



## Integrating physical education into the framework of NEP 2020

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### Abstract

A chorus of Indian educationists has recently expressed a powerful conviction: that the nation can ascend to the position of a global superpower on the back of a transformative new education system. This optimism stems from the recently unveiled National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, a landmark initiative crafted through a comprehensive consultative process. The NEP's introduction has ignited a nationwide discourse on the future of education in India.

As Mahatma Gandhi eloquently stated, true education fosters the holistic and excellent development of the child's and adult's body, mind, and soul. Similarly, Swami Vivekananda envisioned education as the catalyst that unlocks the inherent perfection within each individual. These profound philosophies serve as a guiding light for the NEP, which was formulated specifically to address the shortcomings identified in the 1986 Education Policy.

The NEP recognizes the limitations of an education solely focused on rote learning of prescribed subjects. For students to flourish holistically, the policy advocates for the integration of diverse fields such as Arts, Physical Education, Vocational Education, and preparation for competitive examinations. This comprehensive approach aims to equip students with a well-rounded skillset that empowers them to thrive in an ever-evolving world.

To achieve this ambitious vision, the NEP underscores the critical need for a nationwide effort to recruit qualified teachers across all states and union territories. The policy emphasizes the importance of implementing a meritocratic teacher recruitment process that prioritizes quality. This focus on teacher development reflects the NEP's commitment to fostering a dynamic school environment that nurtures both educators and students, enabling them to reach their full potential.

The present research paper delves into this transformative vision, specifically exploring the role of Physical Education within the framework of the NEP 2020. It examines the policy's provisions for integrating physical activity into the curriculum, with the ultimate goal of promoting student health, well-being, and overall development.

**Keywords:** National education policy (2020), physical education, sports, health

### Introduction

At the heart of any discussion on education lies the fundamental question: what is education itself? Beyond the literal definition of teaching and learning, education takes on a broader social role. It becomes a continuous process woven into the fabric of society, serving a distinct purpose in each context. Through this process, individuals cultivate their inherent potential, refine their behavior, and ultimately transform into well-equipped citizens with a growing knowledge base and honed skills.

The recent announcement of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 marks a significant shift, reflected in the renaming of the Ministry of Manpower to the Ministry of Education. This policy ushers in a wave of transformative reforms for both school and higher education. Among its ambitious goals are achieving 100% school enrollment by 2030 and universalizing education from pre-school to secondary level.

The NEP 2020 recognizes the pivotal role of teachers in delivering quality education. To unlock each student's unique potential, the policy emphasizes the need for sensitive and perceptive teachers who collaborate with parents. This fosters a holistic learning environment that nurtures both academic and non-academic abilities.

Higher education offers an exciting realm of possibilities, acting as a powerful tool for individual and societal liberation from disadvantage. Therefore, ensuring equitable access to high-quality educational opportunities becomes a top priority. Teachers, as architects of young minds, shape the future of our nation. Students and educators alike

contribute to building a prosperous society. Historically, meritorious students and qualified teachers have consistently made outstanding contributions due to their dedication.

Ancient civilizations held teachers in high esteem, recognizing their responsibility to impart knowledge, skills, and ethical values. The NEP 2020 echoes this sentiment by prioritizing teacher education, recruitment, placement, service conditions, and professional rights. By addressing these aspects, the policy aims to elevate the quality of education and reignite teachers' enthusiasm. This, in turn, will cultivate a renewed sense of respect for educators within the student body, mirroring the high standards of ancient civilizations.

To empower both teachers and students and propel our nation forward, a sense of motivation is crucial. For centuries, the lack of quality educational institutions in rural areas has left young generations behind. The NEP 2020 addresses this disparity by focusing on B.Ed. programs. Merit-based scholarships and a provision for guaranteed local employment upon graduation (particularly for female students) aim to attract talented individuals to become role models and educators within their communities. Furthermore, incentives like local accommodation encourage excellent teachers to serve in rural and understaffed areas, promoting stability and fostering positive relationships between teachers and students. Frequent teacher transfers disrupt the learning environment, leading to the government's commitment to minimize such occurrences.

The NEP 2020 emphasizes a robust Teacher Eligibility Test (TET) for selecting teachers through rigorous competitive examinations. Furthermore, conducting interviews in local languages ensures a more accurate assessment of a candidate's capabilities. This focus on vernacular communication empowers teachers to effectively connect with their students.

The National Education Policy 2020 represents a comprehensive approach to revamping India's education system. By prioritizing both access and quality, and recognizing the vital role of teachers, the NEP paves the way for a brighter future where education empowers all.

