

THE IMPACT OF COLONIAL PHYSICAL TRAINING SYLLABI ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORT IN NIGERIA WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO 1933 SYLLABUS

BY

PROF. B. A. LADANI
DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION
AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY
ZARIA - NIGERIA

AND

ANDANJE MWISUKHA
INSTITUTE OF KINESIOLOGY, LEISURE AND RECREATION
MANAGEMENT
KENYATTA UNIVERSITY
NAIROBI, KENYA

ABSTRACT

The partition of Africa and the finding of the River Niger brought Nigeria under British rule. This paper examines British Physical Training syllabus in Nigeria and their impact on the development of sports in the country. The paper identified the three British Physical Training syllabi and examined each one of them. The syllabi were the 1918, 1927 and 1933 editions. From the examinations of each of the syllabi, it was found that the 1918 and 1927 syllabi made no significant contributions to the development of Physical Education or sports in the country because of their military nature. However, it was discovered that the 1933 Physical Training syllabus was the best and the activities that were included prepared children for competitive sports, and the formations for the performance of the activities were all shown through Empire Day Celebrations.

KEY WORDS: *Impact, Colonial, Physical Training, Syllabus, Development Nigeria, 1933 Syllabus.*

INTRODUCTION

The partition of Africa in 1885 by European countries brought Nigeria under British administration. Before the total take-over the British government had made several attempts to find the source of River Niger. After much abortive expeditions, a young Scottish doctor called Mungo Park found the river in a place called Segou on July 21, 1796 (Awolowo, 1968). He returned to Scotland to report his findings and another expedition which started in 1815 was organized to trace the mouth of the Niger. Unfortunately Mungo park and his thirty men lost their lives the same year when the boat "Joliba" sank at New Bussa

North of Jebba (Mockler Ferrymen, 1902; Burns, 1969; Flint, 1966).

After waiting in vain to hear from Mungo Park, another expedition headed by John Lander and Richard Lander was set up to trace the mouth of the Niger. This task was accomplished in 1832 (Geary, 1965). This expedition was popularly known as Lander's Brothers because two brothers of the same parents headed it.

THE ARRIVAL OF THE CHRISTIAN MISSIONARIES

The discovery of River Niger combined with the attempt to establish legitimate trade on the Niger paved the way for the Christian Missionaries to come to Nigeria.

The first mission to arrive in Nigeria was the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society in 1841 and chose Badagry as its station (Jakande, 1965). The arrival of this mission issued an unspoken challenge to the Church Missionary Society which arrived in Nigeria in 1842 also chose Badagry as her station (Oyebola, 1967). These two missions were followed in succession by the Presbyterian Church of Scotland in 1846, the Southern Baptist Mission from America in 1853, the Roman Catholic Mission arrived in 1868, the Qualboe in 1887 and the primitive Methodist in 1890 (Ukeje, 1966; Nduka, 1965; Fafunwa, 1974).

EVANGELIZATION AND WESTERN EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

The objective of the missionaries was to evangelize Nigeria, spread the Gospel and make the greatest possible attempt to convert the natives so that they would abhor the traditional African religion. The missionaries, however, found that Nigerians could neither communicate nor understand English language and therefore needed to be educated in order to understand the gospel message (Coleman, 1965). For this reason, Western Education was introduced into the country leading to the building of schools, churches and establishing training institutes for teachers.

The Church Missionary Society (now Anglican Communion) took the lead in the establishment of schools in Nigeria. The first school which was a boarding primary was established in 1845 at Badagry. This development posed a great challenge to the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary which arrived Nigeria first. The race for the establishment of both churches and schools then began. Thus, the missionaries became the pioneer of Western Education in Nigeria (Wilson, 1963).

