

Constraints of Sport Development in Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria

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Abstract

In higher institutions particularly, the universities in many parts of the world, many faculty members looked down on sports as non-academic and have therefore developed very negative attitude toward it. Most Nigerian tertiary institutions do not have modern facilities, equipment and personnel for sports. Only institutions that have won the hosting right of NUGA usually seize the opportunity to improve on the quality and quantity of sports facilities, equipment and personnel in their domains. Inadequate or low level of coaching is a hindrance to the production of national athletes from tertiary institutions. Nigerian Universities and other tertiary institutions have gone further by creating departments to especially handle sports within the general administrative set up. These offices in most cases are headed by a director or sports coach with several subordinates serving under him. The offices include coaches who are specialists in various sports. Today, the establishment of Nigerian University Games Association (NUGA), Nigerian Colleges of Education Games Association (NICEGA) and Nigerian Polytechnics Games Association (NIPOGA), offered tremendous opportunity to students of tertiary institutions to participate in a wide variety of sports which the students welcomed with great enthusiasm, and have participated in all the sports available in the various institutions for development of sports in Nigeria. Recommendations as to improve the Nigeria sports development in tertiary institutions were offered which includes: To conduct regular training courses for sports Personnel in Nigerian institutions, Funding of Institutions generally should not be left in the hands of government alone, To ensure that only the best and qualified personnel are employed for the organization and administration of institutional sports.

Introduction

In higher institutions particularly the universities in many parts of the world, many faculty members looked down on sports as nonacademic and have therefore developed very negative attitude toward it. (Ladani, 2008). This is true for countries in Europe and the United States. Kabido, (2001) affirmed that during medieval period, university students sporadically played games and sports in defiance of restrictions and under threat of punishment,

baneful attitude towards sports at the universities was very common among many academics who saw no value in sports, hence many of them threatened their students who took part in intramural and interscholastic sports. Even with this negative attitude and repression, students still formed themselves into clubs and developed both intramural and inter – collegiate athletic competitions. Similarly, what took place between Oxford and Cambridge in Europe also took place

between Harvard and Yale Universities on the other hand in the United States.

The individual efforts put forth by students of the University of Ibadan to organize sport gave them the confidence to cross Nigeria borders and look for a counterpart in the field of sports. What applies to the University College, Ibadan affects the University of Gold Coast (now Ghana). This situation made it possible for friendship games to be arranged between the two institutions. The first of the series of this game was held between 20th and 24th of March in 1951, Leogon and won by the University of Gold Coast by 10.5 points to 6.5 for Ibadan (Ikulayo, 2008).

Today the practice has assumed a significant change. According to Bitrus, (2005) and Omoruan, 1996) the Universities and other tertiary institutions have taken sport more seriously. The institutions probably because of large sums of money they get from students as sports fee, now allocate large sums of money for sport development in areas like building of facilities, providing equipment and logistics for sports as well as training programmes.

Universities and other tertiary institutions have gone further by creating Departments to handle sports within the general administrative set up. These offices in most cases are headed by a director or sports coach with several subordinate offices serving under him.

The offices include coaches who are specialists in various sports. Staffs from Physical and Health Education Department are sometimes made to work hand with these sports offices in the institutions where they exist (Bitrus, 2005). Given this advantage in addition to availability of facilities and equipment, there is often a greater enthusiasm for participation in sports among students of tertiary institutions particularly the universities than at

other levels. Today, the establishment of Nigerian University Games Association (NUGA), Nigerian Colleges of Education Games Association (NICEGA) and Nigerian Polytechnics Games Association (NIPOGA), has offered tremendous opportunity to students of tertiary institutions to participate in a wide variety of sports which the students welcomed with great enthusiasm, and have participated in all the sports available in the various institutions. Series of competitions have been held among these institutions with credible records of performance. The result of participation in sports by the students in the tertiary institutions is that it has produced sports men and women who have represented Nigeria at important regional and world sporting events such as West African University Games, FISU Games, All Africa Games, Commonwealth Games, the Olympic Games and a host of other national, regional and international open championships in sports (Bitrus, 2005). Through the activities of these students, Nigeria's image has been greatly enhanced in Africa. This paper therefore, examines the constraints and development of sports in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

Constraints of Sports in Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria

Most tertiary institutions do not have modern facilities for sports. Only institutions that have won the hosting right usually seize the opportunity to improve on the quality and quantity of sports facilities in their domains. The culture of maintaining structures and infrastructural facilities in Nigeria is yet to be imbibed. No sooner a competition is successfully hosted by any designated institutions, than the facilities provided are left to rot away. No maintenance culture of sports facilities in tertiary institutions.

