to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe and sustainable. To realize this goal, governments are called upon to provide access to safe, affordable, accessible

and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, such as persons with disabilities. In addition, the proposal calls for providing universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible green and public spaces, particularly for person with disabilities. Goal 17: This goal stresses that in order to strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development, the collection of data and monitoring both for the normal or disable community for capability building ability building is crucial. Physical education influence is seen in SDGs 3, 4, 5, 8, 11, 16 & 17; seven out of 17. The largest impact of Physical Education is on good health and wellbeing (Goal 3) as physical activity has a direct association in promoting physical and mental health and wellbeing. Increasing life expectancy as well as reducing obesity and the risk of non-communicable diseases. Physical education are increasingly being used to promote peace and harmony especially among youth caught amongst conflicts, as it promotes the concept of social cohesion and solidarity. The potential of sport to contribute to sustainable development is explicitly stated in the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development, with identification of the growing contribution of sports to the realization of development and peace in its promotion of tolerance and respect and the contributions it makes to the empowerment of women and of young people, individuals and communities as well as to health, education and social inclusion objectives (UNGA, 2015) [10-15].

Sports is used as a catalyst for human and social development. Commonwealth governments also provided consistent endorsement of the role of sports in contributing to development and peace across multiple commonwealths, sports ministers meetings and at the 2011 commonwealth heads of government meeting (commonwealth secretariat 2011) physical inactivity has become one of the most significant health issues of the twenty-first century (Commonwealth, 2015). Inactivity is the fourth greatest risk factor for global mortality, causing approximately 3.2 million deaths per year (WHO 2010) policies that can contribute to increasingly participation in sport and active recreation can reduce inactivity and in so doing, significantly contribute to SDG target 3 which seeks to address non-communicable diseases and promote mental health and wellbeing. SDG Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. Provision for physical education and sport-based activities within schools and other formal and informal education settings can make various contributions to SDG 4 and its targets. Physical education, complemented by other sporting opportunities is vital to the development of movement competencies and all other aspects of physical literacy among young people. Evidence indicates that young people do not develop physical literacy and proficiencies automatically (Barley, Armour, Pickup and Sandford, 2009). Feeling of competence and skill mastery derived from physical education activities contribute to improvements in self-esteem and self-confidence [16- 19].

SDG Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. Gender equality and empowerment have been a common focus of sport and development policies. Enhancing equality and equity for girls and women within sport can challenge broader discriminatory norms (Shehu, 2010) and in so doing, strengthen all efforts towards SDG 5. Girls and women involvement in sport is similarly framed and influenced by structured inequalities that may have both universal and context specific dimensions (Saavedra, 2009). Physical education is expert in bridging the gap of gender inequality. SDG Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all. Findings have pointed to the growing economic value of sport while also indicating the financial value derived from sport while also indicating the financial value derived from sport-based interventions that deliver social benefit (Crabbe, 2013). Sports have benefited the economic growth in many ways like the creation, marketing and sale of innovative sport-based products and services, provision of specific education and training to develop entrepreneurial skills or enterprise opportunities for participants in sport-based initiatives, networking to enable entrepreneurship and enterprise (Ratten, 2014). DG Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. There are policies in sports that ensure physical environments are safe and conducive for sports participation. Well-designed stadiums can become focal points in cities readily identifiable by both residents and external stakeholders (Ahifeldt and Maennig, 2010). SDG Goal 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. Sports is used to reduce violence and promote peace among youths. National teams and athletes serve to cultivate collective identities within countries that have suffered from societal divisions (Sen, 2011). SDG Goal 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development. Government led implementation like provision of physical education across all state schools is a way of fulfilling SDG goal 17 and structured implementation partnerships that fund national sports federation and other sport-based organizations to deliver specific agreed objectives. Physical education with all its activities speaks to people in a language they can understand (Moss, 2017) not only physical education but sports which according to this paper is a facet of physical education used as a tool for social inclusion for the disabled, they also serve health and social benefits to special person. Studies carried out by scholars shows that physical education/sports have proved to be a tool for sustainable development. A research study by Devine (2017) in the pacific Australia showed that participation in sports clearly gave the interviewed (disabled athletes) a boost in their sense of worth and empowerment. In another study in Jordan, results showed that the basketball wheel chair players had an increased physical self-esteem and self domains (Qasim, 2019). A study in South Africa concurred to this too, the interviewed counted their experience in the participation of sports a positive one as it contributed to making them feel empowered and autonomous, furthermore, it helped them turn a blind eye

