

Research Paper

Physical Education



Human Excellence and Performance through Physical Education

* J. Sasikala ** S. Varalakshmi *** Dr. A. Amuldoss

* Physical Education Director, S.D.N.B. Vaishnav College for Women, Chrompet, Chennai-44

** Physical Education Director, SGSS Jain College for Women, Vepery, Chennai-600007

*** Director of Physical Education, Department of Physical Education, Thiruvalluvar University, Vellore - 632106

ABSTRACT

An educational system is totally incomplete without physical education because of its high level positive role in the development of motor skills, cognitive impacts, increased academic performance and behavior modifications of moral and ethical values. In short the role of Physical education and sports has proved a high level of scientific evidences on the development of wholesome development among the people who participate in it and in particular the young people who are prone to significant modification changes both positively and negatively.

Keywords: Cognitive and Motor function, Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging (fMRI), Academic performance

Introduction

Researches in modern educational system and the international committees and commissions on education have been consistently evoking the importance of physical education and sports both in school and college curriculum, but very often they are taken for granted. It is often stated that an educational system is totally incomplete without physical education but the present system of education only wish to depict physical education as an unwanted element and a waste of time in the academic schedule. Definitions can't be derived for a useless element; the following definitions on physical education would throw better evidence on the importance and meaning of Physical education and sports and its role in the educational scenario.

"Physical Education is as an education of and through human movement where many of educational objectives are achieved by means of big muscle activities involving sports, games, gymnastic, dance and exercise". Barrow

"Physical education is a part of education which gives instructions in the development and care of the body ranging from simple callisthenic exercises to a course of study providing training in hygiene, gymnastics and the performance and management of athletics games". Webster's Dictionary

"Physical education is that part of education which takes place through activities, which involves the motor mechanism of human body which results in an individual's formulating behavior patterns". Jackson R. Sharman

"Physical education is an integral part of total education process, is a field of endeavor which has as its aim the development of physically, mentally, emotionally and socially fit citizens through the medium of physical activities which have been selected with a view to realizing these outcomes." Charles A. Bucher

"Physical education is an education through physical activities for the development of total personality of the child to its fullness and perfection in body, mind and spirit". Central

advisory board of Physical education and Recreation

Acquisition of wholesome development

Apart from a dynamic development achieved through Physical education and sports, it has an educational impact too. Changes can be seen in (i) motor skills development and performance (ii) educational potential etc. This shows the positive relationship between being involved in physical activities and psychosocial development. Sport and physical education is fundamental to the early development of children and youth and the skills learned during play, physical education and sport contribute to the holistic development of young people. Through participation in sport and physical education, young people learn about the importance of key values such as: honesty, teamwork, fair play, respect for themselves and others and adherence to rules. It also provides a forum for young people to learn how to deal with competition and how to cope with both winning and losing. These learning aspects highlight the impact of physical education and sport on a child's social and moral development in addition to all other skill and abilities acquirements.

In terms of physical and health aspects of child and youth development, there is an overwhelming amount of evidence that focuses on the (mostly positive) effects of sport and exercise on physical health, growth and development. Physical education and sport also build health activity habits that encourage life-long participation in physical activity. This extends the impact of physical education beyond the schoolyard and highlights the potential impact of physical education on the public health. To achieve broader goals in education and development, sports programmers must focus on the development of the individual and not only on the development of technical sport skills. While the physical benefits of participation in sport are well known and supported by large volumes of empirical evidence, sport and physical activity can also have positive benefits on education. Sport is an attractive activity for young people, and is often used as a draw card to recruit children and young people to health and education programmes. Sport and development projects that focus on educational outcomes use sport as a means to deliver ed-

educational messages to participants and spectators in some cases. Additionally, some programmes aim to promote and develop other aspects of education such as school attendance and leadership.

Much of the literature emphasizes the crucial role of physical education teachers and other providers of physical activity and sport as determinants of educational experiences. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), for example, are using sport and play programmes to encourage young people, particularly girls and young women, to attend school within refugee camps across the world. In addition, UNICEF has a strong focus on using sport to campaign for girls' education, promoting education through events and awareness campaigns. Sport-based programmes have been shown to improve the learning performance of children and young people, encouraging school attendance and a desire to succeed academically. Whilst a majority of research into the health and development impacts of sport has been conducted in developed countries, there are studies that support this relationship in developing countries. For example, a study on sports involvement among children and young people in Namibia has shown that those who participated in sport and physical activity were more likely to pass the grade 10 examinations. There is further research that suggests this relationship of development through physical activity where, young preschoolers are brimming with energy through participation which is a good thing in terms of physical development, because it's the repeated movement of large and small muscle groups that builds and refines how well these parts of the body work.

Special reference to Academic performance

The percentage of children 6 - 11 years of age who are overweight has more than tripled over the past three decades. While childhood obesity continues to rise, physical activity levels in children continue to decline. In a 2002 Youth Media Campaign Longitudinal Survey more than 3,000 children (9 - 13) were surveyed about their physical activity habits. The survey revealed that less than 40% of the children reported participating in organized physical activity while more than 20% reported no free-play activity outside of school hours. The school is an ideal setting to increase physical activity through physical education, free-play activity during recess and in before- and after- school activity programs. The National Association for Sport and Physical Education recommends at least 150 min/week of instructional physical education for elementary school children. The participation of school children in physical education and sports have considerably declined than that of the yearly periods widely in nations due to various reasons like tight academic pressure and careless physical education policies and in more particular the mind set of parents towards participation in physical education and sports.

Physical activity, academic performance, cognitive development and academic achievement are of critical importance for youth and time devoted to learning in schools is central to its success. However, factors other than time spent on core academic subject matter may also contribute to academic success. Recent studies have shown that physical activity has a positive effect on academic performance. Research has shown that the addition of physical education to the school day results in small but positive gains in academic performance. Studies done by **Shephard (1983-84)** and Colleagues proved improvements in cardiovascular fitness and strength, levels of arousal and attention in the classroom were better and overall academic grades improved intelligence scores due to the additional time allotted to physical activity. Other studies have shown that more time for physical activity does not hinder academic performance.

Recent studies have shown positive associations between physical activity and cognitive function, particularly for executive function such as the ability to plan and select activities to organize goal-directed action and promote decision-making skills which are essential to psychological and social development in children. Executive function influences a child's ability to understand when to apply knowledge, effectively plan, update working memory, shift from one mental set to another, and inhibit impulsive behavior. Improvements in any of these skills may aid in academic performance which is often measured by standardized tests and academic grades or estimated from measures of concentration, memory, and classroom behaviors. Functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) scans of brain activity have been employed to characterize the underlying brain activity patterns linking physical activity, fitness and cognitive function. Research evidence suggests that participation in daily physical activity in schools may improve academic performance (**Tomporowski, 2007**).

Conclusion

Hence, the benefits of physical activity and sporting offered through physical education together with the general form of education in the school and college curriculum extend beyond the known health-related outcomes to include academic performance and cognitive function in youth and should be viewed as a valuable and unavoidable factor in the educational system, if what it aims to create a wholesome development in the youth.

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