

Sports Integration— Cross Curricular Pedagogical Approach in Schools A Context with Reference to National Education Policy of India (NEP 2020)

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Abstract

Sports carry a pivotal role in our educational system especially in school education. Majority of our administrators, academicians, students' community and parents haven't taken sports as a relevant subject to be taken care of in our educational system even though it has got umpteen human qualities to mould our students. The review paper explores the benefits and scientific evidence that has been gathered from the research studies and various educational policies of India along with a special reference to National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. The research reviews suggest that sports activities can foster holistic development by promoting cognitive, affective and psychomotor qualities among school students. Human qualities like self confidence, resilience, leadership, decision making, self esteem, social skills, and the ability to cope with failure and victory can be acquired through organised sports programmes. NEP 2020 paved the way for the administrators, policy makers and the academicians to implement quality physical education programme as an important pedagogical tool in school curriculum towards holistic development of students. Implementation of quality physical education in line with NEP 2020 will provide enormous benefits to students.

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INTRODUCTION

National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 states that the current learning outcome and the desired learning outcome of students have a wide difference. It has to be narrowed down through massive educational reforms.

Principles of NEP 2020 states, “The purpose of the education system is to develop good human beings capable of rational thought and action, possessing compassion and empathy, courage and resilience, scientific temper and creative imagination with sound ethical moorings and values. It aims at producing engaging repetitive and contributing citizens for building an equitable, inclusive, and plural society as envisaged by our Constitution” (NEP 2020).

The importance of sports and physical education in school curriculum has already been emphasised even during the Kothari Commission report published in 1964–66. One major change in NEP 2020 is the massive shift of physical education and sports as a curricular subject from the domain of co-curricular subjects. This change is going to reflect in the implementation of Physical Education (PE) in schools. At present, in majority of schools PE is considered more as a leisure activity rather than focusing on the well-being of students. As a result, students are not learning about various health measures and do not know

the importance of physical activity. With the implementation of NEP 2020, physical education teachers have to grade students based on the theoretical and practical aspects of Health and Physical Education (HPE). This means that now all students will be screened for HPE and they will receive quality physical education.

NEP 2020 speaks about integrating physical education throughout the education process. It has identified physical education as a key component in the holistic development of students. Physical education through organised physical activities and sports, aims to develop a student holistically. In very few schools, sports and games are organised periodically at present. As per the present policy, institutions have to organise sports and games periodically. It will pave way for more students to take part in sports and remain active. Students will also develop various life skills learned through active participation in sports. “The aim of education will not only be cognitive development but also building character and creating holistic and well-rounded individuals equipped with the key 21st century skills” (NEP 2020). In formal physical education programmes, the teacher focuses on basic motor skills, games, sports, as well as development of physical fitness. These programmes often include cognitive and emotional development goals (Despina Kaittani et al., 2017). We can confidently

say that quality physical education will improve general outlook and character of our students.

In this paper, authors have made an effort to summarise the educational reforms recommended by NEP 2020 connected with physical education and also the present state of PE in India. We are also providing related review of research substantiating the effects of quality PE programmes in schools and also the challenges and remedies while incorporating the desired reforms.

NEP 2020 key inputs related to Physical Education and present scenario

“Over 85 per cent of a child’s cumulative brain development occurs prior to the age of 6, indicating the critical importance of appropriate care and stimulation of the brain in the early years in order to ensure healthy brain development and growth. The policy has emphasised that the Foundational Stage will consist of five years of flexible, multilevel, play/activity-based learning” (NEP 2020).

“In all stages, experiential learning will be adopted, including hands-on learning, arts-integrated and sports-integrated education. Sports-integration is another cross-curricular pedagogical approach that utilizes physical activities including indigenous sports, in pedagogical practices to help in developing skills such as collaboration, self-initiative, self-direction, self-discipline,

teamwork, responsibility, citizenship, etc. Sports-integrated learning will be undertaken in classroom transactions to help students adopt fitness as a lifelong attitude and to achieve the related life skills along with the levels of fitness as envisaged in the Fit India Movement. The need to integrate sports in education is well recognised as it serves to foster holistic development by promoting physical and psychological well-being while also enhancing cognitive abilities” (NEP, 2020).

