

**PUBLIC FUNDING, PHYSICAL EDUCATION, AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT IN
INDIA: CONSTITUTIONAL MANDATES AND LEGISLATIVE INTERVENTIONS**

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<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19451161>

Abstract

In this paper the complex nature of the interaction between public funding allocations, physical education curriculum, and overall youth development outcomes in the Indian context is critically looked at in terms of an analytical examination of the constitutional directives and the legislative frameworks that facilitate such domains. It also examines the effectiveness of current policies on promoting wholesome physical, mental and social growth of Indian youth bearing in mind the past prevalence of indigenous sports and traditional free exercises. It further explores the effects of commercialization and the prevalence of certain sports like cricket as it affects the fair growth and popularization of a wider array of sports events in the country. The same is applied to the consequences of new government policies, including the National Education Policy 2020 and the Khelo India scheme, in the further development of physical education and sports infrastructure. This question aims to find out whether such programs are successful in their efforts to deal with such bigger issues through the historical underestimation of sports in the mainstream educational system and disjointed governance frameworks. This study also examines the legal and institutional processes that govern the development of Indian sports such as dispute resolution, policies of the country governing the sporting activities.

Keywords: Public Funding, Physical Education, Youth Development, India, Constitutional Mandates, Legislative Interventions, National Education Policy 2020, Khelo India, Sports Law, Governance.

1. Introduction

The present paper will discuss the strategic nexus of public investment in physical education and its significant influence on the youth development in the Indian context with references to the relevant constitutional regulations and legislative systems which oversee the given sphere. This is aimed at examining how these tools of law, whether assist or hamper the growth of physical activity and sports, and, consequently, affects the overall growth of Indian youth. This discussion will also outline the existing trends, issues and developmental reforms in physical education, taking into account how the same aspects are influenced by policy changes that eliminate cultural, regional and socioeconomic obstacles. Moreover, the gap that exists in the constitutional directives that tend to focus on the role of the state in maintaining the physical health of people, including youth development and its practical aspect in the education sector is to be identified in this review. In particular, it will explore the effectiveness of the public funding system to the physical education program, and how it complies with the constitutional requirements, including the considerations of school physical health as one of the primary concerns of the state. This provides an analysis of Art.47 of the Constitution that specifically gives the State the role of enhancing public health, an obligation further enhanced by the national health policies that seek to provide universal and high quality healthcare and well-being to people at all ages. In addition to the constitutional provisions, the Seventh Schedule adds more light on the separation of legislative authority between the central and state governments on the issue of health and sanitation and other programs associated with public welfare. Such complex fiscal deals and legislative boundaries play a vital role in the distribution and use of state funding on health and sports promotion. Such delicate division of roles in the central and the state level calls on close assessment of the budgetary allocations and their conversion into practical physical education facilities and physical education youth development programs [1]. In this regard, therefore, role and financial abilities of central and state governments in developing sports and physical education are key factors to consider in determining whether the policies are performing well as it is now. As an example, such initiatives as Khelo India highlight the role of government strategy and investments to promote the culture of sports at the grassroots level, and investment priorities of huge sums of money in construction of sports facilities. These concerted efforts are crucial given the observed evidence across the world that has shown a strong positive relationship between strong schools based physical education and physical health outcomes among adolescents. Nevertheless, the real effects of such initiatives on the health outcomes may differ greatly between states due to the discrepancies between publicly funded health spending, resources, and fiscal priorities [2].

2. Constitutional Framework for Youth Development and Physical Education in India

Indian Constitution, in several articles, implicitly and explicitly stipulates the role of the state in terms of ensuring the growth and physical health of the youth subjects, and thus provides the foundation of the law regarding the steps to be followed by the state in the areas of physical education and sports. Some of these directives overlap with the Directive Principles of State Policy over which although unjustifiable, they are God-fathers to the purpose of governance as they encourage a holistic developmental setting of children and youth, safeguarding them against exploitation and neglect.

2.1. Directive Principles of State Policy and Youth Welfare

The principles are clear evidence of the role of the state in encouraging the physical and mental well-being of the young population, including with the help of available physical education and sports programs, which are important in developing human resources. Besides, the categorization of sports as a state subject in the constitution brings about heterogeneity in the

policy implementation and resource allocation among various states in India, which results in different developments and performance in sports. Such decentralization tends to create inconsistent rates of investment in infrastructure, training and talent recognition programs, which can have substantial effect on the opportunities that the youths can enjoy, considering his / her geographic location in the country. These differences require a differentiated conceptualization of state-specific legislative systems and funding systems to be able to assess comprehensively the physical education and youth sports situation in the country [3].

