

## CUURENT TRENDS IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION : A REVIEW

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### ABSTRACT:

The paper reviews the challenges faced by physical education in India including its low status and low priority in the school time-table. It further goes on to suggest changes in physical education curriculum including use of technology of various forms and kinds to enhance students' social, emotional, mental and physical well-being. It makes recommendations to use audio and video recording, YouTube, mobile learning etc. for improving student-learning in physical education.

The importance of physical education has never been emphasised more than it is today. It is widely recognised that physical education (PE) and sports is relevant and important in developing an active and healthy lifestyle and the solution to rising obesity rates worldwide. Although in most countries, physical education is part of the school curriculum, lessons are not given, thus leading to a reduced experience of physical activity for children and youth. The practice of a physically active lifestyle in combination with healthy nutrition, however, needs to be started in early childhood. Therefore, ensuring that all children engage in regular physical activity is crucial, and the schools are the only place where all children can be reached. Quality Physical Education is the most effective and inclusive means of providing all children, whatever their ability/disability, sex, age, cultural, race/ethnicity, religious or social background, with the skills, attitudes, values, knowledge and understanding for lifelong participation in physical activity and sport and is the only school subject whose primary focus is on the body, physical activity, physical development and health. The present study will identify the current trends, issues and challenges in PE and sports based on which future challenges will be addressed.

### **Challenges Faced by Physical Education in India :**

- Physical education is perceived to be a low priority subject because to many people it does not contribute directly or substantially to a country's economy. This has given rise to a situation where physical education is sidelined to include other 'more important' subjects.
- Priority subjects that lead to jobs and thereby to economic growth are allocated a longer teaching time and subjects like physical education struggle to retain timeslots of thirty five to seventy minutes per week in the school timetable.
- Often the schools run two shifts – morning and afternoon – to cater to large enrolments and insufficient classrooms and facilities. Limited space and equipment have serious implications for physical education teaching and sports co-curriculum, with overcrowded classes of eighty or more students each. This leads to the allocation of available classrooms to priority subjects, resulting in physical education and sports classes being assigned to other unused areas and facilities indoors and outdoors.
- It is noted that the amount of time devoted to physical education has diminished in the school curriculum throughout the world.
- Our country's financial resources and budget also have a bearing on the length of teacher training programmes, and therefore the quality of teachers. In many developing countries, a college of teacher education is usually only two years long, and physical education teachers again do not feature very high in terms of priority to ensure longer and better teacher training programmes.
- Physical education is often not being delivered or delivered without quality, insufficient time allocation, lack of competent qualified and/or inadequately trained teachers, inadequate provision of facilities and equipment and teaching materials, large class sizes.
- Physical educators have failed to ensure that the linkage between their efforts in the classroom and the health and cognitive development of their students. The responsibility rests directly on the shoulders of physical educators to ensure that the importance of their subject matter is understood and embraced as a part of their schools' overall curriculum.

Additional benefits have also been observed for children who participate in regular physicaleducation as follows :

- Enhanced self-esteem and self-concept.
- Reduced levels of anxiety and stress.
- Academic performances equal to or better than those receiving more academiccurriculum time and less physical education.
- More positive attitudes about school, physical activity, and themselves which lead to improved attendance and reduced drop-out rates.
- A more positive school climate.
- Children are less aggressive and experience fewer discipline problems.
- A reduced likelihood to smoke, use drugs or consume alcohol.

Physical education leads to physical, mental, social and emotional well-being.

1. Physical Aspect : It improves our health and keeps blood pressure, blood sugar, cholesterol under control, releases hormones that control stress.
2. Mental Aspect : It boosts morale, reduces stress and anxiety.
3. Social Aspect : It develops a team spirit and gives social recognition.
4. Emotional Aspect : It controls depression and anger as well as enhances self esteem.

**Recommendations :** This push towards health education is beginning in the intermediate level, including lessons on bullying, self-esteem and stress and anger management. Incorporating local indigenous knowledge into physical education can lead to many meaningful experiences and a way of learning about other cultures. Yoga is one such example. Lezim is another such example.

#### A. Physical Education Curriculum

The aim of physical education is to develop physical competence so that all children are able to move efficiently, effectively and safely and understand what they are doing. The outcome of physical education is physical literacy which, along with numeracy and literacy, is the crucial foundation for learners to access the whole range of competences and experiences.

Today, more than ever, the physical education curriculum needs to be linked to the overall well-being of children and youth as they matriculate through the curriculum. As has been noted, lessons learned at an early age carry into adult life. Furthermore, the importance of physical activity as a way of creating greater attentiveness in the classroom has not been recognized. The opportunity for schools to provide Brain Breaks, which stimulate students and reenergize their efforts, has largely been ignored in the overall curriculum. Physical education

trends have developed recently to incorporate a greater variety of activities besides typical sports. Usually, at school level and junior college level, one hour has been set aside for physical education. On the other hand, at senior college level, sports participation has been emphasized rather than physical education.

Physical education curriculum today needs to incorporate the following :

- Its purpose needs to be more focused on active living, fitness and healthy lifestyles.
- The pedagogies need to transmit more knowledge-based lessons to students.
- Local indigenous activities and games need to be incorporated so as to enable students to identify with their own cultures and strengthen the development of a healthy image and self-confidence.
- Ensure equitable opportunities and learning experiences for all, including girls with disabilities.
- Use of technology should be an important part of the curriculum.

