

PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND HEALTHFUL ENVIRONMENT IN PRIMARY SCHOOL OF WEST BENGAL AFTER INDEPENDENCE

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ABSTRACT

Primary education consists of first years of formal and structural education. Globally, around 70% of primary age children are enrolled in primary education and it is gradually increasing. Under the 'Education for all' program by UNESCO, most countries have committed to achieving universal primary education by 2015. Objectives of primary education as indicated by Education Commission: 1964-66 are -Development of language, mental and psychological aspects, health habits; infusion of character traits and value education, inculcation of social culture and dignity of labor are important. In post independent period, West Bengal primary council (WBPC) introduced health and physical education as a subject in the primary school curriculum in 1950. Present study was a survey. A questionnaire was developed with twenty one questions from different areas of Health and Physical education such as syllabus of the subject, teacher to teach the subject, time slot for the subject in school time table, program, facilities and equipment, budget, and different aspects of school health programs like sanitation, drinking water, mid-day meal and health check up. One hundred primary schools from nineteen Districts of West Bengal were selected for getting information through questionnaire. The obtained data were analyzed using statistical methods. Results indicated that 38% of the schools did not have correct knowledge about the syllabus of health and physical education and its proper implementation. There were classes for sports at the end part of the day for about 86% of schools and in most of the cases these were not properly organized. Games period were mostly looked after by either general teacher or no-body. But 62% schools had playground and equipments are available for football, kabaddi athletics, skipping and other such activities. Annual sports are organized in 100% of schools. Drinking water facility was available in 92% of schools. Separate toilet facilities were available in 86% of the schools. Twenty per cent schools did not have the facility for medical check -up. Mid-day meal was organized in 90% of schools. Within the limitations of the study and on the basis of the results obtained, the following conclusions were drawn: Health and physical education was incorporated in primary school syllabus of West Bengal from 1950 but the subject was not properly implemented. Most of the primary schools of West Bengal have minimum required facilities for games and sports but these are not properly utilized due to lack of initiative on the party of school authorities and school administrators. Present state and status of Health and Physical Education in primary schools is not very encouraging.

Key words: Health and Physical Education, Primary education, Mid-day meal, Facilities and equipment.

INTRODUCTION:

Primary [elementary] education consists of the first years of formal and structural education. In general, primary education consists of six or seven years of schooling starting at the age of 5 or

6, although this varies between and some times within countries. Globally, around 70% of primary-age children are enrolled in primary education, and this proportion is rising. Under the 'education for all' programme driven by UNESCO, most countries have committed to achieving universal enrolment in primary education by 2015, and in many countries, it is compulsory for children to receive primary education. The division between primary and secondary education is some what arbitrary, but it generally occurs at about eleven or twelve years of age. Some education systems have separate middle schools, which is the transition to the final stage of secondary education and takes place at around the age of fourteen. Schools that provide primary education are mostly referred to as primary schools. Primary schools in these countries are often sub-divided into in front schools and junior schools.

Primary education encompasses all the programmes and activities on education of the second stage in the formal system of education. It has been admitted by the educationists that primary education is of utmost importance in the individual or social life of an educand. The experiences gained at this stage help individuals lay foundations of their physical, mental, emotional, intellectual or social development in life. Modern educationists and sociologists are of the opinion that equal distribution of social amenities becomes easier through the expansion of primary education in the country. Primary education plays a vital role in social development. Education of this stage enables a person to become aware of his own duties, rights and responsibilities.

Many people think that primary education is initial formal education in the life of an individual. Expansion of educational endeavour has taken place in modern age. In this context, if the word "primary" is used in the sense of "Initial" the importance of pre-primary education gets lost. According to another popular notion, primary education is a combined period of a few academic years. The academic time span of school education has been divided into the stages of a few classes or academic years.

Primary education is the instruction imparted to pupil from Class I to Class IV or V. Primary education stage refers to the period of schooling during which every child must remain in school. Education which is imparted at the initial stage without following a curriculum may not actually be primary education. Rather, education which runs according to specific and fixed curriculum is

primary education. Primary education is structured education with definite curriculum but it is universal in nature. Educationists think that planned training and education are necessary for development of necessary basic qualities in individual life. The task of such training is performed at the primary level of education.

