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Implementation of Physical Education Curriculum in Indian School: Challenges and Opportunities

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ABSTRACT: The implementation of the physical education (PE) curriculum in Indian schools faces numerous challenges but also offers significant opportunities for innovation. Despite the critical role of PE in the holistic development of children, factors such as inadequate infrastructure, lack of trained personnel, and socio-cultural barriers hinder effective implementation. Many schools, particularly in rural areas, lack adequate sports facilities and equipment, while a shortage of qualified PE teachers further exacerbates the issue. Additionally, socio-cultural attitudes and gender disparities limit the inclusivity and effectiveness of PE programs. However, increasing awareness of the benefits of physical education is driving policy reforms and investments in school sports infrastructure. Opportunities include developing comprehensive training programs for PE teachers, leveraging technology for innovative teaching methods, and engaging communities to support PE initiatives. This paper explores the current challenges and opportunities in implementing PE curricula in Indian schools and proposes strategies to create a more effective and inclusive PE system.

KEYWORDS: Physical Education, Curriculum Implementation, Indian Schools.

I. INTRODUCTION

The implementation of physical education (PE) curriculum in Indian schools presents a complex landscape filled with both challenges and opportunities. As India undergoes rapid economic, demographic, and lifestyle changes, the importance of incorporating a robust physical education program in schools cannot be overstated. Physical education plays a crucial role in the holistic development of children, contributing not only to their physical well-being but also to their mental and social health. Despite its recognized importance, the effective implementation of PE curricula faces numerous obstacles, including inadequate infrastructure, lack of trained personnel, and socio-cultural barriers. However, these challenges also pave the way for significant opportunities to innovate and improve the PE curriculum to better meet the needs of students. The challenges in implementing an effective PE curriculum are multifaceted. Infrastructure in many schools is often insufficient, with limited access to proper sports facilities and equipment. Additionally, there is a shortage of adequately trained PE teachers, and the existing teaching methodologies may not align with contemporary educational standards. Socio-cultural factors, such as gender biases and varying levels of parental support, further complicate the integration of physical education into the school routine [1-4].

Conversely, these challenges highlight opportunities for substantial improvements. With increasing awareness of the benefits of physical education, there is a growing impetus for policy reforms and investments in school sports infrastructure. Training programs for PE teachers can be developed and enhanced, incorporating modern pedagogical techniques and promoting lifelong physical activity among students. Moreover, leveraging technology can facilitate innovative approaches to physical education, making it more engaging and accessible. This paper explores the current state of physical education in Indian schools, examining the challenges that hinder its implementation and the opportunities that can be harnessed to promote a more effective and inclusive PE curriculum. By addressing these issues, we can work towards a future where physical education is an integral part of every student's school experience.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Boyle-Holmes et al. (2010) used a quasi-experimental design to study the impact of Michigan's Exemplary Physical Education Curriculum (EPEC) on fourth- and fifth-grade students. They found that students exposed to EPEC demonstrated significantly stronger motor skills and self-efficacy in physical activity compared to those with standard PE curricula. The study, involving 1,464 students, utilized surveys, activity checklists, and fitness assessments. Results



showed notable improvements in motor skills and physical activity levels, particularly among fourth graders, but no significant fitness outcomes. The research suggests that EPEC is more effective in enhancing motor skill performance

Flory et al. (2011) examined culturally relevant physical education in urban settings using the cultural relevance cycle framework. They observed 53 PE teachers and interviewed 183 students over four years, identifying themes of care, respect, communication, and curricular content. The study highlighted the importance of cultural knowledge and respectful learning environments for student engagement. While the cycle of cultural relevance was effective in creating positive educational experiences, few teachers fully implemented all three steps. The findings emphasize the need for comprehensive approaches to culturally relevant education in urban PE settings.

Misra et al. (2012) reviewed the rising prevalence of lifestyle-related diseases in India due to inadequate diets and decreased physical activity. They formulated India-specific physical activity guidelines, recommending 60 minutes of daily activity, including moderate-intensity aerobic exercise, work-related activity, and muscle-strengthening exercises. For children, 60 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity is advised. The guidelines aim to address obesity, metabolic syndrome, type 2 diabetes, and coronary heart disease. Proper implementation of these guidelines is expected to significantly impact the health of Asian Indians, especially given their high predisposition to these conditions.

Di Brezzo et al. (2012) compared traditional PE with the PE4Life curriculum, focusing on health-related physical fitness in middle school students. The study involved two demographically similar schools, with one adopting PE4Life and the other using traditional methods. Assessments included BMI, PACER, curl-ups, push-ups, and flexibility tests. Results showed significant improvements in PACER scores and BMI reduction in the PE4Life group over two years. PE4Life also enhanced flexibility more than traditional PE. The study suggests that the PE4Life curriculum, with its emphasis on health-related fitness, is more beneficial for improving student fitness outcomes.

Ghosh et al. (2013) surveyed the implementation of health and physical education in West Bengal primary schools. They found that while health and physical education were included in the curriculum since 1950, proper implementation was lacking. Many schools had minimum facilities for games and sports, but these were underutilized. Annual sports were organized, and drinking water and toilet facilities were available in most schools. However, medical check-ups and proper organization of sports periods were often inadequate. The study concluded that more initiative is needed from school authorities to fully utilize existing resources for physical education.