**B. A Quality Physical Education Programme needs to include:**

- Curricular instruction for all secondary school students for a minimum of 150 minutes per week.
- Qualified, enthusiastic teachers.
- Well planned lessons incorporating a wide range of activities.
- A high level of participation by all students in each class.
- An emphasis on fun, enjoyment, success, fair play, self-fulfilment and personal health.
- Appropriate activities for the age and stage of each student.
- Activities which enhance cardiovascular systems, muscular strength, endurance and flexibility.
- A participation based intramural program.
- Creative and safe use of facilities and equipment.

**C. Use of Technology in Physical Education :** New technology in physical education is playing a big role in classes in the developed countries. It could also be adopted in Indian schools. One of the most affordable and effective is a simple video recorder. With the use of a video recorder, students can see the mistakes they are making in things such as a throwing motion or swinging form. Studies show that students find this more effective than having someone try to explain what they are doing wrong and then trying to rectify it. Educators also found the use of other technologies such as pedometers and heart rate monitors very successful, using them to make step and heart rate goals for students. Using heart rate monitors in physical education is important because it helps students understand how exercise affects their body.

Other technologies that can be used in a physical education setting would include video projectors, GPS and even gaming systems. Projectors can be used to show students things such as proper form or how to play certain games. GPS systems can be used to get students active in an outdoor setting and active exer-games can be used by teachers to show students a good way to stay fit in and out of the classroom setting. Another type of technology that is commonly used in physical education is the use of pedometers. Pedometers do not necessarily track how far a person is going, but it lets them know the number of steps they are making. It will let them know how many steps on average they are making

The rapid development of technology over the past twenty five years has provided many novel and imaginative ways for educators to present instructional materials effectively. Technology such as projection systems, smart/interactive white boards and wireless transmission (WiFi and Bluetooth) allow for the display and transfer of information far beyond the traditional chalkboard. Teachers can enrich physical education instruction by using those tools, provided that set-up and/or implementation does not diminish student activity time. Motion-analysis software and digital video make student performance evaluation easier, thereby enhancing teacher, peer and individual assessment. Many pieces of technology, such as heart rate monitors, pedometers and active games, have the ability to track performance, allowing students to document and monitor their development.

Some of the other technology that can be used to make instruction in physical education more effective include the following :

1. iPod Touch: Sets of these units can become enormously popular in the classroom. There are many applications and functions that lend themselves to different topics, such as geocaching for orientation of activities and games that test reaction time.
2. Xbox Kinect: With this videogame peripheral, you are not only required to use your entire body as the controller but just one set-up can be effective for a whole class. For example, games such as Dance Central and Zumba Fitness are great for setting up a dance unit; you can calibrate the Kinect to one student, who then stands at the front of the class and acts as the lead dancer for everyone else. Everyone is fully involved in the activity, which can incorporate many different styles of dance.
3. Edmodo: This is an e-learning platform, which has only recently been introduced to education. Each class has its own group and students are beginning to submit class work and homework tasks via Edmodo. Web 2.0 tools such as aMap, YouTube and Jigsaw Planet embed strikingly. Students are also able to produce work on sites such as Photopeach, Photovisi and

Popplet, and then add their link to a post. This enables easy sharing in class and opportunities for peer review. Edmodo is the education equivalent of Facebook, allowing teachers to instantly create a personalised social network with their students. Once registered, students can enter a unique class access code given to them by their teachers, which will then enable students to easily share resources with each other. Edmodo will handle all types of media from images, documents, videos and website URLs making it a fantastic place to develop a rich tapestry of discussion around health related concepts.

4. Twitter is a recent addition to the social networking world is twitter. The basic idea behind the popular platform is the sharing of information in a maximum of 140 characters. Without an intended focus, twitter becomes like any form of free speech in that the majority of what is spoken about is complete nonsense. With the click of a button, teachers can connect with those from all over the world, who are willing to share their lessons and ideas. The recent influx of technology in schools has brought about a growth in the number of physical education teachers all of which are vying for the latest resources and innovative tools. One of the applications of twitter in a practical class includes injured students tweeting the results and key moments of games in the classroom, creating a brilliant micro blog snapshot of the years learning.

5. Students could contribute to the wider world through video coaching with pocket cameras by teaching a game or skill via video to another person.

6. Mobile learning involves students ringing a local phone number and leaving a voice message. Once they hang up, the message is saved and made available at a nominated online space, effectively leaving a trail of recordings of student experiences. As students return to the classroom, they can listen to their recordings, which then helps them to visualise and explore the theoretical concepts behind the field trip. Imagine a physical education teacher having students phonecast their responses to theoretical concepts such as biomechanics, physiology and so on. This not only allows sharing by the very nature of recording, but students are also forced to consider and understand the concepts in a much deeper way.

7. The higher level of podcast is the vodcast which involves producing a video version known as a vodcast. Utilise your video camera or webcam to record you explaining a concept or instructions for an activity. You can then share these with your students via a USB or place them on your school/college's intranet and upload your lesson videos to video-hosting websites such as YouTube and give your students the ability to pause, rewind and fast forward your teaching.

However, physical educators must deliberate on the reliability and validity of such devices when selecting the technologies to use. Students also should be well versed in using the devices, to prevent an increase in management time and a decrease in student activity levels. Implementing technology appropriately into physical education can enhance teaching and learning and contribute to providing a quality physical education program. Technology can aid in content presentation and can help students becoming physically educated individuals who have the knowledge, skills and confidence to enjoy a lifetime of physical activity

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