2.2. Fundamental Rights and Their Implications for Physical Education Access

In addition to the Directive Principles, some Fundamental Rights, especially Article 21A relating to the Right to Education implies that physical education as one of the key parts of the whole school system affects youth participation and their overall health. Article 21A asserts the right to education, but other articles, like Article 39, explicitly provide protection to the health and strength of the workers including the tender age of the children, which means exploitation and pushing into the wrong professions are not permitted [4]. Also, Article 24 concerns the forced labor of children under the age of 14 in dangerous professions, which also promotes the idea of the state protecting children and, consequently, of their right to have a childish life with time spent on physical growth. Moreover, Article 39 provided that children must have access to and access to healthy development in circumstances of freedom and dignity and protect childhood and youth against exploitation and abandonment [5], [6].

2.3. Role of Union and State Governments in Sports and Education

The division of roles between the Union and State Governments directly affects the legislative and executive activities regarding sports and physical education, and the national programs targeted at promoting youth empowerment and sports participation among the masses are orchestrated by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports. Nevertheless, even with these governmental processes, the freedom of sports activities is not always the priority as much as other essential freedoms, and, thus, physical education as a part of national policy-making is under-estimated. This is also made trickier by the fact that, though many schools and courts do provide physical education, it is not always mandatory in the Indian school system, and can be the cause of inconsistent student participation and program delivery [7]. This situation of no universal compulsory physical education is in contrast to the world best practices and policies like the title IX in the United States that boosted the sports participation of girls tremendously and enhanced the overall health outcomes of adolescents remarkably.

3. Legislative Interventions in Physical Education and Youth Development

These interventions can be in the form of certain acts, policies and programs that aim at physical liquefaction of the constitutional directives involving the physical literacy, sports promotion and, generally, well being of the youth in the varying educational and social environments of India. An example is that like the aspects of leisure and sports are considered as the right of social and a responsibility of the state, as structured in the constitution of Brazil, there have been in India, legislative moves to ensure that physical activity becomes a part of youth development.

3.1. Key Acts and Policies Related to Education and Sports

Amongst these important interventions is the Right to Education Act of 2009, though mainly with a view to promoting literacy, its indirect but severe effect on the teaching of physical education has been to gain access to schooling by the marginalized children although qualitative changes in physical activity are not easily achieved. Besides, sports-integrated learning is also characterized in the National Education Policy of 2020, and the goal here is to internalize physical literacy as a lifetime attitude into curriculum. Although physical education in Indian schools has been improved through such policies there are high impediments in the practical implementation of this program of which the challenges include inadequate infrastructure, lack of trained physical education teachers and lack of clarity of policies which

are some of the contributing elements to high levels of physical inactivity among the youths. The difference can be seen in the fact that more or less a quarter of Indian children and adolescents are complying with the recommended screen time, a fact which led to a D- grading of sedentary behavior in the country [8].

3.2. Schemes and Programs for Promoting Physical Education

In a bid to overcome these issues, a number of government initiatives like the Khelo India program have been introduced to encourage grassroot sports activities, as well as, discover athletic talent, and are trying to bridge the difference between the intention of the policy and its real participation rates. Also, such programs as the Fit India movement (introduced in August 2019) emphasize the governmental willingness to instill the culture of physical fitness in all age groups, as physical activity has wide social values. These programs are meant to offset the unhealthy indoors habits among the Indian youths which have been noted to lead to a low total body activity and score of D in the national surveys. With these strategic interventions, enduring issues, including the partiality of the measurement of the organized sport involvement in the 2022 India Report Card, continue to show the continuing challenge towards the overall measurement and subsequent enhancement of the indices of active living among Indian children and adolescents. This intention is also enhanced by the National Education Policy 2020, which promotes the inclusion of physical education and sports science into the main lineup of the curriculum, which is the sound indication of the tremendous change tissues towards all-encompassing educational frameworks [9].

3.3. Challenges in Policy Implementation and Enforcement

Although there are elaborate policy frameworks, lack of clarity is evident not only in efficient implementation of the same but also in shortage of sufficient funds, skilled staff, and clear actionable guidelines on how the physical literacy is to be incorporated into the education system. In particular, the lack of qualified physical education teachers and insufficient facilities as well as the lack of modern professional growth opportunities of the current educators remain an issue. This lack not only hinders the successful implementation of physical education unit curriculums but also leads to a systemic problem, in general, in which the role of active plays, familial and peer impact in activity, and vision of physical fitness have been evaluated with minimal consideration. In addition, although there has been an effort to promote physical activity among the population through national campaigns such as the Fit India campaign, there still exists a huge gap in trying to convert such general campaigns into organized, curriculum-based physical education programs in schools.