After fifty four years of missionary activities in developing education in Nigeria, the first government school was founded in 1899 in Lagos, for Muslim children who refused to attend mission

schools for fear of conversion (Ukeje, 1966). This development paved the way for British rule in Nigeria. The actual year of British administration in Nigeria was 1861 when Dosumu the king of Lagos was accused by the British of his inability to comply with the treaty signed by his father Akintoye. He was then forced to surrender the sovereignty of Lagos to the British. This capitulation marked the beginning of direct rule of the British in Nigeria (Ukeje, 1966). Thus the traders continued with their commercial enterprises, the missionaries devoted themselves to spreading the gospel and Western Education and the British officials addressed themselves to governing the country. Thus the 1885 partition was just meant to formalize British rule in Nigeria (Ladani, 1978).

MISSIONARY EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

Western Education in Nigeria was a brainchild of the Christian Missionaries. During the nineteenth century and early twentieth century Nigeria was like a virgin land where many agriculturists came to have the farmland. Missionaries with strong economic backing from their home countries were able to establish many churches and schools particularly the Roman Catholic and the Church Missionary Society had more schools than other missions.

When the missionaries were busy building churches and establishing schools, the British administration was busy stabilizing its rule over the country. Therefore, there was no controlling body or any policy put in place to shape the system of education. Based on the above premise, each mission laid emphasis on the aspects of subjects that would help it in propagating the gospel. This made it impossible to evolve a common curriculum for the mission schools. Since there was no common syllabus, no school thought of physical training as a subject to be included in the curriculum.

The first proposal to include physical training into the curriculum came from the first African sub-inspector of Education and who eventually was the first African inspector of Education – Henry Carr. This proposal came during the Lagos Anglican Synod meeting in April, 1882. Henry Carr listed the physical, social, emotional and moral ideals of physical training to bolster his proposal. Since this was just a mission, the proposal did not materialize in the same year 1882, the colonial administration enacted the first education ordinance for schools in the country. This ordinance spelt out conditions to be met by schools before they could be grant-aided (Adesina, 1977).

FIRST COLONIAL PHYSICAL TRAINING SYLLABUS

After seventy-three years of intensive efforts of the Christian Missionaries to educate Nigerians and propagate the gospel, the colonial administrators felt that it was necessary to have a common and unified syllabus. The harmonization of educational activities of the missionaries into a single entity brought about the adoption of a common syllabus for all schools in Nigeria in 1918. This development paved the way for physical training to become part of the syllabus in Nigerian schools (Akioye, 1978).

1918 PHYSICAL TRAINING SYLLABUS

This syllabus was sent to all schools in Britain and her colonies. The activities in this syllabus were very rigid, military in nature and devoid of enjoyment which is one of the fundamentals of taking part in physical activities included running on the spot, running for direction, jumping, hopping, simple stunts, gymnastics, tumbling and calisthenics.

The approach of this syllabus was very formal and did not stress enjoyment. To make matters worse, teachers who taught children lacked the needed experience and methodology in presenting this subject effectively. The rigidity of this syllabus

was due to the fact that it was prepared by the British soldiers who were discharged from the army after the First World War. The syllabus was composed of activities in which the soldiers were engaged during break in the war-front. Generally the syllabus was not positively received and its shortcomings easily accounted for the negative attitude of school children towards physical training even into the late fifties (Akioye, 1978).

1927 PHYSICAL TRAINING SYLLABUS

Although the 1918 syllabus was revised in 1927, few significant changes were made. The syllabus was still military and rigid in nature and did not give room for initiative or flexibility. Both parents and children still maintained their negative position against the syllabus. Children saw physical training generally as a weapon of punishment (Ladani, 1986; 1994). Therefore, physical training was not seen or accepted as a discipline designed for optimum development of the body. Children preferred cutting grass than taking part in physical training.

Interestingly, the militaristic nature of the syllabus can be traced to the schools in Britain which McIntosh (1972) described thus:

“There were two distinct traditions in Physical Education. Outside the public schools a different type of Physical Education grew up springing from several roots – military drill, calisthenics and gymnastics. From them grew the system of physical training which at the end of the century was being adopted in public elementary schools.”