Every society expects that their children will be good citizens. Training is also needed for being a good citizen. The period of primary education is the time for inculcating values, habits and sentiments in the pupils. So, it has been felt that primary education must be a compulsory form of education for all. The Education Commission (1964-66) has accepted primary education in this sense. One directive of Indian constitution is that every child must have the right to receive free education upto the age of 14. It is the responsibility of the state to arrange for this free and compulsory education. Education at this stage is primary education. The Education Commission in its recommended structure of education has fixed the age range for receiving primary education from 6 years to 14 years. Primary education for a child is to start from 6 years when his pre-primary education will be over.

Development of personality takes place through the development of physical, mental, emotional, and social characteristics. Objective of primary education is to render direct help for development of these characteristics. Other objectives are to train children to become worthy citizens, to develop attitude for maintaining national integration and to help children to raise national productivity.

When the Indian Education Commission (1964-66) started to survey the different aspects of the existing education system, at that time four or five years of academic studies were considered as primary education. Instruction imparted to pupil from class I to class IV or V was called primary education. The education commission suggested in their report to expand the time period for primary education. They suggested that after pre-primary education and from the age of six years a child will start to undergo the process of primary education.

METHODOLOGY:

For getting information about the condition of physical education and healthful environment prevailing in primary school at present, hundred primary schools were selected from all the

districts of West Bengal on the basis of stratified sampling. A questionnaire with fifteen questions for assessing the state of physical education and six more questions regarding healthful environment was developed for collecting information.

Collected information with respect to each question was analyzed using appropriate method of statistics. For objective numerical quantitative data, mean and S.D were calculated and for the other questions percentage value of number of respondents was found for drawing conclusion.

The present study would highlight the status of physical education in primary school of West Bengal after Independence. The results would reveal the historical development of primary Physical Education of West Bengal. It would also be known from the results regarding the importance of games sports and Physical Education given in primary school curriculum in the state. It would be known from the results about the academic status of physical education in primary schools of West Bengal.

Syllabus and curriculum of Primary Education of West Bengal in Post-Independent Period

After independence the structure of education was newly planned for the nation. Education was a state subjects, accordingly, Govt. of West Bengal initiated framing of curriculum for different levels of education primary, secondary and beyond.

West Bengal Board of Primary education was set up for planning and controlling the primary education of the State. This body prepared first syllabus for primary schools in 1950.

(i) The first syllabus:

The primary schools considered ten different areas to be included. These were -

- (i) Health education;
- (ii) Physical culture, play and games;

The class-wise syllabus for class one to class five was prepared. Physical culture and play activity were compulsory for all. Daily physical education programme for 15 to 20 minutes was developed. The details syllabus for different classes was as follows:

Table – 1

First Physical Education syllabus for primary schools in 1950

Class	Age of children	Compulsory / optional	Duration	Frequency	Activity
I & II	6 – 8 years	Compulsory	15-20 m.	Daily	1.Fundamental activity, 2.Imitating Activities, 3.Minor games, 4.Simple folk dance 5.Swimming, 6.Free hand exercise
III & IV	8-10 years	Compulsory	25-30 m	Daily	1.Repetition of previous work, 2.Minor games, 3.Simple folk dance and bratachari, 4.Swimming 5.Conditional exercise: Agility exercise, rolling, and group dance.

(ii) Second Syllabus and curriculum of Primary Education (1979)

Syllabus was reframed in 1979 by the West Bengal Board of Primary Education; the syllabus was divided in to four main areas as follows:

- I. Physical culture and play activity,
- II. Productive and creative work,
- III. Practical work for practical experiences,
- IV. Reading and writing.

The curriculum contain for different classes primary section was as follows.

Table – 2

Second Physical Education syllabus for primary schools in 1979

Class	Age of children	Compulsory/ optional	Duration	Frequency	Activity
I & II	6 – 7 years	Compulsory	15-20 m.	Daily	1.Fundamental activities 2.Imitating activities, 3. Balance activities, 4.Action song, 5.Minor games, 6. Action with storytelling, 7.Personal cleanliness
III & IV	8-10 years	Compulsory	25-30 m	Daily	1.Repetition of previous work, 2. Minor games, 3. Developmental exercise. 4. Personal cleanliness. 5.Athletics, 6. Major games 7. Folk dance.

