



## A REVIEW OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION STATUS IN SCHOOL EDUCATION SYSTEM

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**ABSTRACT** This review report provides an introductory overview of the situation of physical education in schools, which culminated in the Berlin Physical Education World Summit in November 1999. There is surge amount of individual and institutions gives the best education to the teacher so that they can deliver the best physical education curriculum to children in school. But on the other hand, you have equal evidence to that people are expressing their displeasure about the situation. In many countries children are fairly in physical education. Some other key features of developments since the 1999 Physical Education World Summit in selected continental regions and countries, and embraces the issue of Inclusion and specially-abled children. There are mixed feelings about this situation. The 1997EUPEA survey cu unravelled a similar scenario of dilemma. In the last focuses on inter-governmental and non-governmental agencies' recent initiatives followed by concluding comments.

**KEYWORDS :** Active lifestyle, Physical fitness, Curricula, Quality physical education, Specially-abled children

### INTRODUCTION

John F. Kennedy had aptly said 'Physical Fitness is not only one of the most important keys to a healthy body. It is the basic dynamic and creative intellectual activity'. This paper is emphasised on status & physical education worldwide. Physical Education in school curricula started declining worldwide in the 1970s and 1980s. The situation worsens as the crescendo of the voices increased in the conferences, journals, nationally and Internationally. Several International agencies and regional continental organization position, politics, advocacy, and declaration statements were made proclaimed the precarious position of physical education in school. The global concern particularly in 1990s lead to the initiation of the survey of status of physical education in school by International Council for Sport Science and Physical Education (ICSSPE). These surveys were supported by International Olympic Committee (IOC).

One important consequences of the initiative were the world summit on physical education from 3-5<sup>th</sup> November 1999 in Berlin which was organized by ICSSPE under the aegis of support of IOC, UNESCO and WHO. During the Berlin summit policy makers, administrator, researchers and physical education practitioners from round the world congregated to share the information about the physical education in school.

The promulgated findings from the survey confined the perilous position of physical education in schools revealed in earlier findings. It made UNESCO respond that the principles of its 78 International Charter has not be imposed and sports and physical education had not gained national priority. Physical education has been relegated to the back seat. It was ailing from decreasing time allotment, budgetary constraints and scarce financial, material and personal resources. The authority pushed down physical education to a level that it lost its importance and value and status all over the world.

In school, it was not considered on par with the superior academic subjects which were concerned with honing the intellectual side of the child. It hardly focuses any place in the school curriculum. The survey formed on reaffirmed the current showing concern about the position of physical education. Problems were also faced in collecting data, interrogating and reporting data based on a broad sample and wide range of sources, there were common trends and issues, which were a source for critical concern. The survey pointed to the inadequacy of getting appropriate data and mainly highlighted the need for more and better-quality baseline data in each county.

The Physical Education World Summit concluded with the establishment of Action Agendas and an Appeal to UNESCO General Conference and the Ministers with responsibility for Physical Education and Sport (MINEPS III) meeting in Punta del Este, Uruguay (30 November - 3 December 1999). The 'Berlin Agenda' summoned the governments and ministers to implement policies for physical

education as a human right for all children so that they can enjoy good physical, mental and social health, holistic development in safe, supportive communities. Furthermore, it was required that for quality physical education, the educator should undergo in-service professional training. Investment was also needed for research to improve the effectiveness as well as quality of physical education.

The general conference was firmly requested to take stringent measures to develop strategies for proper implementation meticulously planned programmes to mobilised intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, public and private sectors to co-operate in the progress and development of physical education. It was also urged to invite the Director General of UNESCO to submit the World PE Summit's Appeal to the MINEPS III meeting in Punta del Este which was held from 30<sup>th</sup> November – 3<sup>rd</sup> December 1999. The Minister reaffirmed that physical education should be mandatory in all the school and should become part and parcel of continuing education and social development. The also expressed their concern that in spite of the expansion of the elite sport in the recent years, opportunities for children to participate in physical education did not get its rightful place in the school curriculum in many countries because of the changing position.