1933 PHYSICAL TRAINING SYLLABUS

The last syllabus of British origin was introduced in 1933, and remained in use in some regions in Nigeria until the late fifties. This syllabus which appeared in Britain in 1930, was divided into two parts: one for use in junior schools for children under eleven years of age; and, the second part for children in senior primary schools above eleven years. The activities in the

1918 and 1927 syllabi were overhauled, fresh activities were included and revised teaching methods were introduced, stressing encouragement.

The 1933 Physical Training syllabus was compiled by the Board of Education of Britain and it was a total departure from the two earlier syllabi which were military in nature. This new edition of the syllabus showed a notable improvement because its primary objective was to help in the production and maintenance of healthy body and mind.

The activities in the syllabus were meant for children of eleven and up to twelve years of age, and could also be used with advantage for children under fourteen years in all grades of schools. The syllabus incorporated games and exercises that stimulated the children to perform better skills. It emphasized on physical training as a vehicle for the development of a healthy physique, qualities of alertness and sound character. Unlike the previous syllabi, it stressed on physical training as a way of providing opportunity for children to enjoy and then form habits of recreation as a carryover value.

As already stated in the objective, maintenance of good posture therefore stood out as a vital object of physical training, and careful attention was consequently drawn on the need for children to show good and correct position of the body in sitting, standing, walking and in ordinary occupations of daily life which could be made habitual. Maintenance of good posture was seen as necessary for good health and for complete physical development, and to make the body more useful, skilful and aesthetic. It was conceptualized to produce self-respect and self confidence (Board of Education, 1933).

In addition to the stated objective of physical training, the syllabus contained several other detailed components that characterized the physical education syllabi in the post-colonial period particularly the

first indigenous syllabus which was authored by late Harding Ekperigen and Mr. Isaac Akiyoye in the then Western Provinces of Nigeria. This syllabus was published by the Ministry of Education, Western Provinces in 1956. These included: specification of frequency and duration of lessons, the outfits for pupils, teaching methodology, content/teacher's notes, equipment / apparatus and lesson plans.

The syllabus laid emphasis on the need to teach physical training on daily basis and the standard minimum time was five 20 minutes periods per week, three of which were devoted to formal lessons and others to more specialized activities, such as games and swimming. It was mandatory to conduct all physical training activities out of doors whenever possible, except schools which had none were expected to set aside physical training rooms for lessons during bad weather. The children were permitted to use any type of outfit that did not hamper movement during their lessons.

The 1933 syllabus provided general guidance on methodology of teaching (which was totally absent in the two previous syllabi), with specific emphasis on teacher's voice, teaching progression, class organization in groups and teams and class supervision. The syllabus also gave lesson notes on the type of games and exercises to be taught during the lessons. However, each school was given free hand to select the type of games and exercises depending on the availability of facilities and equipment.

Although the 1933 syllabus did not provide any sample or guidance on the preparations of schemes of work for the teaching of physical activities, lesson plans for the teaching of each of the content areas were provided. The lesson plans comprised of four major components-introductory activities, class activities, group activities and games.

In the post-colonial syllabus in Nigeria, some items were added-preliminary activities which were performed before Introductory Activities, then Rhythmic Jump followed the Introductory Activities, this was followed by Trunk Mobilizing which was sub-divided into Abdominal and Dorsal and then contest. After this Class Activities, Group Activities, Games, Depletive and then Health. The second component of the 1933 syllabus had compensatory activities and final activities. Based on these additional activities, it is safe to say that the 1933 Physical Training syllabus laid the foundation for modern Physical Education in Nigeria.

It is important to note that unlike the former syllabi, the 1933 syllabus was more elaborate with better focus and specific objective. It was flexible because it provided more diverse activities and there was room for initiative and enjoyment. Since there were many similarities between the 1933 syllabus and Physical Education syllabus of modern age, it is clear that the curriculum developers in the post-colonial era borrowed heavily from the contents of this last colonial syllabus in Nigeria.

Another very important departure of the 1933 syllabus from the first two colonial syllabi was that activities were described along with methodology and even illustrations and pictures also describing the activities. In addition local games were included for children to enjoy and develop skills for good posture and health. The activities emphasized team spirit and development of skills required for performing both individual, dual and team sports.

