

NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY (NEP) 2020 AND ITS IMPACT ON PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Sandeep Jagannath Jagtap

Director of Physical Education & Sports

Shri Sant Savta Mali Gramin Mahavidyalaya, Phulambri, District Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar (MS)

sunsports7349@gmail.com

Article Info	Abstract
<p>Received: 18/02/2025 Revised: 26/02/2025 Accepted: 05/03/2025</p> <p>Keywords: National Education Policy 2020, Physical Education, Holistic Learning, Sports Integration, Indian Education System</p>	<p>The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 aims to revolutionize the Indian education system by focusing on holistic development, interdisciplinary learning, and skill-based education. This paper explores the role of NEP 2020 in reshaping Physical Education (PE) in schools and higher education institutions. The policy emphasizes physical fitness, sports integration, and experiential learning to promote well-being and overall student development. This study also examines the challenges and opportunities of implementing PE reforms under NEP 2020.</p>

INTRODUCTION:

Education plays a vital role in shaping individuals and societies. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, introduced by the Government of India, aims to transform the Indian education system by emphasizing experiential learning, multidisciplinary approaches, and physical well-being. Unlike previous policies, NEP 2020 focuses on holistic development by integrating Physical Education (PE) as a crucial component of school and higher education curricula. Physical education is essential for fostering motor skills, fitness, teamwork, and mental well-being. However, in traditional Indian education, PE has often been side-lined in favour of academic subjects. This paper examines how NEP 2020 aims to bridge this gap and enhance PE's role in the education system.

NEP 2020: Key Reforms and Their Impact on Physical Education

NEP 2020 introduces several structural and pedagogical changes that directly impact physical education:

• **Multidisciplinary Approach and PE Integration**

NEP 2020 promotes a holistic and multidisciplinary approach, where sports and physical activities are considered as important as academic subjects do. The policy encourages schools to:

- Integrate sports and fitness programs into daily schedules
- Make physical education mandatory across all levels of schooling
- Develop a “sports-inclusive” culture in schools and colleges

Revised School Structure (5+3+3+4) and PE

The traditional 10+2 education system is replaced with a 5+3+3+4 model, emphasizing age-appropriate skill development:

- Foundational Stage (3-8 years): Focus on motor skills, play-based learning, and movement education
- Preparatory Stage (8-11 years): Introduction of organized sports, basic yoga, and physical activities
- Middle Stage (11-14 years): Structured PE classes, competitive sports, and fitness assessments
- Secondary Stage (14-18 years): Advanced sports training, fitness testing, and sports-related career pathways

This shift ensures that **physical fitness and movement education** are embedded into learning from an early age.

Inclusion of PE in Higher Education

For the first time, higher education institutions (HEIs) are encouraged to integrate sports science and fitness programs. Universities are:

- Encouraged to offer sports science and physical education as degree programs
- Expected to develop sports research centers
- Advised to promote fitness activities and intramural sports for all students

Emphasis on Indian Traditional Sports and Yoga

NEP 2020 highlights the need to promote traditional Indian sports like Kabaddi, Kho-Kho, and Mallakhamb alongside mainstream global sports. Yoga is also integrated into the curriculum to promote mental and physical well-being.

Challenges in Implementing PE Under NEP 2020

Despite its progressive outlook, several challenges hinder the full implementation of PE under NEP 2020:

- **Lack of Infrastructure and Resources**
Many schools, especially in rural areas, lack proper sports infrastructure, equipment, and trained PE teachers. Implementing an effective PE curriculum requires significant

investment in facilities and human resources.

- **Teacher Training and Awareness**

PE teachers need specialized training in sports science, child psychology, and fitness education. However, limited teacher training programs exist to meet this demand.

- **Academic Pressure and Parental Attitudes**

Traditionally, Indian parents and educators have emphasized academic achievements over sports participation. Shifting this mind-set and promoting PE as an essential subject remains a challenge.

- **Assessment and Evaluation in PE**

NEP 2020 suggests formative and holistic assessments, but designing effective evaluation metrics for PE remains difficult. Unlike theoretical subjects, PE assessment should measure physical skills, fitness levels, teamwork, and sportsmanship.

Opportunities and Future Prospects

Despite challenges, NEP 2020 provides several opportunities to enhance physical education in India:

- **Growth of Sports Industry and Career Opportunities**

With increased focus on PE, students can explore careers in sports science, coaching, physiotherapy, and fitness management. The Khelo India initiative and increased government funding support this growth.

- **Integration of Technology in PE**

The use of wearable fitness trackers, AI-based coaching, and online PE classes can revolutionize physical education. Schools can use technology to monitor students' fitness levels and progress.

- **National and International Collaborations**

The government can collaborate with global sports organizations, universities,

and corporate sponsors to improve PE infrastructure and research.

CONCLUSIONS:

NEP 2020 represents a significant shift in India's education system, placing Physical Education at the core of holistic development. While implementation challenges exist, the policy has the potential to transform attitudes towards fitness, sports, and overall well-being. By ensuring proper infrastructure, teacher training, and awareness, India can create a more active, healthy, and skilled generation.

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