### **The Nep 2020: A Paradigm Shift for Holistic Development and Physical Wellbeing in India**

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 marks a refreshing departure from the traditional emphasis on rote learning and academic achievement. This paradigm shift elevates the significance of co-curricular activities, including sports, to an unprecedented level. However, a crucial question lingers: how will the NEP 2020 reshape the landscape of Indian sports?

Historically, pursuing a career in sports hasn't garnered widespread societal support, particularly among Indian parents. This unfortunate reality has tragically stifled the potential of countless budding talents before they could flourish. The detrimental effects of physical inactivity are well-documented and pose a significant public health threat across all age groups. The lack of regular exercise increases the risk of a multitude of chronic conditions, ranging from heart disease and cancers to diabetes, hypertension, and mental health issues like anxiety and depression. Emerging research paints a concerning picture, suggesting that physical inactivity's global health burden, in terms of mortality, rivals that of cigarette smoking.

The widespread prevalence and substantial health risks associated with physical inactivity have prompted a global movement advocating for increased physical activity across all lifespans. The Institute of Medicine's Committee on Physical Activity and Physical Education in the School Environment exemplifies this movement. Established to address the critical need for integrating physical activity into the school environment, the committee's mission is multifaceted. It encompasses a comprehensive review of the current state of physical activity and physical education within schools, considering all stages – before, during, and after school hours. Additionally, it delves into the profound impact of physical activity and physical education on children and adolescents' short- and long-term physical, cognitive, and psychosocial health and development.

India's cultural heritage is a vibrant tapestry, woven with a myriad of languages, dialects, and artistic expressions. From its diverse classical dance and music forms to its rich traditions of folk arts, crafts, and culinary delights, India boasts a cultural treasure trove. Preserving and enriching these cultural treasures is not only a responsibility but also an opportunity to innovate within the education system. For instance, integrating these cultural expressions into a liberal arts education can foster creativity and originality among students, as famously emphasized by Albert Einstein when he urged, "Bear in mind that the knowledge you acquire in your schools is the result of generations past, entrusted to you as your heritage. Embrace it, understand it, build upon it, and pass it faithfully to your children, for in this way

mortals achieve eternity through the enduring legacy we create together."

Physical activity has been inextricably linked to human survival and well-being since time immemorial. Early humans engaged in fundamental forms of movement, such as running, jumping, and throwing, as a means of existence. Charles Darwin's notion of the "struggle for existence" permeated all facets of life, emphasizing the primal significance of physical exertion. However, with modernization and technological advancements, the importance of physical conditioning has dwindled, leading to a rise in sedentary lifestyles and associated health issues. In today's era, marked by global health challenges, the value of physical activity, especially among schoolchildren, becomes even more evident. Physical education emerges as a cornerstone of modern education, nurturing physical fitness, resilience, and overall well-being. By prioritizing mandatory physical education in schools, we not only promote good health but also equip children with the tools to combat diseases and lead fulfilling lives.

Physical education constitutes a formal subject within school curricula, based on standards-based programs designed to foster motor skills, knowledge, and behaviors conducive to healthy living. It serves as a platform for imparting scientific principles and methods of physical activity, tailored to the developmental needs of school-aged children.

The NEP 2020 envisions a comprehensive overhaul of the education system, catering to the diverse needs of its citizens while upholding core values and traditions. It aspires to create a system aligned with the aspirations of 21st-century education while remaining rooted in India's cultural ethos. Anchored in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which recognizes education as a fundamental right, this vision advocates for free and compulsory education to ensure the holistic development of individuals and the promotion of human rights and freedoms.

### **Objectives of physical education**

Physical education transcends the realm of mere physical activity. It serves as a cornerstone for the holistic development of students, encompassing not only their physical well-being but also their mental, social, and emotional spheres.

At its core, physical education fosters well-rounded individuals. It cultivates not just a robust physique but also a sharp intellect. Through engaging physical activities, students develop critical thinking skills, strategic planning, and problem-solving abilities. This cognitive development prepares them to become thoughtful contributors to society, equipped to adapt and thrive in an ever-changing world.

Physical education is a powerful tool for promoting healthy lifestyles. It instills in students a deep understanding of the interconnectedness between physical well-being and mental clarity. The adage "a healthy mind in a healthy body" rings true in this context. By engaging in physical activity, students learn the importance of healthy habits, laying the foundation for a lifetime of physical and mental wellness.