4. Public Funding Mechanisms for Physical Education and Youth Development

The effective delivery of physical education and sports programs and its further development needs a strong public funding system, particularly in developing countries, where these programs cannot be effective enough due to poor infrastructure and equipment. In India, even with the commendable governmental policies and with the bright outlook of change of institutional attitudes about the issue of physical inactivity among the children and adolescents, the amount of money actually put in place in the schools to support the active living policies and programs is becoming a big challenge. This investment inadequacy directly affects the quality and availability of physical education to the extent of commonly subsidising sports facilities and special coaching by external grants or individual funds [8].

4.1. Government Allocations for Sports and Youth Affairs

A review of governmental budgetary allocations shows that although there has been a positive tendency in the trend of the budgetary allocations over time, a significant amount of the budgetary allocations has been channeled towards elite sports and high-performance training with a fairly lower emphasis on the basic physical education and grassroots youth development programs. This unbalanced distribution does not usually take into account the underlying nature and basis of physical literacy formation during the early years of development and primary

school level, thus complicating the building of a holistic and comprehensive physical activity ecosystem. The trend has the potential to further increase the already poor rates of physical activity of the general youth community where most spend much time in sedentary activities. Also, although a perceived relationship between physical activity and good academic performance has been identified, incorporation of physical education in the mainstream curriculum and financial support that is required to incorporate physical education is yet to be harmonized [10].

4.2. Funding from Central and State Budgets

In India, although funding of physical education and the development of youth comes through both the central government and state government budgets, it is often conducted through a lot of the ministries and departments in charge of the sports, youth affairs, and education sector. But due to the decentralization of this funding, there is the tendency to have disparities in resource distribution and the effectiveness of this program within various regions and learning institutions. This disintegration frequently has the effect of providing physical education unequally, with private institutions occasionally superior provided by more money but with no corresponding increase in physical exercise of students. The role of the central government on state policies, especially on funding schemes, makes matters even more complicated as states usually get funds to do those projects only when they can be relevant to the national priorities. It results in capital-intensive projects, like development of infrastructure, being favored over human-oriented investment, like coaching and training which is a common trend in allotment of resources which, as it has been seen, exacerbates the overall sport performance and growth of athletes [11].

4.3. Role of Public-Private Partnerships and Other Funding Sources

Along with governmental expenditures, there are also emergent roles of government-providers and other non-governmental sources of funds to supplement financial resources in physical education and youth development programs, especially in use sectors where government funds are low or poorly allocated. Such forms of collaboration will typically support the creation of specialized sport facilities, availability of quality coaching, and innovative programs that otherwise would not be accessible in terms of funding needs in the public sector [12]. The use of external funding may however create imbalance in the availability of resources and schools in the wealthier neighborhoods or those with better networks will find it easier to access such partnerships. In addition, the withdrawal of extra-budgetary funds related to business operations, sponsorships and donations are erratic and hence long-term planning and the continuation of the program is not feasible. This creates the need to critically evaluate the effectiveness and scope of existing sports policies, particularly given the high investment that in some cases cannot give consistent outcomes [13].

5. Impact of Public Funding on Physical Education Infrastructure and Programs

Public funding directly affects the physical education infrastructure (sports and other physical activities facilities, equipment, and physical activity areas) which are critical in proper program implementation. Poor funding, therefore, often equates with poor facilities, deficiency of the right equipment, poor physical spaces which are well maintained and directly hinder putting up a full and interesting physical education program. These problems are only complicated by the financial obstacles posed by relatively low socioeconomic status which denies a large percentage of the youth population equitable access to quality physical education programs. This rather weak participation implication of the role of the public expenditure implies that the present funding models should also be reconsidered to provide a more direct effect on the participation of the youth in sports and physical activities. Since the financial issues are some of the core issues with sports development, especially in the Brazilian situation, it has been a doubtful sphere to study to maximize the effect of Indian subsidy. In particular, the dissimilarities between the quality of infrastructure in the system between the public and the

private schools where the latter tend to have better facilities underline the inequalities supported by the existing funding strategies. The aforementioned departure highlights the need to have policy interventions that deal specifically with equitable distribution of resources to state educational institutions and hence a more inclusive atmosphere resulting in more people becoming involved in physical activity [14]. Also, the public funding of various activities often goes towards the development of sports facilities, which, albeit being a significant requirement, does not necessarily mean more people will enroll in physical education programs or develop young athletes as a whole. This observation implies that there may be a discrepancy between infrastructure-based investment models and the overall goals of the physical education, namely, skill growth, promotion of health, and long-term participation in physical exercise. In fact, the lack of proper funding within the schools usually causes the school to make a reduction to the budgets of the sports programs and this may subject the students to paying a fee to take part in the sports, the gear used and the uniforms and this can disproportionately exclude the children in the low income bracket. In addition, the lack of secure and well-kept open areas to sport as witnessed in other developing environments also limits the accessibility of the youth to sport hence increasing the social and developmental disparity. These differences are further augmented by the varying effects of peer support on the level of physical activity of the different members of the population which indicates that the interventions need to be adjusted to certain gender and regional variables. Absence of long term financial empowerment of sports professionals such as fair remuneration and career advancement opportunity also has a role to play in the high turnover rate which prevents long term development of sports talent in India. In turn, the existing paradigm of resources allocation now that prevails in India can once again unknowingly trigger a sub-optimal resource utilization in building sports infrastructures as soon as the focus on the so-called hardware becomes too high at the expense of the training of the so-called liveware (i.e. high-quality coaching systems).