to their impairments and have a sense of belonging (Swartz, 2018). Having to be associated with an achievement, making friends and possessing the will for competency were the highlights for the disabled participants in Malaysia (Wilson and Khoo, 2013). Physical education for sustainable development is not only about being environmentally friendly; it also involves developing life skills including leadership, communication and management; all of which are extremely important for personal development. By equipping special person with these relevant capabilities in addition to their environmental knowledge helps them excel of living lives (Adelodun, 2020).

3. Physical Education Unique Needs for Special Person

Physical education is an integral part of general education that educates an individual physically, mentally, socially, economically and emotionally through well organized and conducted physical activities. Individual with Disability Education Act (IDEA) requires that students with disability receive physical education services, specially designed if necessary (Individual Education Program, (IEP), 2020). This act allows school to provide physical education as part of students special education programme. Students with disability safely and successfully participate in general physical education with or without accommodation and support from specially designed or adapted physical education. Individualized Education Program (2020) asserted that because physical education is required component of special education, child general and adapted physical education teacher should be included as a member of Individualized Education Program team if the student is receiving specially designed physical education. Individualized Education Program (2020) further stressed that at a minimum should include a summary of present level of performance in physical education content, the frequency and duration (minutes and days per week or stipulated time period) for any child receiving specially designed or adapted physical education. Individual with Disability Education Act (IDEA) according to IEP (2020) highlights physical education content and requirement to include: physical motor skills, fundamental motor skill and patterns, skills in aquatics, dance and individual and group games and sports and includes special physical education, adapted physical education, movement education and motor development [20-22].

Physical education in general is widely used as a means to develop human capacity and capital, to improve economic potentials and to build up people's idiosyncrasies. Lere (2017) opined that in Africa today and elsewhere in the world, there are large number of children who differ so markedly in mental, physical or behavioural characteristics from their normal peers as to require special help in realizing their optimum potentials. The global advocacy for educating children with special needs is very strong and compelling (Adelodun, 2020). Kirk and Gallagher (2006) stressed that for many years ago, the goodness of fit and efficacy of any educational system is in the extent to which it is able to meet the needs of learners on the two extremes (high flyers and learners with disabilities) as much as it is designed to meet

the needs of those clustering at the middle of the continuum (all average learners) is still extremely valid today [23-26].

4. Role Of Physical Education to Special Persons

People with disabilities are often discriminated against because they perceived to be suffering from an ailment or having a poor health because being in good health is often centered on the absence of diseases. However, participating in sports/physical education has been shown to improve the health and quality of life of special person. It boosts their cardiovascular and mental health as well as their abilities to be flexible while carrying out various tasks making them more independent (Dixon-Ibarra and Driver, 2013). A study of Wilhite (2009) in the US confirmed that participation in sports is an important tool in fostering the physical and emotional wellbeing of the disabled. Furthermore, it strengthens social relationship. Physical education has been recognized globally as having the potential for fostering social change, it has the following attributes; it builds up life core principles, tolerance, respect, leadership skills, it strengthens inclusion for groups that are marginalized as a result of religion or cultural barriers and it grants all and sundry to experience some form of equality and empowerment (Kay and Dudfield, 2013). The positive experiences were not without barriers or challenges.

