

UNIT - I

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Definition, Objectives, Scope and Importance of Physical Education

MEANING OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The word physical refers to body, and indicates bodily characteristics such as strength, speed, endurance, flexibility, health coordination and performance. It seemingly contrasts the body with the mind. The term education when used in conjunction with physical, refers to a process of education that develops the human body especially fitness and movement skills. Therefore, it transcends all misconceptions and misgivings about physical education as a field of teaching and being considered as an ingredient of general education.

Physical Education is rightly recognized as an integral part of education. The existence of man is primarily physical. The first lessons a human child learns are lessons of physical activity. No education, howsoever ideal and exalted in its objectives, is complete without emphasis on motor activity. The human body is a sacred gift of Nature. Its growth, development and efficiency largely depends upon the quantity and quality of motor activities it performs. Compartmentalization of human personality into “body, mind, and spirit” is an over-simplification.

The importance of physical education and activity was recognized by Plato when he said, “Lack of activity destroys

the good conditions of every human being, while movement and methodical physical exercise save it and preserve it.” When human movement is combined with the universal drive of play, the combination forms one of the most powerful education media—the physical education.

Today’s education not merely deals with mental enhancement of an individual, but also a source of physical activities that leads to all-round development of an individual. The best individual is one who is physically fit, mentally sound and sharp, emotionally balanced and socially well adjusted. It is therefore, 'physical education' said to be an integral part of 'Total Education'.

The term physical Education consists of two separate words, 'Physical and Education' .The first word 'Physical' is said to be related with bodily functions. Physical is relating to body or all the bodily characteristics. The term Physical may include the body functions, like digestive function, circulatory function or muscular function of any body, and it may be physical strength, physical endurance of any human being. In other words this word deals with fitness components and bodily effectiveness of any individual that can also be said as physical appearance.

The term 'Education' is described as a process in which and by which knowledge, character and behaviour of the individuals are understood and shaped. It is a systematic instruction for any particular task. Education is basically a preparation for life. Education is a training to learn and to apply that learning in real life. A combined meaning of these two words would be that systematic instructions and training which relate to physical activities or programme of activities, necessary for development of physical powers or cultivation of physical skill.

Education is not confined to any particular place. It is 'ever on' process. Education is a doing phenomenon also.

Education can exist anywhere and anytime. Same applied for Physical Education as well, A well planned and prepared process in physical education leads to healthful living. This not only increases physical efficiency of an individual but also social adoptability. Physical education is that part of education that cannot be neglected at any cost. This process leads to many quality development programmes which ultimately assist individual to become well social being. This educational process results in being vigorous and strong, with all due importance to mental health and emotion .In other words physical education for all around development of an individual. This means physical education covers all the aspects of physical, mental and social well being.

The meaning of physical education can be derived from noting what takes place within the context of gym classes in the public schools. Yet for at least two reasons that hardly seems the right thing to do. Most importantly, such an abrupt beginning and ending would not do justice to the volumes of material written on the nature of physical education. Also, the primary identification of physical education with public school gym classes may merely represent a professional bias of mine. Therefore I will proceed with delineation of that which appears to lie deeper in the meaning of physical education. Many of the attempts to probe the meaning of physical education date back several years. Among more recent works, Siedentop's *Physical Education: Introductory Analysis* stands out as a legitimate effort in the search for such meaning. Although his efforts to arrive at meaning proceed from a definitional base, he does not stop with mere definition. After assessing other selected efforts to define physical education, Siedentop advances his own source of meaning. Other physical education theorists might not agree with Siedentop's focus on play. Nevertheless, his differentiate strike a familiar cord with respect to other

efforts at exploring the meaning of physical education. The idea that physical education must meet an educational criterion probably is the master key to unlocking the deeper meaning of physical education.

Analysis of the background of physical education will reveal that physical educators have usually been preoccupied with their concern that physical education be recognized as an integral part of the educational process. The logic behind such concern is readily understood. Physical educators are employed as part of a school system. Schools are supposed to be first and foremost concerned with the educational process. Therefore, physical educators consider it necessary to secure their place in the sun by proclaiming the educational benefits of their work. After all, who wants to be a second class citizen? With that form of reasoning either consciously or subconsciously operative, the literature of physical education is replete with efforts to justify the existence of physical education from an educational perspective. Even though Siedentop might differ from some of his colleagues in identifying the focus on play, he is careful to add that it should be conceived as play education. One other key to unlocking the meaning of physical education can also be elicited from Siedentop's differentiate. That is the proposition that physical education involves activities with a dominant motor emphasis.

Once again this strikes a familiar tone that is evident in much of the physical education literature. It would appear that this is also a principal reason why many physical educators tend to be quite uncomfortable about the suggestion that sport is the focus of physical education. They will readily point out that physical education includes many activities with a dominant motor emphasis that do not meet the criteria for a sport. Dance, movement education, and various exercises programs

would be cited as examples of activities with a dominant motor emphasis that are not sports. Hence, in the conception of physical education, sport shares the motor emphasis domain with a number of other activities. Thus it would appear that the essence of physical education can be readily identified in those school activities that have a dominant motor emphasis and meet certain educational criteria. The idea of instruction seems to loom large in the fulfilment of those educational criteria. However, another dimension to the meaning of physical education is worth noting, a dimension that lies beneath the surface, but it may be the most significant in explaining why there are conflicts between certain segments of the sport enterprise and physical education. Physical educators have a mission. As I see it that mission has a twofold thrust. The first objective is to maximize participation by providing opportunities for everyone to benefit from learning through the experience of engaging in these activities with a dominant motor emphasis. The second objective would appear to be a corollary of the first.

In attempting to meet the first objective, physical educators are convinced that various controls must be applied to the sport enterprise. Competition is usually the focal point in calling for the control.

The literature of physical education and the language of physical educators are replete with references to the need for controlling the extent of competition in sport. Beyond this focal concern about competition we find several related aspects that add spokes to the wheel involving the total mission of physical education.

There seems to be inherent resistance to such ideas as sport is entertainment, sport is business, and the commercial nature of sport or that sport should be marketed. Even though physical educators recognize