At present, in elementary level, the teaching is not play-oriented. Activity-oriented learning ensures total participation from students. Teaching various aspects through play makes the learning permanent. It also gives children physical and mental situation. A thorough exercise for body and mind. This physical activity oriented approach will make them physically and mentally fit healthy. This approach also sows in children a liking for physical activity which is beneficial in the long run.

“NEP has recommended curricular Integration of essential Subjects, Skills, and Capacities. While students must have a large amount of flexibility in choosing their individual curricula, certain subjects, skills, and capacities should be learned by all students to become good, successful, innovative, adaptable, and productive human beings in today’s rapidly changing world. The policy has prioritised health and

nutrition; physical education, fitness, wellness, and sports as compulsory areas where students need to develop their expertise” (NEP, 2020).

Physical education in schools today is not compulsory. As a result, parents, teachers and even students are less bothered about this subject. Many lifestyle related diseases have already emerged among school students. Making PE compulsory will instill in the students’ minds the importance and urgency of inculcating physical activity during their school hours and attract all students towards it.

Initiativeness, empathy, courage, resilience, and various other life skills are learned substantially through organised sports and games.

“The policy has also emphasised more on indigenous sports and games rooted in the Indian and local geographic context. It is believed that ideas, abstractions, and creativity will indeed best flourish when learning is thus rooted. This will ensure that education is maximally relatable, relevant, interesting, and effective for our students” (NEP 2020).

Indigenous sports which is an offshoot of our culture gets very little attention in the modern day. Making space for indigenous sports through NEP 2020 will ensure that these sports flourish in our institutions. These sports are the reflection of our culture, and have a significant place in generating values and fitness aspects.

“To make education wholesome NEP proposes a holistic progress card. 360-degree, multidimensional report that reflects in great detail the progress as well as the uniqueness of each learner in the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains” (NEP 2020).

Psychomotor development includes physical movement, coordination and use of motor skill areas. Development of these skills requires practice and is measured in terms of speed, precision, distance, procedures or techniques in execution. “Healthy body leads to healthy mind” and physical activity can support intellectual development in children (Synder E. and Spreitzer E. 1977).

Grading of psychomotor domain is going to give a huge impetus to physical activity. World Health Organisation (WHO) recommends one hour of physical activity for school children. Now this can be attained in school itself. This will ensure active school campuses.

“To identify and strengthen student’s talents, teachers will be encouraged to set up various topic-based and project-based clubs and circles. It will help students to identify their talents and teachers offer various ways to enrich it. Among other circles sports, chess, yoga, health and well being clubs is mentioned” (NEP 2020).

Students have different abilities. Presence of various sports clubs

will ensure that talents and interest of students are appreciated. Now, some schools have sports clubs based on resources and interests of the teacher. This is going to change and schools will have more options. It will help identify talents in different sports.

“To ensure an adequate number of teachers across subjects—particularly in subjects such as art, physical education, vocational education, and languages—teachers could be recruited to a school or school complex and the sharing of teachers across schools could be considered in accordance with the grouping of schools adopted by State/UT governments” (NEP 2020).

At present, in majority of schools, PE teachers are not recruited. As a result, there is no quality physical education teaching. Other subject teachers handle PE classes mostly by, leaving students free or giving them a ball to play by themselves. To get real benefits, expertise of the PE teacher must be provided and sports should be organised with specific learning outcomes.

“Sports and recreational resources will be provided to all schools to ensure that teachers and students, including children of all genders and children with disabilities, receive a safe, inclusive, and effective learning environment and are comfortable and inspired to teach and learn in their schools” (NEP 2020).

Lack of sports equipment is a major concern in our schools today. Distribution of sports equipment will go a long way in attracting students towards sports and giving them a meaningful participation.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

In this section we provide the scientific backing of the positive effects of physical education. As per the research study on the topic, ‘Integration of Sports and Education Based on the Characteristics of the Times’, the researcher found the below mentioned life skills getting developed with the implementation of sports education.