Many tertiary institutions in Nigeria only put in place administrative structures without providing the enabling machinery for the personnel charged with the responsibility of planning, directing and organizing sporting activities to perform their functions. The sports councils in some universities do not have vehicle, office accommodations and materials, ICT equipment to keep in touch with global information and development in sport.

Moreover, it has been observed that a good number of Sport Councils in tertiary institutions are short-staffed. Highly qualified professional coaches, who usually avail themselves the opportunity of attending seminars, workshops, coaching clinics and conferences to improve on their technical skills, are unavailable.

Inadequate and low level of coaching is a hindrance to the production of national athletes from tertiary institutions. As observed by Onifade 1990, many sports do not have coaches attached to them. The number of coaches usually employed by tertiary institutions cannot go round the various sports in the institutions. The students merely go out to practice on their own. Over the decade, the situation has not changed for the better. Non-production of athletes to represent the nation is in sharp contrast to what obtains in advanced countries, where they draw the bulk or national sportsmen and women from the universities.

In spite of the provisions of the National Policy on Sports, most higher institutions in Nigeria do not set aside a day for sporting activities within a week and sport is not seen as quite indispensable for human survival. It is rather unfortunate that many lecturers, who do not have interest in sport, often regard sportsmen and women as lazy individuals who fail to take academics serious. In recent time,

some higher institutions all over the world including a few in Nigeria, tend to provide some measures of support for youth participation in sports, having realized the significance of sports as an image-making process. The support, in terms of the provision of some sports facilities and equipment can only ensure mass participation and the skillful performance in various sporting activities by youth (Akindutire, 1990).

It is a general observation that students, especially in tertiary institutions in Nigeria usually exhibit quite unconvincing apathy for participation in sports. This behavior, as earlier noted, contradicts the current practice in many advanced countries where the bulk of their national athletes are drawn from the universities. Complaints of students range from lack of personal interest to inadequate facilities; interruption of academic programme; lack of clear-cut philosophy of sport programme; frustrating efforts of some lecturers who are not interested in sports, and lack of incentives from the school authorities (Ukah, 1991).

The Development of Sport

Against the background of the continuous decline in all the segments of the sports development in Nigeria, it is important to examine the need for introducing refresher courses, among other things, for all stakeholders of sport development.

For this purpose, it is hoped that if all the people concerned with sport administration, organization, marketing, promotion through the radio, television and other media outfits, undertake the enabling refresher courses, the status of sport may improve considerably in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

Sports Facilities

Omolawon (2000) stated that the role of sports management cannot be over-stressed. This is because sporting facilities are regarded to facilitate the numerous activities involved in sports. Facilities here refer to sport arena such as fields, courts, running tracks, boxing rings, swimming pools. These facilities play vital roles in the participation and management of sports in any developed and developing community.

Awosika (1996) confirmed that facilities represent a sensitive area in all ramification of sports management. They occupy an enviable position since their provision carries with them certain standards as determined by age, weight and experience of the user. He noted that the existing sports facilities in Nigerian institutions of learning are exceedingly inadequate and substandard. Udoh (1990) reported that the problem is not that of construction of sports facilities but that of maintenance. It is the maintenance culture that is faulty. If adequate sports facilities are provided and maintained, definitely the standard of performance and participation in intramural and extramural schools sports programme would be appreciated and enjoyed by participants including the sports personnel and managers.

Ajisafe (1990) reported that modern sports programme that encourage a wide range of skills require extensive play areas. He then listed the essential facilities that should be provided for both instruction and participation purposes as follows:-

- (i) Basketball and volley pitches.
- (ii) Tennis and Badminton courts.
- (iii) Soccer pitch.
- (iv) Hockey pitch
- (v) Access to a swimming pool
- (vi) A sport field with a 400m, athletic tracks round it which

can successfully accommodate both track and field events.

Sports Equipment

Akpe (1995) reiterated that if sports programmes are to achieve any success and for effective organization, there must be availability of sports equipment and supplies in high quality and quantity. Ladani (1990) observed that equipment can be said to represent the tools that the coaches and the participants must have or use to facilitate the coaching of sports and for competitions. The provision and maintenance of good and quality equipment items by the college or university will enhance and promote healthy sports competitions. Inadequate sports equipment may force the sports personnel to regulate their sporting activities.

Agboola (1994) concluded that lack of sports equipment hinders the organization and management of sports programme in schools, colleges and universities. Adedeji (1990) found that adequate computerized equipment are very essential in order to obtain optimum performance from the athletes in the school when the athletes have been psyched to believe in equipment and stressing that effort should be made to properly equip athletes in the country. Richard (2000) stated that equipping a player with cheap, poor, filthy equipment is no different from selling a gun without telling the buyer how to use it. He advocated for the provision of good equipment for sports competitions in the schools or colleges. Ajayi (1994) supported that sports equipment and facilities should be provided in sufficient number so as to enable all students in the school to participate actively in sports programmes. He claimed that lack of adequate equipment will result in poorly planned programmes of sports

activities that are capable of providing for all round development of students.