A year later after the publication of worldwide survey final report (Hardman and Marshall, 2000), a Council of Europe Committee for the Development of (CDDS) ' working group of experts ' on Access of children to physical education and sport resolved to spearhead the mission to scrutinize the situation of school physical education and sport in the member states of the Council of Europe with a view to providing informed recommendations for discussion and action at the Informal Meeting of Ministers responsible for Sport in Warsaw, Poland which was conducted on 12<sup>th</sup> & 13<sup>th</sup> September 2002. The ministerial Conclusions acknowledged a serious deterioration in the quality as well as time allocated for teaching physical education and sport for children and young people in schools. The children never had any proper exposer to sports and opportunity to explore their talent and calibre. They urged further that research should be made to find ways and means to provide good and quality physical education even to specially-abled children. Deputy Secretary-general of the Council of Europe in her Warsaw Informal Ministerial Meeting Opening Address found that "the crux of the issue is that there is lots of a gap between the promise and the reality" (De Boer-Buquicchio, 2002, p.2).

### Methods and Materials

A review report on physical education status in school education system was developed based on the systematic review of current available literature, including the comprehensive search on WHO databases, scholar.google.com, jasonline.com.

### 1. Africa

Effectively trained personnel and Shortage of facilities are widely

stated all over the continent as are the peripheral value in the curriculum (regarded as non-educational, unproductive use of time, is treated as recreation/play time especially in primary schools) and poor monitoring reviews in secondary schools (e.g. in Benin, Botswana and Uganda). Usually, priority is given to language and mathematics and other subjects with even inadequate allocated physical education/sport resources frequently diverted to other subjects. Still in many countries physical education and sports for girls are optional and most of them do not take part in sports and physical activity due to lack of proper facilities and changing rooms. In South Africa, physical education does not exist as a school subject though it is a focus (physical development and movement) of the learning area "Life Orientation" together with health promotion, emotional, mental, social development, personal development and orientation to the world of work foci in grades R-9 (General Education and Training Band) (Van Deventer, 2003). Most of the African countries, provision of physical education and sports for especially abled child are least emphases. Benin government officials stated that his country does "not have any programme, which deals with the physical education teaching to the disabilities". A Professor of Physical Education in Botswana spots that "cultural beliefs and attitudes do not permit the handicapped to be exposed to free physical activities and sports, for fear of their being injured or being ridiculed by their normal peers" but that "some of the courses offered at the Department of Physical Education to all grades of programmes include those on adapted Physical Education including the adapted sports".

## 2. Asia

In several Indian and Pakistani schools, scarcity of well-equipped teaching professionals and facilities, inadequate examination, perception of physical education as a non-educational fun/recreational activity and subservience to other academic subjects like mathematics, science and language, mutually subsidize to either negligible provision or to not even being a feature of the curriculum. In most of the rural area girls are discouraged from participating in physical education and sports clubs especially because of what it will do to their bodies (render them "unfeminine"). In Pakistan, cultural and religious constraints limit the scope of physical education for girls, who are not allowed to take part in sports and physical activities except within the four walls of the schools. In Vietnam, it is alleged that time allocation does not reach requirements, the physical education lesson is more likely to be cancelled than other subjects and teachers' technique is poor. The Indian sub-continent generally has minimal provision for disabled students. In India, for example, a Physical Education Lecturer asserts "there is no special provision of 3 physical education lesson of the students with disabilities in the school... The percentage of students with disabilities in the schools is very negligible".

## 3. Central and Latin America including the Caribbean

In the Bahamas and St. Vincent, physical education and sports is observed as play/fun time. It is often used as a class venue for disruptive or backward students. In Jamaica, it is considered as a waste of time. In the most Latin American countries, physical education in elementary and middle schools (basic education) has given a compulsory place in curriculum by the most recent legislation, though timetable allocation, for which there are no legal prescriptions, is generally minimal or low. Despite the legislation on requirement, in most countries (Chile and Colombia are exceptions) there has been a huge decrease in the real number of physical education and sports classes. The number of facilities for the general population participation in physical and sporting activity has generally increased and outdoor amenities (e.g. beaches) are accessible but community-oriented physical education programmes have not kept pace with facility provision. The number of courses leading to qualified teacher status and masters and doctoral programmes has developed favourably throughout the continent; in Brazil alone there are 400 Physical Education College Education Institutions and 12 Physical Education Masters and Doctors programmes. Concomitantly, the number of publishing companies and specialist journals in Physical Education has grown steadily, especially in Brazil, Mexico and Colombia. In Brazil, the Conselho Federal de Educação Física (CONFEF, The Federal Physical Education Council) has established a regulatory Register of Physical Education Professionals (currently about 100,000 physical educators). CONFEF has also dispensed a Brazilian Physical Education Charter, which consensuses with the Berlin PE Summit Action Agenda principles for 'Quality rather than quantity', as well as a Code of Ethics for registered professionals. Other countries in the region have started developing processes like the Brazilian example,