- Personal confidence
- Decision making
- Resilience
- Team building
- Interpersonal skills
- Assiduous attitude
- Conflict resolution skills
- Dealing with success and failure
- Goal setting
- Coping with stressful situation
- Intrapersonal skills

Teenagers are the hope of the country and the nation. In the new era, making full use of the historical opportunity of deepening the integration of sports and education, to vigorously promote the healthy growth and overall progress of young people is an important historical mission. The integration of sports and

education is an important conceptual change, and strategic task in the transformation and development of sports and education. A realisation of the modernisation of education and the strategy of strengthening the country in sports, resolved to a new concept of promoting the all-round development of young people and a set of actions for government departments and for all sectors of society, the guidelines are of great significance (Weiping Lin, 2021).

NEP 2020 also aims to develop various life skills necessary for the 21st century through physical education and sports as one of its prominent means.

A study conducted in Sweden found that the role of sports in society has become increasingly important over the years. Physical activity and exercise have significant positive effects in preventing or alleviating mental illness, including depressive symptoms and anxiety or stress related diseases (Christer, Malm, 2019).

In a study done on low socio-economic group, it was found that social inequity in health is apparent in mental, social and physical aspects. One important factor in lowering the risk of many Non Communicable Diseases (NCDs) while improving mental health is the promotion of physical activity (PA). They found that lowering the risk of many NCDs and improving mental health is best achieved through

setting-based programmes that facilitate long-term PA behaviour changes in children and adolescents living in marginalised neighborhoods. Empirical evidence indicates that extrinsic motives for participating in physical activities such as, improving health are insufficient when long-term participation is the goal. Therefore, activities that aim to create more intrinsic and autonomous motivations by building on more broad and positive understandings of health and participation should be included. They advocated that sports-based recreation (SR) holds several advantages. If implemented well, SR has the potential to be a health-promoting activity that is meaningful and motivating, and that it involves physiological health-promoting aspects, a social aspect, positive relations with others, and positive experiences of oneself (Elsborg, et al., 2019).

Implementation Challenges

Implementation of NEP 2020 will be a historical step in reforming education. However, there are challenges which need to be addressed.

With the shift of physical education from cocurricular to curricular subject, a quality PE curriculum needs to be developed throughout the country. Latest innovations, research studies and teaching methodologies require to be implemented in the curriculum.

Nature and work of physical education teacher also demands a change. The present PE teachers needs to be updated and refresher courses should be made available to them.

According to U-DISE 2016–17 data, nearly 28 per cent of India's public primary schools and 14.8 per cent of India's upper primary schools have less than 30 students. Teachers often teach multiple grades at a time, and teach multiple subjects, including subjects in which they may have no prior background; key areas such as music, arts, and sports are too often simply not taught; and physical resources, such as, lab and sports equipment and library books, are simply not available across schools. NEP has recommended grouping of schools to solve this issue (NEP 2020). Grouping of schools may invite new problems like increased workload, issues in service conditions, coordination issues, resistance from parents, issues with sharing resources, and so on.

There is also an increasing concern by some parents that while sports has its space. It shouldn't interfere with the real business of schooling which many believe to be academic achievement and examination results (Richard Bailey, 2006). Parent's convictions and belief reflects in the attitude of children towards sports and it needs to be addressed. Parents should be made aware about the importance of PE in schools. Awareness classes should

be held calling experts in the field to make parents and significant others understand the importance of sports and games.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

We recommend all the State Councils of Educational Research and Training (SCERT) institutes to promote and implement NEP 2020 at the earliest to strengthen sports and physical education programmes in school education system with the support of National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), National Curriculum Framework (NCF), as well as with the support of PM-SHRI (Prime Ministers Schools for Rising India) Scheme which is recently approved by the Union cabinet on 7 September 2022.

Qualified physical education teachers must be appointed at primary, upper primary, high school and higher secondary level for the deliverance of Quality Physical Education (QPE) classes.

The NEP 2020 envisions the implementation and execution of holistic development of students in school education system through a cross curricular pedagogical approach. In the case of Sports and Physical education, NEP 2020 categorically emphasises the relevance of sports for holistic development by highlighting the salient features, namely collaboration, self initiative, self direction, self discipline, team work, responsibility, citizenship,

self confidence and wellness, etc. all levels. Special emphasis must be given at the ground level so that the policy gets implemented in total.

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