Furthermore, physical education fosters emotional development. It provides a safe and structured space for students to manage their emotions, build self-confidence, and develop healthy coping mechanisms. Through teamwork and collaborative games, students learn valuable

lessons in communication, respect, and empathy, shaping them into well-adjusted individuals.

Finally, physical education promotes muscular strength and endurance, enabling students to remain active and energetic. This not only enhances their physical capabilities but also contributes to a sense of overall well-being and a zest for life.

### **The Transformation of Physical Education in Schools: From Hygiene to Holistic Development**

The early 19th century witnessed the dawn of physical education as a formal school subject, initially taking the form of German and Swedish gymnastics. These early iterations laid the foundation for the recognition of physical activity's positive impact on human health. However, the emphasis in the early 20th century remained largely on personal hygiene and basic exercise for physical well-being. Educationist Thomas Wood challenged this narrow focus, arguing that solely prioritizing health limited the holistic development of the child. His visionary perspective led the educational community to adopt a more comprehensive approach to physical education. This shift saw the incorporation of fundamental movement skills and basic sports into the core curriculum, fostering a well-rounded learning experience.

Over the past 15 years, physical education has undergone a significant evolution once more. The focus has broadened to encompass the connections between physical activity, its various outcomes (including its relationship to subjects like physics and health), and the science of healthy living. This contemporary approach equips students with the skills necessary to lead active and fulfilling lives. Sallis and McKenzie (1991) made a seminal contribution by defining physical education as a "holistic but physically active approach." This definition emphasizes the importance of integrating social-cognitive skills and physical abilities within a framework of movement-based learning. They further posit two key goals: 1) preparing students for a lifetime of physical activity, and 2) facilitating physical activity within the physical education curriculum itself. These goals highlight the long-term benefits of a robust physical education program, empowering students to carry healthy habits into adulthood.

### **Building A Robust Education System: Standards and Criteria for Teachers**

To foster an effective and transparent approach to teacher recruitment and promotion, the NEP advocates for a system based on periodic performance appraisals. This ensures a meritocratic process that recognizes and rewards excellence in teaching. Furthermore, the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) will develop National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST) by 2022. These standards will provide a clear framework for teacher development and ensure consistency in the quality of educators across the nation.

The NEP also emphasizes the importance of a strong teacher education curriculum. In collaboration with the NCERT, the NCTE will develop a National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (NCFTE). This framework will serve as a blueprint for equipping aspiring teachers with the necessary knowledge, skills, and pedagogical approaches to excel in the classroom. By 2030, a four-year integrated B.Ed. degree will become the minimum qualification for

teaching. This mandatory requirement signifies the government's commitment to elevating the professional standards of educators across the country.

### **Higher Education Under the Nep 2020: Expanding Access and Fostering Flexibility**

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 charts an ambitious course for higher education in India. A central tenet is the significant augmentation of the Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER). The policy aims to propel the GER from 26.3% (recorded in 2018) to a remarkable 50%. This translates to the creation of an additional 3.5 crore new student placements within higher education institutions. This expansion has the potential to democratize access to higher education, empowering a wider segment of the population to pursue academic pursuits.

The NEP 2020 ushers in a paradigm shift with the adoption of a multiple entry and exit system within undergraduate programs. This innovative approach affords students enrolled in three or four-year undergraduate programs the flexibility to exit at various milestones. Upon exiting, students will be awarded relevant qualifications, such as certificates or diplomas, commensurate with their academic achievements. This program structure allows for greater personalization of the learning journey, catering to students with diverse needs and aspirations. For instance, a student might choose to exit after one year with an Advanced Diploma, after two years with a Bachelor's Degree, or pursue a research-oriented Bachelor's Degree after three years, culminating in a Bachelor's Degree with Research after four years. This flexibility empowers students to tailor their educational experience to their individual goals and circumstances.

Furthermore, the NEP 2020 proposes the establishment of an Educational Bank of Credit. This novel initiative will function as a digital repository for academic credentials earned by students across various higher education institutions. By storing academic records electronically, the bank facilitates the awarding of degrees based on a student's cumulative performance across different institutions. This promotes academic mobility and eliminates unnecessary duplication of coursework, paving the way for a more streamlined and efficient learning experience.

It is important to note that the NEP 2020 proposes the discontinuation of the M. Phil program. This decision likely stems from a desire to streamline the higher education landscape and potentially encourage a more research-focused approach within Master's programs.

