

Secondary School Physical Education Curriculum: Implications for Sports Development in Botswana

波斯尼亞中學體育課程與運動發展的探索

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Abstract

In many countries, a major rationale for curriculum design in physical education is that it promotes a physically active lifestyle among the youths and provides a basis for the development of fundamental sports skills. Access to physical education and sport is not only a fundamental human right but it also promotes health, desirable social attitudes and values. Based on the above rationale physical education was introduced to Botswana secondary schools in 1999. In this study, the Botswana secondary school physical education curriculum was analysed regarding its potential role in sports development in the country. Structured interviews were carried out with Principals of selected public secondary schools in which physical education is a teaching subject and the curriculum development unit in the Ministry of Education. Results were discussed in the following specific areas: curriculum content analysis, implementation problems, time allocation, provision of teaching and learning resources, funding, personnel, opportunities for competitive sport participation and assessment procedures. Problems affecting the teaching of physical education in Botswana were also discussed and possible solutions proffered. Finally, analysis of implications of the physical education curriculum for sport development in Botswana was presented.

Key words: Physical education, sports development, problems, children and youth, Botswana

摘要

體育運動對學童成長過程非常重要，本文旨在探討非洲波斯尼亞中學體育課程，從多方面分析體育課程與體育運動發展的關係，透過與校長及教育部長面談，了解影響體育運動發展的原因。

Introduction

Botswana, a landlocked but prosperous Southern African nation, gained independence from Britain in 1966. It has approximately 5 million inhabitants composed of several ethnic groups, most of whom speak Setswana. The Botswana economy

is mainly dependent on diamond and beef exports and in the last five years, the country is widely believed to be one of the most stable and fastest growing economies in Africa. In Botswana, education is largely based on the British system, although the education system has witnessed several phenomenal changes since independence aimed at keeping pace with realities

of contemporary times and meeting global political and economic challenges. Typical of such changes is the introduction of the 7-3-2-4 tier education system, in which primary education consists of seven years, junior and senior secondary schooling three and two years, respectively and university education, four years.

Although the need to introduce physical education into Botswana schools was emphasised by Mal Whitfield, an American Olympic medallist who visited the country in 1981 in his recommendations to the government (Masala & Kalui, 1996), several attempts at introducing the subject in the secondary school curriculum did not materialise for many years. In 1990 a physical education officer was appointed in the Ministry of Education and a panel constituted to develop a junior certificate syllabus (Rathedi, 1997). The Revised National Policy on Education (Mokgwathi, 1999) also recognised the need to include diverse subjects in the curriculum of which physical education was considered an option. Based on this recognition ten schools were identified to pilot the teaching of physical education, but practical implementation was constrained by negative attitudes, the lack of qualified teachers, equipment and facilities.

The introduction of physical education at the University of Botswana in 1993 enhanced the image of the subject and added impetus to the need to have it introduced as a curriculum offering in the schools. In 1998, the Curriculum Development Division (CDD) of the Ministry of Education in collaboration with various stakeholders developed a physical education syllabus for the secondary schools. Several pilot schools were again identified in various districts of the country, which formally started teaching the subject in 1999. The purpose of this paper is to present the statistics of schools offering physical education in Botswana and discuss problems facing implementation of physical education in the schools. Subsequently, I will analyse the physical education syllabus, present a broad outlook of competitive sports in Botswana schools and evaluate the opportunities, which exist in terms of the role of physical education in sports development in Botswana.

Methods and Procedures

Subjects

In order to address the above issues, structured interviews were conducted with representatives of the following organisations: National Department of Sports and Recreation, CDD and heads of specific community junior secondary schools (CJSS) schools piloting physical education in various districts of the country

namely, Tlokweng CJSS, Marulamantse CJSS, Sir Seretse Khama CJSS and Bokamoso CJSS.

Research Instrument

Information for the study was collected using a structured interview guide. Interview items were carefully worded to elicit necessary information regarding the status of physical education in Botswana secondary schools, problems affecting implementation of physical education in the schools and role of physical education in development of competitive sport.

Data Analysis

Information obtained were analysed and discussed qualitatively, except in a few instances where available statistics of physical education piloting schools were given. (see Table 1)

Table 1. Status of Physical Education in Botswana Schools.

From 1999 to 2001 physical education was piloted in 15 schools *.