6. Physical Education's Contribution to Holistic Youth Development

Physical education is an important part of a holistic academic system since it contributes to the physical growth of an individual as well as cognitive, social, and emotional growth, as well as a component. This whole person contribution is not only limited to physical fitness, it also entails training the necessary life skills that include working in a team, discipline, leadership, and being strong enough to stand up. With the help of organized physical events, students will obtain motor training, comprehend better health and nutrition, and learn how to behave in the dynamically interactive social environment. Nevertheless, having all these acknowledged advantages, the situation with school sport in India is still worrying, as approximately half of educational establishments contain sporting facilities and merely a minor percentage of all students can attend physical education. Such restricted access is further compounded by an understanding that physical education and sports are essentially the same thing that further prevents implementation of specific, extensive programs. Furthermore, incorporation of physical education in the curriculum is generally attended by challenges of lack of awareness of holistic developmental benefits of physical education in educational circles. The lack of this understanding is the reason why the physical education programs are underprioritized and underfunded, which eventually harms their potential to encourage active lifestyles and reduce the emergence of non-communicable diseases [8]. This is also added to the fact that there is a low overall performance in international sporting events such as the Olympics which reflects internal problems within the education system such as lack of proper infrastructure and funding limitations. India Report Card on Physical Activity in children and adolescents of 2022 indicates that even though some schools have physical education lessons and facilities, the many have not continued to promote the recommended amount of physical activity, which implies that there is a difference between policy and practice. National Curriculum Framework 2023, however, aims to do so by incorporating physical education as a core part of school

curriculum as it has been suggested to promote general well-being, cognitive and social, and lifelong fitness behavior. The given framework highlights the centrality of physical education teachers, who are expected to implement these aspirations into tangible results, especially by promoting holistic health and involving indigenous games. The adoption of these policy initiatives has been met with serious challenges such as misunderstandings and misperceptions among school teachers and people on the whole on the extent to which physical education is important beyond sports competition [15].

7. Conclusion

Thus, there is a collective effort that is needed to redefine the perception of physical education, its overall contribution to the growth of youth and promote the idea of its obligatory inclusion and effective assessment in all levels of education. These involve sealing the perennial policy to practice gaps especially with regard to flexible curricular models that make balance between the theoretical and the applied together with the consideration of the regional differences in terms of resources and infrastructure. These should be accompanied by lifelong learning among teachers to particularly provide them with the knowledge and skills in pedagogical content that they can help to offer holistic physical education that goes beyond conventional fabrications of sports and competitions. Lack of qualified physical education teachers/ trainers in India and the historical devaluation of their professional roles is also a heavy obstacle in accomplishing these holistic objectives. Such shortage regularly results in the use of staff insufficiently trained or no teaching of physical education at all, which only increases the gap between the policy goals and the real performance of students. Furthermore, other issues like problems intensified by the COVID-19 pandemic, like the necessity to use new teaching strategies and digital technology, expose long-standing gaps in the policy and practice of physical education. Thus, it requires a paradigm shift, beyond conventional teaching to include ecological integration and learning by doing methods, which will bring a more holistic and interesting experience in physical education to students. The reorientation will require the thorough examination of current pedagogical models to make sure that they are aligned with the current conceptualizations of motor learning, psychosocial development, or health promotion. Moreover, to fully reform it, it is important to consider physical education as a field of study requiring special training of teachers and lifelong learning skills, as proved by such global frameworks like the Canadian PHE Competencies. Improving the position of quality physical education in Indian schools is important to cultivate the active, resilient, healthy and active citizens, which requires systemic modifications of time in daily instruction, curriculum and teacher education. The National Education Policy 2020 took a step forward to overcome these deficiencies in the system by incorporating physical education and sports science into mainstream curriculum with focus on a holistic development. Nevertheless, efficient implementation depends on the strong teacher training program which will help to prepare educators with digital skills on the medium level in order to implement technology into lesson planning and to overcome the problem of the weak infrastructure and insufficient possibilities of training.

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