### **Reinvigorating physical education: a pillar of holistic development in the nep 2020**

The discourse surrounding the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 underscores a critical shift: the elevation of physical education and sports within the mainstream curriculum. This emphasis reflects a growing understanding of the indispensable role physical activity plays in fostering holistic development in children.

The Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), the driving force behind the NEP, has been inundated with proposals advocating for the mandatory inclusion of physical education. Currently, this subject remains an elective, often relegated to the periphery due to the perceived dominance of core subjects. However, the NEP 2020 acknowledges this disparity and proposes a paradigm

shift towards compulsory participation. Following internal deliberations, the MHRD will initiate consultations with states to solidify this initiative.

Concerns regarding the perceived waning relevance of physical education and the National Cadet Corps (NCC) program have also emerged within the Ministry. These anxieties are directly addressed by the NEP 2020, which explicitly recognizes physical education as essential for a child's overall well-being. Furthermore, the policy promotes the pedagogical value of sports, advocating for its integration into the learning process.

Taking a proactive stance, the Delhi Board of School Education (CBSE) has devised a comprehensive physical education curriculum encompassing grades 1 through 12. This program departs from the selective participation of the past, mandating involvement from all students. Moreover, it incorporates mandatory fitness assessments. The data gleaned from these evaluations will be analyzed by a team of expert physical educators, enabling them to tailor the curriculum to meet the evolving needs and health considerations of the student body. This groundbreaking initiative promises to revitalize physical education, elevating its status and impact.

### **The Nep 2020: A Multi-Pronged Approach to Sports Integration**

The NEP 2020 champions the principles of multidisciplinary and holistic education. This translates to the inclusion of sports and fitness alongside traditional subjects like science and social studies. The envisioned curriculum aims to cultivate a well-rounded, enriching, and practical learning experience.

At the school level, the NEP 2020 proposes the integration of sports and physical activities into classroom practices. This strategic approach seeks to enhance students' cognitive abilities while simultaneously nurturing both their physical and mental health. By embracing sports-integrated education, students stand to benefit from the Fit India Movement's vision of achieving optimal fitness levels. Furthermore, this approach fosters the development of critical life skills such as cooperation, self-initiative, teamwork, and a sense of responsibility.

The NEP 2020 extends its commitment to student exposure to sports and physical activity through a range of additional initiatives. It advocates for increased flexibility and choice in subject selection, allowing students to choose physical education as a core component of their curriculum. Additionally, the policy proposes the introduction of "bagless" days, enabling students to engage in local activities such as sports, gardening, and hands-on learning experiences.

Recognition of the multifaceted benefits of sports extends to the higher education realm. The NEP 2020 encourages the establishment of departments dedicated to sports, art, and music within higher education institutions. These departments aim to cultivate a multidisciplinary and inspiring environment. The policy emphasizes granting academic credit for these subjects in graduate programs, further incentivizing student participation.

Finally, the NEP 2020 addresses the need for adult education, outlining the development of a comprehensive curriculum framework. This framework will encompass not only foundational literacy and numeracy skills but also critical life skills such as healthcare awareness, child

education and care, and family well-being. This holistic approach extends the benefits of education to all age groups, fostering a lifelong love of learning and well-being.

### **Conclusion**

The ancient proverb, "a healthy mind resides in a healthy body," encapsulates the fundamental significance of physical education. When our bodies are physically robust, we experience a profound sense of wellbeing that translates into mental fortitude. Conversely, a sedentary lifestyle can lead to lethargy and a dampened spirit. Physical education serves as a cornerstone for cultivating a healthy body, which in turn fosters a fertile ground for intellectual and emotional growth.

The National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) recognizes this vital connection. It aspires to create well-rounded individuals equipped not only with the capacity for rational thought and action but also imbued with essential human qualities. These qualities include compassion and empathy, the ability to connect with and understand others' emotions. The policy also emphasizes the importance of courage and resilience, the strength to persevere in the face of adversity. Scientific thinking and creative imagination are fostered, encouraging students to question, explore, and innovate. Finally, the NEP 2020 recognizes the importance of moral values and emotional intelligence, equipping students to navigate the complexities of human interaction with integrity and sensitivity.

The ultimate goal of the NEP 2020 is to cultivate a generation of productive citizens who can contribute meaningfully to an inclusive and pluralistic society, as envisioned by the Indian Constitution. By nurturing well-rounded individuals with a strong moral compass and a commitment to social good, India can reclaim its position as a global leader and play a pivotal role in shaping a brighter future for humanity.

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