The 1933 syllabus had its own shortcomings in the following manners:

- There was problem of inadequate teaching facilities and apparatus
- There was inadequate number of trained teachers to teach physical training.
- There was gross inadequate personnel to supervise physical training in schools.

- There was no room for physically or mentally handicapped children to benefit from the program of activities.
- Due to the level of development at that time, only the psychomotor domain was emphasized while both the cognitive and affective domains were neglected.
- There was little guidance or no guidance on how learners acquired the skills and there was no evaluation to determine the extent of what children have learnt.

However, the syllabus served as reference point for modern Physical Education syllabus.

CONTRIBUTIONS OF 1933 PHYSICAL TRAINING SYLLABUS TOWARD THE DEVELOPMENT OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORT IN NIGERIA

Part of the contributions of 1933 physical training syllabus have been discussed in the body of the work. In summary, this syllabus is the bedrock for subsequent Physical Education syllabi not in Nigeria alone but in Britain and all her former colonies.

The 1933 syllabus also described a large number of simple games, intended to prepare the children for more advanced field games. Programs of lessons and tables in the syllabus portrayed a somewhat formal gymnastic pattern work but at the same time, the inclusions of activity exercise ensured plenty of vigorous movement in every lesson (McIntosh, 1972).

To promote the effective use of the syllabus and maximize the children's enjoyment and benefit from the activities, the British administrators thought it fit and necessary to delegate the administration of physical training to the Ministry of Education. Both the national and the regional ministries of Education charged the inspectors with the responsibility of supervising the schools to see to the

implementation of the syllabus and to ensure that the activities were taught effectively, some of these inspectors were not physical educators and consequently could not perform as expected (Ajisafe, 1977). To give the primary school children the opportunity to practice and improve the skills acquired in the Physical Education lessons, the British government initiated them to competitive track and field athletics and invited mission schools to take part in the Empire Day Celebration.

EMPIRE DAY CELEBRATION IN NIGERIA

Competitive track and field athletics were introduced into primary schools in Nigeria through Empire Day Celebration. Usually held every year on the 24th Day of May to commemorate the birth of Queen Victoria of England (Stamp, 1977). The precise date of introduction of this program of sport was not definite but according to Adedeji (1972) it was/is 1927 when mission schools were called upon to take part in the celebration which had been an exclusive affair of the armed forces and the police.

Before this time, competitive sports had not played a part in the celebrations, which was consisted primarily of gathering of the police, the army and other government officials to listen to the speech from the British throne, sing the British National Anthem and watch the parade of the police and the armed forces.

When schools were invited to join the celebrations, the foundations of competitive sports was laid in Nigeria. All schools in the same district met for athletic competition and skills already acquired from the program of 1933 syllabus were put into use. The events during the celebrations included: sack race, egg and spoon race, tug of war, threading the needle, catching the train, sprints, middle and long distance races, relays, long jump and pole vault (Ama, 1974). By then triple jump had not been introduced.

As these celebrations progressed from year to year, shields and trophies were donated and it became rivalry among mission schools, government schools and even traditional rulers. Remembering his days in the primary school, Chief Anthony Enahoro (a one time Federal Commissioner for Labour Youth and Sports in Nigeria) made these comments:

Empire Day in Nigeria provided an opportunity for Nigerian School Children to demonstrate their Loyalty to the Imperial Britain. For weeks the school band Practiced martial airs, teachers and pupils put away their best Uniforms against the day, and classrooms were deserted for playing Fields. As we would take place of honour at the ceremony of saluting the flag and our band played Rule Britannia and God save the King, we had to be the smartest and best drilled, foremost in all athletics and games competitions, and then we returned from the Empire Day field with the competition shield there was a feast of rice, stew and the meat of two cows donated by the Olowo (ruler of Owo) to celebrate having done well what we had been practicing for several weeks (Enhor, 1965).