Pilot Schools (CJSS)	Region	Number of Teachers
1. Baratani	South	2
2. Itireleng	South	2
3. Ngwaketse	South	2
4. Morama	South	2
5. Mahalapye	Central	1
6. Boipelego	Central	1
7. Sefhope	Central	2
8. Matlala	South Central	1
9. Ramotswa	South Central	1
10. Tshegetsang	South Central	2
11. Letlole	South Central	1
12. Popagano	West	1
13. Tshimologo	West	1
14. Selepa	North	1
15. Thamani	North	1

*Source: CDD, Gaborone, Botswana.

Several other schools were designated to implement physical education at projected periods and these were grouped into two, i.e. Group 1 which comprises 16 schools (January 2000-

2002) and Group 2 that consists of 32 schools (2001-2003). It is noteworthy in Table 1 that the number of physical education teachers in the schools is grossly inadequate to teach the subject across the various streams in the three-year curriculum of the CJSS considering the fact that each class was expected to undertake two 45-minute periods of physical education per week.

Major problems affecting the teaching of physical education in the schools visited were commonly reported as follows:

- Inadequate teaching and learning resources.
- Inadequately qualified teachers.
- Limited space for construction of sporting facilities.
- Poor funding of the subject compared with other teaching subjects.
- Unclear assessment procedures for physical education theory and practice.

Botswana Physical Education Syllabus

Physical education is taught in Botswana schools using the three-year secondary syllabus (CDD, 1998). It is designed to lead to the award of a junior certificate (JC). The syllabus consists of five modules, each categorised into units, i.e. Introduction to physical education, basic movements including gymnastics and dance, human body systems in relation to exercise, physical education, sports and games, and physical fitness. The modules were developed based on the principle of progression in skill development and to accommodate the varied developmental stages and abilities of students.

Assessment of students' competence in physical education activities was thought to include formative and summative evaluations of theory and practice. These comprise skills, knowledge, attitudes and values, which characterise the cognitive, emotional, social and physical development of children. The teaching of physical education should therefore promote integrated skills development in students. However, a critical evaluation of existing structures and implementation problems of physical education in the schools clearly indicate that students have limited opportunities to actively participate in competitive sports. It is necessary therefore, to look at available opportunities for school sports participation in the country and what could be done to improve the situation.

Institutional Sports in Botswana

Before independence the Bechuanaland National Appeal Fund (BENSAF) administered sport in Botswana. It was a body, which comprised parties with keen interest in sport development. In the early years of Botswana as an independent state, little emphasis was placed on sports development. Sport administration was co-ordinated under the erstwhile Ministry of Health, Education and Home Affairs. After a series of reorganisations and developments, motivated by the need to promote sports in the voluntary, the government upgraded the Sport Unit into a Department of Sport and Recreation (DSR) in April 1997 (Kgathi, 1997). The DSR based in the Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs (MLHA), is the legislative arm of the ministry whose main responsibilities are to co-ordinate sports promotion and development programs in the country. The Botswana National Sports Council (BNSC), established by Act of Parliament (CAP 60:01) of 1975, forms the executive arm in the sports delivery process and is more directly involved in sports development activities and programs in collaboration with the various National Sports Associations (NSAs).

The implementation of sports programs for the youths rests on the partnerships and linkages amongst the Department of Sport and Recreation, the BNSC, BISA, BPLSA and BTU. Youth sport programs in the country are co-ordinated at two levels nationally, that is at the secondary school level by the Botswana Institutions Sports Association (BISA) and at the tertiary institution level by the Botswana Premier League Sporting Association (BPSLA). Local authorities also have Youth Departments, which address the sporting needs of the youths. BISA organises sports competitions among over 200 community junior and senior secondary schools twice annually, i.e. track and field in the first term (January to April) and ball games in the second term (May to August). Although BISA is an affiliate of the BNSC, it is the Secondary Department of the Ministry of Education that is responsible for organising the BISA Games (Kgathi, 1997).

