

THE EDUCATIONAL ROLE OF KENYA TEACHERS COLLEGES SPORTS ASSOCIATION (KTCSA)

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Abstract

Teacher training plays a major role in the overall development of Education in Kenya. This is because a teacher is a key facilitator of learning at all levels of education. One major objective of education is to produce an all round individual, an endeavor that is not possible to realize by just exposing the learner to subject based curriculum only. Sports play a major role of ensuring development of a holistic person. As such, it has been recognized as one of co-curricular activities geared at ensuring that the teacher trainee in Kenya is fully equipped with knowledge and skills in various sports that are part of Physical Education curriculum. Physical Education is a compulsory subject in primary and diploma teacher training colleges in Kenya. Often sports are seen as an avenue through which both cognitive and psychomotor skills are polished to ensure the teacher-trainee is effective and competent to teach in primary or secondary school upon graduation, and to employ the skills during athletics and ball games competitions. College sports are also used as avenues through which virtues such as integrity, discipline, honesty, and cooperation are practiced and imparted. It is also a forum where both participants and spectators are educated and sensitized on national and global issues such as HIV and AIDS, drugs and substance abuse and environmental conservation among others. The inclusion of sports for learners with special needs in Kenya teachers colleges sports competitions puts these sports at tandem with the millennium development goals and global objective on Education for All (EFA). This paper reviews the development, organization and the role played by Kenya Teachers Colleges Sports Association(KTCSA) in promoting globally accepted virtues.

Key words: *Teacher Training Colleges, Education, Sports, Competitions*

Introduction

The undisputable role of sports to an individual and society has been recognized since the ancient times. For example during the ancient Olympic games, sports was used for uniting warring Greek tribes and this helped the Greeks establish a disciplined and united army as they waged war against the Persians and Romans (Weust & Bucher, 1999). The excavation at Olympia has revealed that sports were a means through which religious ceremonies were carried out. This strongly points at the connection between ethics, morals and sport (Beashel & Taylor, 1992). Public schools during Victorian days used sports as a means to develop moral values i.e. one had to behave in a certain way to be allowed to participate in a certain game. Equally ,in England during the eighteenth century only the upper class could be allowed to hunt, shoot or fish. These games were out of reach for the ordinary people (Akpata & Gitonga, 2002).In the former Soviet Union, Hitler used Berlin Olympic Games platform to publicize the Nazi government achievements. Wilson (2009) outlines the role of sports in furthering education as follows; increasing knowledge about the world, enhancing respect for rules and regulations, increasing self-confidence, providing a way to a better life and decreasing depression. The aforementioned indicates that sport and society are not separable, and the former plays a variety of roles in the latter. Consequently, this paper tries to dissect the educational role of Kenya Teacher Colleges Sports Association (KTCSA) in Kenya. An exploration is made on role of Physical Education and sport in teacher training colleges in the enhancement of health lifestyles.

A Brief Historical Perspective on Development of College Sports in Kenya

The KTCSA sports bring together teacher trainees from 61 colleges around the country with an estimated population of 18000 teacher- trainees to compete in different Sports and Games for the last 27 years. The games are not only for competition but also for fostering acceptable professional and social attributes such as respect for one another, respect for the rule of law and the governance in authority as entrenched in the Kenya's national goals of education. These values are reflected in well thought themes adopted during KTCSA ball games and athletics competitions held annually. The championships assemble various teachers' colleges from the entire country. The colleges are grouped into seven zones each comprising of a number of colleges. Competition starts at zonal level where a single team is selected to represent that zone at national championships.

After two years of physical education training and sports participation experience, college graduates are absorbed in the labor market in public and private primary and secondary schools. Others are absorbed in the ministry of youth and sport to perform various functions such as organizing sports for the youth in the local communities. The teacher in the course of teaching is hoped to transmit the knowledge and values learned during training and participation in games to the young learner and the youth. Gitonga *et al* (2012) observe that PE teachers are expected to occupy a central position in addressing and cultivating positive lifestyles of children in primary schools in Kenya.