(iii) Third Syllabus and Curriculum for Primary Education (2003)

The syllabus for primary education was revised again in 2003. Accordingly, syllabus for physical education was also updated.

Table – 3

Third Physical Education syllabus for primary schools in 2003

Class	Age of children	Compulsory/ optional	Duration	Frequency	Activity
I & II	5 – 6 years	Compulsory	30 m.	Daily	1.Fundamental activities, 2.Minor games, 3.Free hand exercise, 4.Yoga , 5.Gymnastics, 6.Athletics, 7.Record keeping for height, weight and physical illness.
III & IV	7-10 years	Compulsory	25-30 m	Daily	1.Repetition of previous work, 2.Minor games, 3.Rhythmic activities 4.Gymnastics, 5.Yoga 6.Athletic, 7.Swimming 8.Major game, 9.Indigenous games, 10. Record keeping for height, weight and physical illness.

Present study was conducted to know the status of Physical Education in Primary School of West Bengal after Independence. Therefore, selection of schools for collecting information about various aspects of Physical Education was duly emphasized.

In West Bengal there are nineteen districts. Total number of Government primary schools in all the nineteen districts of the state is fifty thousand four hundred and twenty All these schools follow same syllabus for primary education. But the facilities of all these primary schools differ with respect to infrastructural facilities, human resource and environment for teaching and

learning. So, to get a correct idea about the status of physical education, it was important to select adequate number of schools covering all the districts of the state so that the selected sample becomes the true representative of the total population. The sample schools were selected from both rural and urban areas.

Initially, ten schools from each of nineteen districts of West Bengal were randomly selected for collecting data. Out of a total of 190 schools covering of all of West Bengal. Response was obtained from 100 schools.

The main purpose of the study was to review state and status of Physical Education in primary schools. For this, the infrastructural facilities including playground, indoor hall/gymnasium; equipment for the games and sports; teachers; physical education classes in the time-table; syllabus of physical education; school health programme including sanitation, drinking water facilities, mid-day-meal; facility of health check up and physical education programmes were selected as the factors for evaluation and assessment.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

A. Data regarding Information about Physical Education

Regarding the information about Physical Education it is seen that eighty-six percent of schools offer physical education classes in scheduled class routine, the classes taken by classrooms teachers.

Q.2 Weekly physical education class in school programme:

Regarding physical education class in schools timetable class-wise weekly has been presented in Table-4.

Table – 4
Physical education class in schools programme (weekly)
No. of class and percentages

Class	1 period	Percentage	2 period	Percentage	3 or more period	Percentage
I	22	22	38	38	26	26
II	20	20	40	40	26	26
III	24	24	40	40	22	22
IV	24	24	42	42	20	20

From the table-4 it is seen that in Class I twenty two percent schools provided one class in a week and thirty eight percent schools provided two class and only twenty six percent schools provided three or more class in a week for physical education. In class II it is seen that twenty percent schools provided only one class in a week and forty percent schools provided two classes and twenty six percent schools provided three or more class in week for physical education. In class III and IV it is seen that twenty four percent schools provided one class in a week but in class III forty percent schools provided two class in a week and twenty two percent schools provided more than three classes in a week. It is also seen that in class IV forty two percent schools provided two class and only twenty percent schools provided more than three classes in a week for physical education.

The rest information is very interesting it is seen that only seventy two percent schools followed the Govt. syllabus in all classes but it is also seen that teachers is not property trained in physical education.

Q. 6&7. Playground and Gymnasium in schools:

Information regarding playground and Gymnasium in schools has been presented in Table-5.

Table –5
Playground and Gymnasium

	No. of School	Percentage
Playground	62	62
Gymnasium	Nil	-

From table-5, it is seen that out of hundred schools sixty two percent of the schools had playground, but more of them gymnasium.

Q.8 Games & Sports in School

Information regarding the facility of games & sports in schools has been presented in Table-6.