mainly because there is consensus that the regulation has improved the quality and organization of physical education in the country. Latin America lags behind North America and Europe according to the research investigation in the domain of physical education, despite growing interest. It is stated that there is a close relationship between physical education and health; it is a trend that has originated from Sports for All programmes, which have raised up the levels of awareness towards physical education. According to Agita São Paulo (Move São Paulo), which has already become Agita América (Move America), and Agita Mundo" (Move the World), health centred programme should recommend 30 minutes physical activity per day. In Latin America awareness of the importance of physical education and activity has increased and physical activities are being incorporated into people's individual cultures: beach and park sports practice, gymnastic centres, and social clubs' activities home condominiums' programmes, etc. are testimony to the significant role of physical education in modern life.

## 4. Europe

Europe with its admixture of economically developed and developing countries and regions and various and different historical and socio-cultural settings is a continental region, in which both diversity and congruence are evident. There are common trends and issues, which are a source for some concern:

insufficiencies in curriculum time allocation, subject status, material, human and financial resources, gender and disability issues and the quality of the physical education/sport curriculum a narrow and unjustifiable conception of the role of physical education merely to provide experiences, which serve to reinforce achievement-orientated competition performance sport, thus limiting participatory options rather than expanding horizons (in this context, it is unsurprising that pupil interest in physical education declines throughout the school years and young people become less active in later school years).

This observation is also indirectly supported in the minimal attention paid to broader pedagogical and didactical activities in physical education and an overwhelming pre-disposition of countries to cite competitive sport oriented programmes (e.g. sports competition structures, sports talent development and provision of specialist facilities) as examples of best practice and the problem of reconciliation of elite sport and regular schooling. Whereas it may not be persistently the situation in every Council of Europe member state that there are decreasing numbers of participants from school-based and post-school life sports-related activity, it is the same situation in so many countries not only in the local region but also in other parts of the world.

like, the Nordic countries, physical education curricula are concentrating more on physical, health-related and active lifestyle issues. The utmost up-to-date information indicates that generally timetable allocation has stabilised across the region and in so many countries.

## 5. North America

In Canada, despite support from medical practitioners, physical educators continue to experience problems in convincing provincial Ministries of Education that physical education has a vital role to both in the education system generally and in health promotion. Timetable allocations have remained relatively stable since the Physical Education World Summit but budget allocations have been reduced and many schools have sought to raise monies from other sources to sustain physical education programmes. The main trend in Canadian physical education as evidenced in new curricula is promotion of active lifestyle, which includes use of external resources for which there are costs' implications. There have been widespread cuts in numbers of provincial and school district consultants and/or curriculum co-ordinators. In provinces such as British Columbia, where 'generalist' teachers teach most elementary school physical education classes with little or no training in physical education, the shortfall in advisory consultants and curriculum co-ordinators has impacted negatively. This is especially the case where new curricula have been developed and which need the assistance of relevant professionals to implement them. Thus, these innovative curricula are left to gather dust on shelves (Turkington, 2002, pp.42-43).

In the United States, where 9/11 and the terrorism threat together with the war in Iraq have significantly impacted on the economy and

diverted funds into the military” (Feingold3, 2004) and there was no impact in the United State of the Berlin PE Summit. At the same time, there is an educational environment that stresses accountability and standardized testing primarily focused on the so-called “academic subjects”. The result is that school administrators look to cut back on special subjects, such as health, physical education, art and music. There are almost daily reports about the obesity epidemic and health costs, yet the public does not relate much of this to the need to increase physical education (Feingold, 2004).