Teaching Positive Values through Sports

Sports have the potential to produce positive outcomes in education and non-education setting for children and youth. An individual must have personal enjoyment and personal growth, social

harmony, integration and social growth if the sport engaged in is to be evaluated as a worthwhile activity. Sports also serve as a mechanism for the transmission of values, knowledge and norms in creating social harmony. Sports can contribute to both differentiation and stratification or integration of the society (Coakley,2005). Because of its power to transmit general social values; sports help an individual in building character, discipline, strengthening work ethic and instill the ability to work as a team and provides a unifying element to generate school spirit or institutional loyalty (McPherson *et al*,1989). It is with this understanding that college sports are supported and organised to benefit as many trainees as possible with the hope that the same benefits will trickle down to the society as the teacher interacts with the learner and the youth both in formal and non-formal setting (Gitonga *et al*,2012)

After graduating from college, the professional PE and sports teacher has a duty to assist the young learners to develop values such as cooperation, respect for self and others, self discipline, hard work, fair play, integrity, emotional control and team work, and, self esteem and self confidence. However, these values can only be achieved through careful planning of sports experiences that for example does not overemphasize winning at the expense of participation for enjoyment, personal fulfillment and teamwork. Sports programs should be structured to facilitates achievement of these values and specifically by the teacher “*walking the talk*” by being a role model since children model the behavior of significant others in their lives. Furthermore, these values must be actively sought and planned for if the field of sport is to contribute to affective development because they don’t develop automatically. They occur by deliberately engaging learners in meaningful PE and sports experiences, for example by engaging the participant in suitable and appropriate situations and reinforcing positive behavior and values (Njororai,2010).

Although a teacher plays a crucial role in affective development of the young learner, he/she must first be thoroughly equipped with the competences necessary not only to impart knowledge and to teach the skills but also to promote development of values and ethical judgments. Research suggests that beliefs about PE developed prior to teaching, has relatively little impact on trainee teachers (Curtner-Smith, 2001). Other studies has also found that teacher training does not tend to challenge trainee teachers’ values and beliefs about PE and in teacher training many trainee teachers confirm rather than modify their values and beliefs (Solmon & Ashy, 1995).

The teacher is often trained to be self-confident, and have an appreciation of the value of health and personal well being through physical activity. Consequently teachers are expected to empower the young learner to take responsibility of their own lives. A teacher trainee undergoes a rigorous, intensive training program that enables him/her to develop and implement sports programs both in school and out of school setting.

The UNICEF (2009),report, recommends establishment of recreation centres at local councils to engage the youth actively to keep them from vices such as, drugs abuse, crime and violence and especially the ones who are out of school. Teachers are the most suitable labor force for these tasks because besides having the interpersonal skills, they are also equipped with the necessary organizational and sporting skills as well as experiences to effectively accomplish this crucial need. In the same report the youth has identified the ministry of youth affairs and sports role in assisting them in sporting talents so often displayed during school and college sports competitions (UNICEF,

2009). However, the youth cited lack of recreation activities as one of the reasons young people turn to negative activities including crime, violence and drug abuse (McPherson et al 1989).

Furthering Education through Sports

There are those people in the society less fortunate but talented in sports and games. Sports scholarship and funding has enabled them to climb up the education ladder. As a result of participating in sports, one gains knowledge about others, culture, customs and habits of those from other parts of the country. In the US recent data show that graduation rates of student athletes are on the increase (Sander, 2008) and one can justifiably argue that intercollegiate athletics is having a positive impact on college education considering that the average graduation rate within six years is 53% for the whole student body (Markein, 2009). Self-esteem gained through involvement in sports spills over to academic as well and such a person is motivated to give her best in one's daily tasks. Participation in games provides a way to better one's life. Teachers with experience in sports and understanding of its benefits have pushed children from poor background in situations where they have acquired sports scholarships and this further motivates them to do better academically. Gitonga (1999) findings revealed that athletes performed higher than non-athletes in academics after controlling for salient selected mediating factors of gender, age and performance in high school exams.

Research studies have reported that teacher trainees are recruited into PE due to sport training and achievement, teaching affinity, better opportunities of getting a job and encouragement by significant others (Lawson, 1983; Dewar, 1989; Chung, 2006). Lawson (1983) asserts that occupational socialization of pre-service teachers starts with the phase of acculturation which illustrates the importance of biographical experiences such as gender and parental socio-economic status.