Sugandha Kumar et al. (2014) studied the impact of CBSE and specific model PE curricula on flexibility and coordination in adolescent boys. They compared 15 boys from each of two schools in Chennai. Flexibility was measured by the sit-and-reach test and coordination by the alternate wall toss test. Analysis showed that the CBSE curriculum group improved significantly in both flexibility and coordination compared to the specific model curriculum group. The study suggests that the CBSE physical education curriculum is more effective in enhancing these physical attributes in adolescents.

Naylor et al. (2015) reviewed the implementation of school-based physical activity (PA) programs and their impact on health outcomes. They found a positive relationship between program implementation and health outcomes in most studies. Factors influencing implementation included time, resource availability, and supportive school climate. The review highlighted the need for standardized definitions and measurements of implementation to improve the effectiveness of school-based PA interventions. It called for further research to link implementation levels with health outcomes and to support the scale-up of successful programs for broader population-level health improvements.

Cloes et al. (2016) emphasized the importance of quality physical education (QPE) in promoting physical activity among children and adolescents. They highlighted UNESCO's guidelines for QPE and the challenges faced by educators in many countries due to limited resources. The study described a collaborative action research project in Madagascar aimed at reforming physical education. The project focused on improving the quality of PE, school sports, and community sports practices through a bottom-up process. The study aimed to address diversity, accessibility, inclusion, and equity, emphasizing the need for practical support to implement new teaching strategies effectively.

Te Hiwi et al. (2017) explored physical education in the Pelican Lake Indian Residential School system from 1926 to 1944. They examined how school administrators used physical education to promote "civilized" citizenship ideals among Indigenous students. The study found that physical activities like ball games and races were part of a broader policy to assimilate Indigenous students. Administrators aimed to impart character traits such as self-discipline and



good sportsmanship. The research sheds light on the role of physical education in the broader context of cultural and political assimilation in residential schools.

III. INFRASTRUCTURE AND RESOURCE LIMITATIONS

- **Current State of Facilities:** Many Indian schools lack adequate sports facilities, playgrounds, and equipment, particularly in rural areas. Schools often have limited access to basic infrastructure needed for a comprehensive PE program.
- **Resource Allocation:** Funding for physical education is often minimal, with a significant portion of the budget allocated to academic subjects. This results in poorly maintained or non-existent sports facilities and limited availability of sports equipment.
- **Innovative Solutions:** There is a need for innovative approaches to maximize existing resources. Partnerships with local sports clubs, community organizations, and private sectors can help bridge the gap. Additionally, integrating PE with other school activities and utilizing multipurpose spaces can enhance the PE experience [5].

IV. TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR PE TEACHERS

- **Lack of Qualified Instructors:** A major challenge is the shortage of trained and qualified physical education teachers. Many schools employ general teachers to conduct PE classes, which affects the quality of instruction.
- **Professional Development Programs:** Establishing comprehensive training programs for PE teachers is crucial. These programs should focus on modern teaching methodologies, inclusive practices, and strategies to engage students of all abilities.
- **Continuous Learning:** Encouraging continuous professional development through workshops, seminars, and online courses can help teachers stay updated with the latest trends and techniques in physical education.

V. SOCIO-CULTURAL BARRIERS AND GENDER INEQUALITY

- **Cultural Attitudes:** Socio-cultural attitudes towards physical education vary widely. In some communities, physical education is not prioritized, and there is a lack of understanding of its benefits.
- **Gender Disparities:** Girls often face significant barriers to participation in physical education due to cultural norms and safety concerns. Addressing these disparities requires targeted interventions and policies that promote gender equality in sports.
- **Community Engagement:** Engaging parents and communities in discussions about the importance of physical education can help shift cultural attitudes and encourage greater support for PE programs [6-7].

VI. POLICY AND CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

- **Policy Framework:** There is a need for a robust policy framework that mandates and supports the implementation of physical education in schools. National and state-level policies should emphasize the importance of PE and allocate necessary resources.
- **Curriculum Design:** Developing a standardized PE curriculum that is flexible enough to cater to the diverse needs of students across different regions is essential. The curriculum should be inclusive, promoting physical literacy, health, and well-being.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Implementing a system for regular monitoring and evaluation of PE programs can help identify areas for improvement and ensure that schools adhere to the prescribed standards.

VII. OPPORTUNITIES FOR INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION

- **Digital Tools and Resources:** Leveraging technology can enhance the delivery of physical education. Online platforms, apps, and virtual coaching can provide students with access to quality PE resources, especially in remote areas.
- **Interactive Learning:** Incorporating interactive and gamified elements into PE lessons can make physical activity more engaging and enjoyable for students. This can also help track progress and personalize learning experiences.



- Research and Collaboration: Encouraging research in physical education can lead to the development of evidence-based practices. Collaboration between educational institutions, government bodies, and private organizations can foster innovation and improve PE programs [8-9].

VIII. CONCLUSION

The implementation of physical education in Indian schools is crucial for the holistic development of students, encompassing physical, mental, and social well-being. Despite facing significant challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, a shortage of trained PE teachers, and socio-cultural barriers, there are numerous opportunities to improve and innovate the PE curriculum. Addressing these issues requires a multifaceted approach, including investing in better sports facilities, developing comprehensive training programs for PE teachers, and leveraging technology to make physical education more engaging and accessible. Policy reforms and increased community engagement are also essential to overcoming socio-cultural barriers and promoting gender equality in sports. By focusing on these areas, we can create a more effective and inclusive physical education system that benefits all students. The future of physical education in India holds promise, with potential for significant improvements that can lead to the overall development and well-being of the younger generation.

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