### Conclusion

If not all, but in most of the countries across the world, there are examples of positively executed programmes and good practices in physical education and in physical education teacher training program. Moreover, there is a variety of individual and institutional endeavours to optimise the quality of physical education delivery and so enhance the understandings of children in schools. Equally there is evidence to generate considerable continuing disquiet about the situation. On the other side, there are so many schools and countries where the failure of physical education curriculum is recorded. Children are being deprived of the opportunities that will transform their lives. Such renunciation of opportunities is unpredictable with the policy principles of the Council of Europe and UNESCO Charters and does bring into question the effectiveness of these Charters as appropriate standard-setting instruments; perhaps the justification lies in fundamental purposes of the Charters ostensibly to reduce inequalities between countries and ensure minimum standards of provision.

Thus, the messages are mixed and continue to be so as testified by reports in the Minutes of the EUPEA Forum meeting in Brussels, 8 November 2002. Physical education representatives pointed to an improving national situation in the Czech Republic, Poland and Slovenia and discussions on increasing physical education curriculum time allocation in Croatia and Denmark. At the same time, it was indicated that in France it is difficult to maintain school sport every Wednesday and that there is a problem with physical education evaluation in the final year of secondary schools: “teachers find it difficult to do” (BVLO, 2002); and in Ireland that intentions to introduce higher quality and more time for physical education under proposed curriculum reform may be compromised because “there is not a lot of room for increased time allocation, since the government introduced two new subjects in an already tight programme” (BVLO, 2002).

There is a sense of déjà vu about the 'mixed messages' situation. The 1997 EUPEA Survey (Loopstra and Van der Gugten) revealed a similarly confused scenario. According to the survey report analysis in some countries, there were some encouraging developments in curriculum time allocation within the region, especially in central and eastern Europe. On one hand the survey indicated that in some countries within the region specially in central and Eastern Europe, exhibited emerging progress and time was allotted for physical education in the curriculum. But on the other hand, it was observed that condition had become bad to worse. Countries like Austria, France and Switzerland were allotting 2 hours per week for physical education at primary and secondary levels i.e. for the age group of 6 to 18. Only 9 out of 25 countries which were tender survey, showed 2 hours per week for 6-12 years age group. It was noted that most of countries had insufficient training of teacher who in turn were not able to make a worthy contribution to the insufficient time given to physical education. To top it all, no proper monitoring was being done.

The evidence presented in this Report suggested that although national government promised to make physical education mandatory but showed lethargy and reservation into putting them into action. Growing deficiencies continues in curriculum time allocation, subject status, financial, material and human resources, quality, gender and disability issues. We are only concern about the amenities which were not enough, equipment's supplied was not of god quality due to the lack of finance in countries which were economically under developed. It was also noted that a physical education teacher was underpaid. In general, the fitness standard of young people started falling and the youth stop indulging in the sporting activity. This was due to the decline in physical education in school. The problem of school community coordination and communication in some countries added fuel to fire. (Hardman, 2002).

The Berlin Physical Education Summit Agenda for Action for

Government Ministers, the Punta del Este Declaration, the Council of Europe's Warsaw Meeting Conclusions and UNESCO's 'Round Table' Communiqué together with various WHO, IOC and some national governments' initiatives amongst others demonstrate that there is now an international consensus that issues surrounding physical education in schools requires serious attention to solve existing and future problems. It is essential that the development in physical education all over the world ought to be monitored regularly. This was urged by both the Council of Europe's ministerial Conclusions and the UNESCO 'Round Table' Communiqué. Council of Europe put this on top priority list to monitor policies and practices every five years (Bureau of the Committee for the Development 12 of Sport, 2002a; 2002b). But it is said there is a difference in speaking and putting in practice. Despite official documentation the principals, policies, and aims did not materialized. Promises made should be kept if the position of physical education had to be secured. The gap between promises and the reality is to be bridged. If we keep promising, things will not improve. Physical education should get its due because it is said 'A sound mind dwells in a healthy body'. Otherwise with the Council of Europe Deputy Secretary General's intimation of a gap between “promise” and “reality”, there is a real danger that the Informal Ministers' meeting's agreed Conclusions will remain just that – more “promise” than “reality” in too many countries across the world and compliance with Council of Europe and UNESCO Charters will continue to remain compromised.

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