Sports Personnel

Oduwaye (2000) stated that when considering the structure and operation of an organization, one must take cognizance of the personnel who provides the training and sees to the smooth conduct of the day-to-day affairs of the organization. He claimed further that personnel and leadership are elements around which cooperation, loyalty, sociability and many other societal traits can be developed. The working machinery of any sporting organization depends on the various individuals and groups. The machinery promotes understanding and acceptance of each other working closely together to achieve the goals of the organization (Oduwaye, 2000, Venkateswarlu, 2000). In tertiary institutions setting for instance, efficient organization of sports programme will rely essentially on cooperative, dedicated and qualified personnel. It could be asserted therefore, that the success or otherwise of any unit, department or organization in institutions depends on the quality of the staff to handle its operation. Ladani (1998) identified the tasks of a sport personnel as being summed up to include planning, organizing, staffing, directing, coordinating, reporting, budgeting and evaluating which in common parlance is referred to as “**POSDCORBE**”.

All the personnel involved in planning, organizing, supervising and directing the sporting programmes must take part in refresher courses at regular intervals. Such stakeholders include; sportsmen and women, coaches, sports organizers, sports directors, etc.

Refresher courses could be undertaken at local level, in such places as the National Institute of Sports (NIS), Sports or Soccer Academy, similarly,

advanced courses could be undertaken at international level to keep participants in sports programmes in touch with global developments. Bucher and Krotee (2002) highlighted the key personnel in the tertiary institutions sports committee which include the university sports unit and college sport office, the director of sports or head coach and other technical staff. Therefore, they should be well qualified, certified and licensed and hold membership in their respective officiating association. To ensure that only the best officials are employed, procedure should be established to register and rate officials and determine which are the best qualified.

Sports Finance

Ladani (2008) pointed out that sports consume a lot of money. He stated sport practices could not be classified as with commercial ventures and in this regard, the funding of sport should be adequate and there should be no delay in the release of funds for the running of sports programme. The finances involved in inter collegiate sports programme are raised in various ways. Sources of income for funding most school college sports programmes according to Igbangbo (1986), should include the general school or college funds, gate receipt, general organization and activity fees and some other revenues which are to be incorporated. Adedeji (1990) declared budgeting as the determination, allocation, and deployment of funds and facilities for the services of the school in accordance with the schools educational needs and objectives. It could however be seen that sports organization has become household business and capital intensive all over the world. Hence, adequate funding of sports in institutions would facilitate their success and the realization of the goals

and objectives of sports organization. In this respect, sports funding generally should not be left in the hands of government alone.

Conclusion

In spite of the limiting factors inhibiting mass participation of students in sports, it is noteworthy that a very negligible percentage (usually between 1 and 2%) of the student populace still exhibit active desire for both leisure and competitive sports in tertiary institutions. Coaches, organizers, teachers and sport administrators should have common interest in developing sport to enviable levels during the democratic dispensation in Nigeria.

Their interests can be sustained in enabling working environments, with

Recommendations

For adequate development of Sport in tertiary institutions in Nigeria, government should do the following:

1. Encourage a well-coordinated sports program in all the Nigerian schools institutions in the country.
2. Liaise, collaborate, and cooperate with the National Sports Commission, the National Governing Sports Bodies and the States Sport Councils for effective institutional Sports Organization.
3. Conduct regular training courses for sports Personnel in Nigerian institutions.
4. Encourage the information of schools sports committees for all sports in Nigeria.
5. Ensure that competitions organized by the Nigerian Universities Games (NUGA), Nigeria College of Education Games (NICEGA), Nigeria Polytechnics Games (NIPOGA) are conducted in accordance with the rules and regulations of

adequate provisions of working tools, accessibility to seminars, conferences, workshops, in-service training programmes, and enhanced salary packages. If immediate and visible results must be produced in sport, it is expected that personnel should be accorded equal status with their contemporaries in other developed societies through exposure to refresher courses at both local and international levels. Personnel must have communication skills, physical, social, and psychological competencies important in promoting good teaching, coaching, and organizing sports in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

the National Governing bodies of sports.

6. Harmonize sports activities with approved schools academic calendar.
7. Prepare sports program in order to maintain uniform sporting activities in all the schools in the country.
8. Ensure affiliation with the international school sports Federation.
9. Ensure adequate provision of sports facilities and equipment for proper participation in intramural and extramural schools activities.
10. Ensure that only the best and qualified personnel are employed for the organization and administration of institutional sports.

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