5. Stumbling Blocks of Special Person

Special persons in our environment faced a lot of challenges. Harris and Enfield (2003) pointed out that the discriminatory practices against the disabled have been discovered to be attitudinal, environmental and institutional. They further stressed with displeasure that non-disabled community sometimes use derogatory statements or exclude them from social activities because they perceived them as useless (attitudinal in nature). Environmental based discrimination exists when public buildings like hospitals and schools, transport systems are not made disability friendly (Ugochi, 2019). In a study done by Bombom and Abdullahi (2016) in Jos Nigeria, they stated that societal injustice and exclusion against the disabled is manifested in the inaccessible nature of the transport facilities. A great number of students highlights challenges that faced by special person some of which were: lack of finance, adequate facilities, support, coaching from certified coaches, accessible transport and aided devices, there were still some participants who showed concern as regards the lackadaisical attitudes they got from the government authorities. World Health Organization (2013) pointed out some challenges faced by the special person to include lack of assistive facilities, low budget s and funding, limited access to technologies and lack of participation in the decision making especially the ones touching their social participation. Misener and Darcy (2014) opined that there are gap to be filled in developing countries like Nigeria as regards to the welfare of the special person. Uguochi (2019) in her work pointed out three themes identified as the challenges of the special person to include limited funding, lackadaisical attitude by the government towards disability matters and exclusion of disabled in leadership positions. The sad story about the educational system in Africa is that it is not meeting the needs of learners at the extremes neither

is it sufficiently educating the average ones (Kolo, 2018).

6. Repositioning Of Physical Education to Special Group: A Tool for Sustainable Development

It is noteworthy that special group of person are most underserved in the educational provision. This has greatly contributed to potential waste and has retarded the national growth (Yewchukwu, 2009). The enormous challenges of the special person in the provision of physical education today has become desirable to reposition it in order to meet the need of person living with disabilities so that they can equally make their contributions to the continent's building. There are many processes of changing the way special person should be involved in physical education to achieve new goal, improve their image or increase their value. Some ways are special education, adapted sports, corrective or remedial physical education, developmental physical education, modified physical education, rehabilitation or reconditioning (Ugochi, 2019). Special person needs special education. The national policy on education (FRN, 2004) defined special education as the education of children and adults who have learning difficulty because of different sorts of handicaps such as blindness, partial sightedness, deafness, hardness of learning, mental retardation, social maladjustment, physical handicap etc due to circumstances of birth, inheritance, social maladjustment, physical health pattern or accident in later life. Also included are children who are intellectually precocious and find themselves insufficiently challenged by the programme of the regular school. Adeniyi (2015) defined special education as an area within the framework of general education that provides appropriate facilities, specialized materials and methods and teaches with specialized training for children and adults considered to be handicapped. Adapted sports refers to sports modified or created to meet the unique needs of individuals with disabilities such as wheelchair basketball, frame football, sitting volleyball and wheelchair dance sports, etc. Corrective or remedial physical education emphasize improvement in the function or structure of individual by means of selected physical exercise. Developmental physical education stresses on development of movement abilities and physical fitness especially those that have been identified to deficient in those areas. Modified physical education is a program in which adjustment are made in the regular physical education program to meet the needs and abilities of the handicapped or exceptional children while rehabilitation or reconditioning describe motor activity programme developed for recovering from injuries to restore disabled individuals to useful activities [27-30].

7. Conclusion

Special needs person (disability) is referenced in numerous parts of five out of seventeen global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) specifically in parts related to growth and employment, inequality, accessibility of human settlements, data collection and monitory of the Sustainable Development Goals. Physical education equally is referenced in seven out of the seventeen sustainable development goals (SDGs) specifically in the provision of healthy lives, inclusive and quality education, economic growth, breaking gender

inequality, promote peace in the society and strengthen the means of implementation and partnership for sustained development. This implies that the role physical education could play in the realization of sustainable development goals to special person cannot be overemphasized. Therefore, it stands to reason that as special persons are increasing in our society, the need to make physical education accessible to them so that they can give back to the society their own contributions for sustainable development should be paramount in the agenda of the government of all nations especially in our country Nigeria [30-33].

Recommendations

The following are recommended

- Financing of special needs physical education is one of the most critical factors in order to reposition physical education for special needs person so the government must always make adequate fund available for the running of special schools in the country.
- Government should always post specialist physical education teacher to teach special person because they will be in the best position to meet the need of the children for they have been trained to do so.
- Specific infrastructure like wheelchair, a comfortable classroom and safely aspects of the special person should be considered by stakeholders.
- Curriculum planners should consider modified and articulated curriculum that would provide students with disabilities appropriate and effective instructional support.
- The government at all levels should formulate policies that will be in the interest of children with special needs.
- Non-governmental organization should assist special needs with scholarships while in school.

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