The impact of this syllabus on sports development cannot be quantified because the first set of athletes that represented Nigeria in intercolonial and international competitions particularly the Commonwealth Games were products of this competition. For example Commissioner of Police called Adeola popularly known as the flying police represented Nigeria in both 100 and 200 metres. Late Major Emmanuel Ifeajina the first athlete to win gold medal for Nigeria in the Commonwealth Games setting a record in high jump with a height of 6ft. 8ins in 1954 Commonwealth Games at Vancouver, Canada. Samuel Igins won models in triple jump, Bellow Osagie in high jump, David Ejioke, A.K. Amu and a host of others.

CONCLUSION

In summary, the 1933 syllabus through the Empire Day Celebrations palyed very significant roles in the development of competitive sports in the country based on the following factors.

- 1) The syllabus through Empire Celebrations laid the foundations of competitive sports especially track and field athletics in the primary schools.
- 2) They initiated Nigerian primary schools to competitive sports.
- 3) They established standards in track and field and helped to identify talented athletes who later represented Nigeria in international competitions.
- 4) The venues used for the Empire Day Celebrations later became legacy of facilities which were transformed into popular soccer fields, athletic tracks and cricket pitches.

REFERENCES

- Adedeji, J. A. (1972). *"The Role of Physical Education in the Nation Building of Nigeria."* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Ohio State University, (Microfilm Oregon State University, 1975).
- Adesina, S. (1977). Educational Planning in Nigeria. University of Lagos Press, Lagos.
- Aina, S. I. (1974). Sports Development in Nigeria's Post Primary Institutions. NAPHER Conference, Benin City, 1-2.
- Ajisafe, M. O. (1977). *"Problems in Physical Education in Nigeria"* International Journal of Physical Education, xiv, 2, (Summer), 40-43.
- Akioye, I. (1978). Tape Recorded Interview National Sports Commission, Lagos, May 8.
- Awohowo, O. (1968). The People's Republic. Oxford University Press, Ibadan.
- Board of Education (1933). Syllabus of Physical Training for Schools. His Majesty's Stationery Office, York House, London.
- Burns, A. (1969). History of Nigeria. George Allen and Unwin Limited, London.
- Coleman, J. S. (1963). Nigeria: Background to Nationalism. University of California Press, Berkeley.
- Enahoro, A. (1965). Fugitive Offender: The story of a Political Prisoner. Cassell & Company Ltd., London.
- Fafunwa, B. A. (1974) A history of Education in Nigeria George. Allen & Unwin Limited, London.
- Flint, J. E. (1966). Sir George Goldie and the Making of Nigeria. Oxford University Press, London.
- Geary, W. N M. (1965). Nigeria under British Rule. Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., London.
- Jakande, L. K. (1967). Nigeria School Directory. John West Publication Limited, Lagos.
- Ladani, B. A. (1978). An Examination of British Influence on the Development of Sport in Nigeria from 1861 to the Present. Unpublished Masters Thesis, University of Western Ontario, London, Canada.
- Ladani, B. A. (1986). An Approach to Comparative Physical Education (Monograph). Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.
- Ladani, B. A. (1994). Foundations and Historical Perspectives of Physical Education and Sport (Monograph). Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.
- McIntoch, P. C. (1972). Physical Education in England Since 1800. G. Bell and Son Ltd., London.
- Mockler-Ferryman, A. F (1902). British Nigeria: A Geographical and Historical Description of British Possessions

Adjacent to the River Niger West Africa.
Cassell and Company Limited, London.

Nduka, O. (1965). Western Education and the Nigerian Cultural Background. Oxford University Press, Ibadan.

Oyebola, A. and Adekunle, O. (1967). A Textbook of Government for West Africa. The Sketch Publishing Co. Ltd., Ibadan.

Stamp, R. M. (1977). Empire Day in the Schools of Ontario: "*The Training of Young Imperialists*" in Canadian Schools and Canadian Identity by Charlton, Alf and Mc Donald Neil, eds. Gage Educational Publishing Limited, Toronto.

Ukeje, B. O. (1966). Education for Social Reconstruction. Macmillan & Co. (Nigeria) Ltd., Lagos.

Wilson, J. (1963). Education and changing West African Culture. Bureau of Publications, New York.