Teachers familiar with benefits of physical activity are able to devise enjoyable activities during physical education and games. Sports and games activities are a good way to decrease feelings of anxiety and depression. The appropriate activities also elevate the mood of the participants which in turn is conducive for performing well academically in sports as well as in other areas because there is synergy that allows greater concentration. Sporting activities are undisputable conduits for frustration of any kind (Muniu, 2009)

Collegiate sports competitions venues are rotated around the seven administrative zones/provinces. This offers athletes increased knowledge about other parts of the nation and helps in spreading awareness about the culture, customs, and habits of different people. This rich exposure equips the future teacher with experiences that are transmitted to young learners during physical education and games.

Sports and Employment in Kenya.

Sports based economic activities are labor intensive and can thus absorb a number of college graduates. Employment growth in sport is beginning to be felt in Kenya and it is highly correlated to the growing demand for sport participation and physical activities. This is necessitated by the

increased awareness of the detrimental effects of lifestyles characterized by inactivity and bad feeding habits especially in urban centers and the suburbs (Kamau,2008). It is important that professional approach to sport activities is on the spot hence the need for trained workforce. The teachers college graduates undergo a compulsory intensive physical education curriculum and are therefore equipped with the basic sporting skills, which are further practiced and refined during sports and games. The teacher is therefore better placed to offer basic advice and practical assistance to individuals or group seeking the benefits of a physically active lifestyle. And even in the course of normal classroom teaching the teacher is still better placed to instill in the learner the need to be actively involved in sporting activities later in lifestyle. If this is done, the future generation will be free from the myriads of ills and conditions that are as a result of sedentary lifestyles (Kamau,2008). This education can also take place at community level and the church where the youth and adults naturally come together for other causes.

The establishment of talent academies of sports is a pointer to the realization and acceptance that sports is field not yet exploited as a source of employment. Sport is a skill-based curriculum that looks beyond transmission of knowledge but one that encourages collaborative learning based on individuals' interests and experiences encouraging creativity. The national teachers colleges sports competition are usually a hunting ground for young talents especially in athletics by foreign managers and coaches. Talented youths have acquired academic sponsorships where they are able to pursue further education and also advance their sports skills (Njororai,2012).

Sports as a Vehicle for Social Inclusion

During the eighteenth century sports were also used to determine an individual's situation. For example in England only the upper class could be allowed to hunt, shoot or fish. These games were out of reach for the ordinary people. Today sports have evolved to the point of removing such barriers such that in most sports it is only the level of skill or lack of interest that would hinder a person from participation. At college level trainees have equal opportunity in sports regardless of gender, ethnic background as well as ability.

Sports activities must provide individualized learning that focus on abilities of participants thus offering more opportunities to develop competences in activities that are meaningful and satisfying to an individual. Thus the ability of the teacher to plan activities for participants with special needs is very crucial. This is a task that can only be carried out by a trained physical education and sport individual. To equip the trainee to accomplish this task, collegiate sports have integrated individuals with special needs particularly the visually and physically challenged by introducing adapted events both in ball games and track and field athletics at zonal and national levels of competition. So far Goal ball for the visually impaired has attracted a lot of spectators, a sign of the general population support for the integration of those with various disabilities. The joy of inclusion is better represented by the response of a physically challenged participant who noted that she has received recognition in school for excelling in sporting events including sitting volley ball, javelin and has represented the country international wheelchair basketball competition(Bukhala,2009).

Students with disabilities need encouragement in order to feel a sense of belonging and accomplishment (Bukhala, 2009). He notes that students with disabilities participation in sports is

limited by factors such as lack of encouragement, lack of information, inappropriate activities, and lack of skill among others. There is no doubt that collegiate sports will go along way in narrowing this gap since trainees with disabilities experience a curriculum with appropriate activities and they are practically involved in sports competitions. They are therefore equipped to impart the same experiences to other students and to adopt an active lifestyle through recreational activities. Active lifestyle in and out of college and school by those with disabilities improves physical fitness levels and motor skills.

