

THE ROLE OF SPORTS FOR ALL IN THE INDIAN CONTEXT: WITH REFERENCE TO UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

Physical education and sports is an essential part of once life. If one is involved in these two activities throughout their life, that person is fit and healthy. According to NCF 2005 importance of health and physical education for overall development needs to be reinforced. This study was based on Second year students of Graduation. Physical Education is an important component of their curriculum. While collecting data and interacting with them it was felt that they have no motivation and inclination towards sports or doing any sort of physical exercise, they felt ashamed while working out. They become tired easily, felt lazy had little confidence in themselves but after doing this component in their curriculum which was compulsory, they could not skip or leave out this particular area of the syllabus. The students were ready to take challenge for doing physical education and sports. After completing this they felt energetic, active, confident, strong and refreshing. The rule of Physical Education and sports in everybody's life is immense.

Keywords: Sports, Physical Education, Exercises, motivation, Energetic, Challenge, Confident.

Physical education and sports is an essential dimension of education. The continuity of physical exercises and sports programmes must be ensured throughout one's life by means of global, life long and democratized education. At the individual level physical education and sports contribute towards maintenance and improvement of health and enables one to cope with the drawbacks of modern living (Ghosh 1995)

Greeks developed the philosophy of sports, women were left out of its scope (Ghosh & Dheer 1990)

The Romans did not contribute to the philosophy of sports but emphasized the involvement of women in sports.

As we all know that women play an important role in modern India, in building the nation and in every walk of life the role of women

cannot be ignored. Realizing the important role of women play in a society and in education this study tries to look into the real state of sports for all in the life of an undergraduate female student.

This study is based on the data collected from 54 undergraduate female students of the University of Delhi who are studying to be elementary teachers. Before discussing the data and drawing the conclusion from it let us discuss the position and status of physical education/sports education.

Let us see how the National Curriculum Framework (2005) has defined sports/physical education. This document identifies certain broad aims of education which includes independence of thought and action sensitivity to others, learning to respond to a new situation in a flexible and creative manner etc. Apart from changes in the four familiar

areas of school curriculum (i.e. Language, Mathematics, Science and Social Sciences), education could be made more relevant to the needs and the present day. NCF felt the need to draw attention to our important curricular areas the arts and heritage crafts, health and physical education and peace. The child's success depends on nutrition and well-planned physical activity programmes. Special efforts are needed to ensure that girls receive as much attention in health and physical education programmes as boys from the pre-school stage onwards.

Children's basic capabilities need to be defined and developed. Capabilities for work and action involve the coordination of thought and bodily movement. Sports are a valuable form of knowledge which is practical in nature. Any sports involves physical stamina, endurance, knowledge of rule of the game, skills and physical dexterity, and knowledge of one's own capabilities, ability to plan and coordinate as a team, to assess the other team and strategize to win.

ACCORDING TO NCF

"The importance of health and physical education to overall development needs to be reinforced at the policy level with participation by administrators, other subject teachers, health departments and children. Recognizing sports and physical education as a core subject and a compulsory subject from primary to senior secondary stages. It needs to be given equal status with other subjects, a status that is not being given at present." (NCF 2005, p.57)

NCF also puts emphasis on the minimum essential physical space and equipment in every school. It also advocates integration of sports and physical education into elementary and secondary pre-service teacher education courses. Currently physical education, health aspects are "less important in the curriculum, and are marked by a lack of seriousness."

Report cards of the children carry information on various subjects but nothing on the

other aspects of the child's development including physical fitness and abilities in games, health etc. In today's world Physical education and health are necessary for overall development of a learner.

My study is based on 54 undergraduate female students of the University of Delhi who are studying to become elementary school teachers. The students belong to a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds-they come from the urban as well as rural areas of Delhi. These students have completed senior secondary school and they are now in the second year of college education. In their second year of education in the college, physical education is a compulsory component in the curriculum. It was found that these students were not encouraged to do sports or any kind of physical exercises. Since, it was considered a waste of time.

The girls were supposed to help in the household work or study. Since the students had no exposure, motivation or encouragement to do sports in schools. So, when they were told that they had a compulsory component of sports and physical education (includes games, yoga and other sports) in the second year of their course, they had a mixed reaction of why/how do we do this? After so many years the students were expected to play, run and do other physical activities for which they felt awkward and confused as to how they would cope with this. While talking to the students, we could clearly feel their concern and apprehension as to why and how they were going to fulfil this component. I had tried to voice some of the concerns in this paper.

One of the students said that: "...After class 5 I stopped taking part in sports or any kind of physical activity because in the school I did not get any encouragement towards sports..... Further the student says that since the physical education was compulsory, I started taking an interest in it. Now after the classes I feel confident and energetic. – Manju

The students had several things to say: "...Physical exercise had given me physical strength

and fitness, made me more confident, self-dependent, I feel active and energized...”-Kanika.

Reena wrote: “After learning taekwondo my confidence level had increased. I am able to handle adverse situations and do not feel any kind of fear. I feel healthy and active....”.

“.....after these exercises my body became more flexible and active...”Jyotsna.

“.....Now we can work with our body parts like legs, and hand movements with more strength and power. My concentration power has also increased.....”Priya.