The BPLSA organises annual sports competitions for the tertiary institutions, comprising a University, and diploma/certificate - awarding Colleges of Education, Agriculture and Health Institutes, Vocational Training Centres, Institutes of Secretarial Studies and the Police College. The annual BPLSA competitions are staged to select athletes who would represent the country at major international and regional games such as the Federation of International University Sports (FISU) and the Confederation of Universities and Colleges in Southern

Africa (CUCSA) Games. The BPLSA organises the annual competitions in conjunction with the national sports associations in popular sports like soccer, volleyball, netball, softball, athletics, basketball, badminton and table tennis. Opportunities for youth sports participation also exist in form of intramural indoor and outdoor games held among students in the various Faculties, Department and units in the tertiary institutions. Age group competitions are held under the auspices of the various NSAs. Botswana participates regularly in Confederation of African Football (CAF)/FIFA Under 17, Under 20 and Under 23 Championships as well as the junior athletics Championships organised by African Amateur Athletics Confederation and the International Amateur Athletic Federation. The country's teams in some of these regional and continental championships recorded surprisingly commendable performances, especially in athletics and soccer. Detailed results of notable achievements in this regard have been published elsewhere (Kgathi, 1997). Both the BISA and BPLSA report directly to the BNSC.

Botswana has a youth development policy that places very little emphasis on youth sports development. In article 5.3 (p.18) of the National Youth Policy, titled the "active participation of young people in recreation, sports and leisure," the need to design a clear policy on sports, recreation and leisure in the country was emphatically stated (Republic of Botswana, 1996). However, it is not clear how the need expressed in the 15-line article could be achieved. Presently, the country lacks a national policy, which should provide broad guidelines and framework for youth sports development in the country (Kgathi, 1997). Realising the importance of a policy in facilitating sports development, the DSR organised a National Sports Policy Development Workshop in October 1997 with the aim of addressing this problem.

Discussion on Role of Physical Education in Sports Development in Botswana

Access to physical education and sport is a fundamental human right (International Council for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, Sport and Dance, i.e. ICHPER-SD, 2000). A world summit on physical education organised in Berlin reinforced the importance of physical education as a life-long process in its agenda for action for government ministers. The summit stressed the following among other values of physical education and sport (ICHPER-SD, 2000):

- Physical education is the most effective and inclusive means of providing all children, irrespective of their ability/disability, sex, age, cultural, race/ethnicity,

religious or social backgrounds with skills, attitudes, values, knowledge and understandings for life-long participation in physical activity and sport.

- Physical education is the only school subject whose primary focus is on the body, physical activity, physical development and health.
- Physical education helps children to develop the patterns of and interest in physical activity which are essential for healthy development, and which lay the foundation for adult healthy lifestyle.
- Physical education enhances social development by preparing children to cope with competition, winning, losing, and cooperation and collaboration.
- Physical education promotes desirable knowledge; skills and attitudes for future work in sport, physical activity, recreation and leisure.

In addition to the above positive values, physical education activities provide children the opportunity to develop fundamental movement skills, which are basic components of competitive sports performance. The subjects interviewed in this study unanimously concurred that physical education promotes sports development in the schools. However, available information indicates that the teaching of physical education in the schools is constrained by negative attitudes, limited resources and inadequately qualified personnel. Furthermore, limited partnerships in sports development between the Ministry of Education and the DSR exist. For many schools active sports participation is restricted to involvement in BISA-organised competitions. This makes it difficult to continuously nurture sporting talents who could represent the country at future international competitions.

Conclusion

Physical education is relatively new in Botswana secondary schools. Analysis of the JC physical education syllabus indicates that it prescribes activities, which could enhance the development of sports skills among students if taught effectively. However, despite its widely acknowledged potential to promote a physically healthy lifestyle and sports development among children and youth, resources for teaching physical education are inadequate in Botswana schools. This further limits available opportunities for sports participation as well as for identifying and nurturing sporting talents in the schools.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. The Botswana Ministry of Education should provide adequate teaching and learning resources for physical education in the schools. These should include both short- and long-term provision in the areas of qualified personnel, textbooks, equipment, facilities and supplies.
2. There should be more visible partnerships between the Ministry of Education and Department of Sports and Recreation in school sports promotion. More age group sports competitions should be organised to facilitate identification and nurturing of sporting talents. Regional and national sports competitions, such as a national sports festival should also be organised annually to provide regular exposure to young, but talented athletes to excel in various sports.
3. There is a need to educate all relevant parties concerned with sports development in schools, i.e. education officers, physical education teachers, school heads and sports coaches in the various sports associations, to mention a few. Such sport education programme will assist to inculcate the right type of attitude and values in the people responsible for sports promotion in the schools.
4. The DSR in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and other relevant stakeholders should start a school of sport excellence in a strategic location in the country. This would help to motivate young outstanding athletes, whilst concurrently providing opportunities for such athletes to further their education.

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