KTCSA also organizes the game of netball for men and rugby by women. This is in line with the millennium development goal that emphasizes offering all individuals equal opportunities to education and participation in any activity in and out of schools irrespective of gender, race, ability, or social class. A teacher equipped with sports knowledge and experience will be a role model in articulating and imparting the same to the young minds entrusted to him/her in the course of duty. The youth has expressed the need for sports celebrities as role models in the (UNICEF, 2009).

Organizing community-sporting activities can enable people from all walks of life to practice the same at the community level. All teacher trainees are prepared to cope with challenges in both social and physical environment where they live, thus we can say that sports serves an adaptation function.

Sports and Peace building in Kenya.

Sports have been a vehicle for uniting warring tribes and nations since the ancient Greece. One of the objectives of the ancient Olympics was uniting the Greek tribes because the Greeks understood that peace and unity would hold the nation together even against the outside forces. The philosophy of the modern Olympics still is to preach peace to the world nations and bringing people together to a competition as one nation. Sports has continued to build a culture of peace and tolerance by bringing people of diverse background and ethnicity together for a common goal crossing national boundaries and racial barriers to promote understanding and mutual respect (Mwisukha, Njororai & Onywera, 2003).

Sports participants are familiar with rules and regulations and their importance in sports. They are henceforth able to understand the regulations that govern education, and they are able to abide by them without questioning the authority. The Tegla Loroupe Peace Foundation uses sport to unite the pastoral communities in Kenya and between Kenya, Uganda and Southern Sudan (Rintaugu, Mwisukha & Munayi, 2011).

One of the methods used early in Kenya in the early 2008 after post election violence was to engage the internally displaced children and youth in sporting activities. After the post election violence sports competitions were organized with the hope of uniting the youths by composing teams of players from different ethnic communities. Primary and secondary schools used PE and sports not only to help students cope with trauma of post election violence but also to teach learners to work as one team for a common goal, that is, peace and unity. Indeed most of the school sports competitions from 2008 to 2012 had their themes revolving around peace and national co-existence.

The KTCSA understood the role of sports in peace building that was particularly urgent after the 2007 general elections. Indeed the organizers understood the importance of sport in national

peace and reconciliation is reflected by the theme of the 2008 inter-collegiate athletics championships, being, “compete and live together peacefully.”

Sporting Lifestyle for Healthy People

Sports are a major type of activity in which children and youth are involved and thus it is a viable method of promoting good health especially for those skilled lifetime sports such as golf, tennis and cycling. Early childhood in sports can minimize the emphasis on competition and focus on skills instructions to allow people develop habits of enjoying participation in sports at an early age. For such an individual engaging in sports even at advanced age becomes a lifestyle. There is a strong relationship between psychological well-being and regular participation in physical activity especially in areas of reduction of anxiety and depression (Muniu,2009). However, conditions to maximize these outcomes depend on personal preferences to activity type, environmental factors, level of skill and individual versus group format. Sports and games activities are a good way to decrease feelings of anxiety and depression. Appropriate activities also elevates the mood of the participants which in turn is conducive for performing well academically in sports as well as in other areas because there is peace that allows greater concentration. Sporting activities are undisputable conduits for sublimation of frustrations of any kind. Gitonga (1999) found that student-athletes performed higher than non-athletes in TTCS in Kenya. The study had recommended that sports should be emphasized at college level with the provision of sport facilities for individual sports.

One of the Kenya's' vision 2030 health sectors flag ship for 2012 is to revitalize community health centres to promote preventive health care as opposed to curative intervention (GOK, 2007). It is also hoped that this goal will be achieved by promoting individuals' adopt health lifestyle by establishing recreation and sports centres and recruiting skilled personnel to offer leadership in sports curricula. Weust and Bucher (1999) is of the view that like other programs educational endeavors, the value of sport program depends on the quality of adult leadership and the supporting environment. After all a teacher has an opportunity to interact with a majority of people of different age groups than any other professional. Programmes that encourage continued sport involvement of children for purpose of having fun, learning specific motor skills, socializing with friends, and experiencing the excitement of competition on their own terms can only be developed and implemented by qualified PE and sports teacher.