The question asked was related to the changes the students felt in their personality and capability after doing regular exercises and physical activity. The questionnaire was measured on four point scale, namely poor, average, good and excellent. The variables were stamina, concentration, activeness, self-defence, flexibility, team spirit, health, improvement in social bondings, character building, and discipline. Confidence was measured on poor, average and excellent scale. Diet was measured on a two-point scale: poor and good. Positive thinking and increase in the level of patience was measured on a ‘yes’ and ‘no’ scale. The last variable tiredness was measured on poor, average and severe scales.

THE PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS WHO FELT THAT THESE EXERCISES HAD BENEFITED THEM IN

1. Stamina	:	100%
2. Concentration	:	100%
3. Activeness	:	100%
4. Self-defence	:	100%
5. Flexibility	:	95%
6. Team work/Team Spirit	:	90%
7. Health	:	100%
8. Improvement in Social Bondings	:	95%
9. Character building	:	100%
10. Discipline	:	100%
11. Confidence	:	100%

The other variables were as follows:

12. Diet

13. Positive thinking

14. Increase in the level of patience

15. Tiredness

Stamina: All the students agreed that after attending physical education classes their stamina had increased tremendously.

“..... Initially I used to get tired after 10 minutes of exercise but gradually I gained stamina and now I can work out for more than an hour.....” - Priya Sehwat

Concentration: All the students said that after doing physical exercises regularly their concentration power had increased.

“.....the freshness I get from regular exercises gave me better concentration in my studies and all my daily activities. It helps me pay full attention in all my work...” -Sheetal

Active: All the students became more active, do things faster than before, run to catch a bus and do household work actively.

“.....after physical exercises I felt active and full of energy. Earlier, I used to get tired but now it is not so. I felt that physically I became stronger and energetic.....” -Megha

Self-defence: The students felt empowered after doing physical exercise. They were confident of taking care of themselves and felt that they could use the techniques learnt during physical exercises towards the miscreants.

“.....after doing these exercises, I was confident that if anyone misbehaved with me. I am capable of giving him a befitting answer. This had inculcated good traits in me which in turn gave me courage.....” -Urvashi

Flexibility: 95 percent of the students thought that their body had become more flexible than before.

“.....I feel that my body has become flexible as I can work very actively.....”-Purnima

Team Work/Team Spirit: 90 percent of the students felt that physical education had enhanced friendship in the class. Now they can connect to each other easily and when needed help each other.

“..... while doing exercises we help each other and practise various steps/tactics of the sports together.....” -Heena

Health: Almost every student had answered this positively. All of them said that earlier they felt tired after doing a little work, they had headaches, some had pain in the body and some other health-related issues but after doing regular physical exercises in the college their health improved. Now they do not feel tired, their headaches had disappeared and they felt healthy and fit

“.....daily practice made me fit and healthy. Now, I look more beautiful.....” -Dimple

Discipline: “..... these classes also taught me discipline. These classes taught me discipline in terms of enjoyment. These classes taught me how to enjoy myself and be disciplined at the same time” -Himanshi

Students said that now they wake up early, sleep on time and prefer to do exercises in the morning and follow a kind of discipline in their lives.

Improvement in Social Bonding and character building: The relations among the students had improved after these classes as reported by 95 percent of the students. Almost all the students felt that they became stronger. They were able to control their anger.

Diet: This variable was measured on the two-point scale poor and good. Students had shared their views on how earlier they never thought about a balanced diet. They used to eat whatever they liked. Some students said that they never ate anything in the morning. Some never drank milk but after the physical exercise and activities they used to get milk and bananas in the college which gave them energy. Physical exercise also improved their diet habits.

“.....my mother used to be sad as I did not like to drink milk but after the sports and physical

activities in the college we used to get milk and bananas which gave us instant energy and strength. Now, I like milk and I know that a balanced diet is very important.....” - Swati Kalra

Tiredness was an important variable in this study as almost all the students said that they used to get tired after doing little work but physical education helped them get over it. Now, they do not get tired and could keep doing their work for a longer period of time.

“.....earlier I used to get tired easily and could not work for a longer time but after regular exercises I felt that I should include this in my daily routine.....” - Pooja

Positive thinking and increase in the level of patience: These variables were measured on a ‘yes’ and ‘no’ scale. Students generally thought that they became positive in their thinking and their patience level had increased. Now, they can control their anger and are patient. Students felt that these classes have improved their tolerance power.

“.....since I am short I had this feeling of negative thinking as I always thought that whatever others can do I cannot do as I am short but now my thinking has changed and I think I could also do what others could do.....” -Swati

From the data collected and after talking to the students I could visualize that girl students when in schools have no motivation and interest in sports and any other physical activity. This led to getting tired fast, feeling lazy, feeling ashamed when doing physical activity in front of others (while running after the bus I used to feel ashamed that people would look at me-Swati) After doing physical exercise as a compulsory component of their curriculum made a difference in their thinking and attitude towards life, they felt beautiful (I feel beautiful inside-Manpreet), felt stress free(regular exercise helped me as a stress buster-Priyanka), improved presence of mind, body and mind coordination was better, in almost all the students of this class. Now they feel stronger, full of energy, active, healthy and beautiful.

Overall, I could say that physical education and sports can bring about immense change in a student. As NCF has advocated the need and importance of sports for all, Also the physical activities for the overall development of students and in turn for our country.

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