The youth has equally expressed the urgent need for the protection of the play spaces and parks from being taken over by greedy land developers (Rintaugu *et al*,2011). This concern puts spotlight on the importance the young people hold towards sport. This therefore is a good opportunity for all stake holders i.e. the ministry of youth affairs and sport, teachers, and community leaders to assist the youth meet the desire for an active lifestyle. It is in this dispensation that the schools and colleges to work closely with employer to develop customized or contract training for potential workers (UNICEF,2009)

Teachers would play a crucial role in identifying and recommending the school and college graduates with the potential/talents for further training as managers and fitness trainers in community recreation centers. Teachers are suited to teach other people skills for active lifestyle to

ward off the increasing cases of hypokinetic diseases. Health related themes are used to educate during teachers colleges games. These include 'Health is Wealth' and 'reason above passion' which have been used to educate on healthy lifestyles on HIV/AIDS respectively.

Challenges to collegiate sports in Kenya

Despite the vital role sports play in the life of an individual and society. Schools and colleges are increasingly faced with the challenge of reduced resources put into sports as they struggle to balance their budgets. Sports organization and implementation is an expensive undertaking especially due to expensive equipment. The meager and reduced number of equipment allows only a minority the opportunity to fully enjoy benefits of sports participation.

The government grant given to learning institutions is not specific. It is usually given for extracurricular activities leaving the decision of how and spend it to the to heads of colleges to decide on priority areas. Some institutional administrators still think sport is a waste of resources and time often divert the funds to other activities such as music and drama. Such decision is often motivated by ignorance of the role played by sports in the holistic education of the learners.

The burden of learning sports programs has also been shifted to the parents who more often than not due to ignorance have earmarked sport as not an area of priority for institutional money spending. Though the college sports has been conducted under high level of sports ethics and discipline, this is a big challenge to maintain the same especially as they have been attracting huge spectator crowds and as participant have learnt the increasing benefit of excelling in sports. Every participant would like to be at the top thus the organizers must ensure the conduct and officiating the games are maintained. In Kenya just like in the US ,educational abuses associated with collegiate sport include student-athletes loss of interest in academics,encouraging academically weak students to enroll in college for a few semesters before transferring to a major college, ignoring admission standards and practices,registration and grading discrepancies,lower graduation rates and individual abuses where athletes are likely to engage in deviant behavoiur (McPherson *et al*,1989;Coakley,2005).Although the above abuses are prevalent In the US ,collegiate sport has experienced the same but with lower magnitude due lack of connected with the commercial values of sport.

The way forward.

Institutions and sports organizations are turning to private enterprises such as banks, soft drink manufacturing companies and milk processing firms for sponsorship to purchase equipment, rehabilitate or establish facilities, and to assist in hosting the sports competitions. However,this is not done in a structured manner nad many a times it is done as one-off thing.There are cases of misappropriation of funds,a,lack of transparency and accountability etc.

The trained Physical education teacher at the community he/she is serving should give guidance on the possibility of engaging in sports that do not necessarily require lot of money or none at all. People of all ages can be encouraged to jog as individuals or as a group for enjoyment, and for social and physical health benefit.However,these teachers may find avenues to jump-start these programmes problematic.Organizati on and conduct of the games can be elevated by contracting

qualified officials and by college lecturers continuing to be role models to the trainees by practicing fair play at all times.

A link should be deliberately established between learning institutions and local sports federations. This will ensure that talents and values acquired in college are nurtured when trainees graduate and are absorbed into specific sports. Sports federations are in a better position to offer seminars on skills and rules of specific games since they are in touch with international federations. This would go along way in raising the standards of collegiate games. Secondly, student athletes must become more sensitive to the importance of academic achievement and less oriented to the fantasy career of professional sport. Thirdly, coaches to be aware of career and academic needs of student athletes and must establish a set of ethics for their profession. Fourthly, both coaches and student athletes must be given greater job security. The faculty and head of institutions must eliminate prejudicial attitudes and discriminatory behaviour directed toward college athletes (Njororai, 2012).

Politicians are known to using sports to mobilizing masses especially during their campaign for elections. Programmes initiated this way however are characterized by inefficiency in organization and are not sustainable. A well organized pre and post election sports programmes in and outside educational institutions can tap the potential of such games to promote social cohesion among different communities, thus averting ethnic and political polarization which are major causes of conflicts in Kenya.

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