Table – 6
Games & Spots facility in schools

Game	No. of school	Percentage	Total No. of school
Kabaddi	18	18	↑ 100 ↓
Football	54	54	
Athletic	24	24	
Yoga	6	6	
Kho-kho	10	10	
Badminton	6	6	
Skeping	18	18	
Minor game	20	20	
Volleyball	4	4	
Bratachary	6	6	
Cricket	8	8	
Gymnastics	4	4	

From the table-6 it is seen that out of hundred schools fifty four percent of schools had facilities of football game, twenty four percent schools had facility of athletic and twenty percent schools provided for facilities of Kabaddi and skipping and ten percent of schools had facility of kho-kho game but only light percent schools had facility of cricket game, it is also seen that only six percent schools provided facilities of Bratacharya, Badminton game and Yoga, and only four percent of schools provided facilities of Gymnastics.

Regarding the sports equipments it is seen that sixty percent schools had a football and ten percent schools had cricket bat and ball and twenty percent of the schools had Bagaduli, ludo and skipping, etc. Some schools had ring ball also but only six percent of the schools had badminton racket and cock.

Regarding the purchase of sports equipments it is seen that no Govt. aid, but only ten percent of the schools purchases their sports equipment from T.L.M. funds this funds also a Govt. fund.

Regarding the examination for physical education it is seen that sixty two percent of the schools take examination for physical education. All schools take physical education examination yearly or annually fifty marks only.

Q.12, 13, 14& 15 Prayer, Mass drill, Schools performance, Annual sports in school :

Information regarding prayer, Mass drill, schools performance, Annual sports in schools has been presented in Table-7.

Table – 7

Other sports related information

	School	Percentage
Prayer	80	80
After prayer Mass-Drill	32	32
Schools performance	76	76
Annual sports	100	100

Regarding the other sports related information it is seen that the table-8, eighty percent of the schools organized daily prayer but unfortunately only thirty two percent of the schools organize

physical activity (Mass-drill) after prayer. Seventy six percent of the schools provide schools performance and all schools organize annual sports meet but only eighty eight per cent of the schools participate in school gave organize by the West Bengal Govt.

B.Data regarding Information about the Healthful Environment

Q.1, 2, 3, 4, &5. Healthful environment including drinking water, Mid-day meal, Toilet, First Aid & Health checking facility in school

Regarding the facility of Drinking water, Mid-day meal, Toilet, First-Aid and Health Checking facility in schools have been presented in Table 8.

Table – 8
Healthful Environment

	No. of school	Percentage
Drinking water	92	92%
Mid-day-meal	96	96%
Toilet	100	100%
Common Toilet	14	14%
Separate Toilet	86	86%
First – Aid	86	86%
Health checking	80	80%
Govt. organization	48	48%
Other	32	32%

From the table-8, it is seen that ninety-two percent schools had drinking water facility but ninety six percent schools had provision of mid-day meal. All schools had toilet but eighty six percent schools had separate toilet and fourteen percent of the schools had common toilet. It is seen that eighty-six percent schools had provision for First-Aid, and eight percent schools had provision for regular health checking facility but only for the eight percent of the schools are used as a service of Govt. organization and health centre and rest of thirty two percent of the schools is other.

Q.6 Most prevalent disease in primary school:

The following table 9 presents the information regarding the common disease of student.

Table – 9
Common Disease

Disease	No. of school	Percentage
Cold & cough	48	48
Malnutrition	30	30
Bowels complaint	12	12
Vision problems	6	6
Skin disease	4	4

Out of hundred schools it is seen that forty-eight percent of the schools student suffer from cold & cough and thirty percent of the schools students suffer from malnutrition, and only twelve percent of the schools students suffer from bowels complaint but only six percent schools students suffer from vision problems and two percent of the schools students suffer from skin disease.

CONCLUSION:

Since independence the syllabus of primary schools has been modified three times. The first was introduced in 1950 and it was modified in 1979, finally it was again modified in 2003.

Status of Physical Education

Twenty two percent schools had one period per week for each of the classes from one to four; forty per cent schools had two periods for each of the classes from one to four, twenty four per cent schools provided three or more period per week for all the students from one to four. Eighty six per cent schools provided classes for physical education in weekly time table and fourteen percent of the schools did not provide any classes for physical education in weekly time table. Sixty-two percent schools had a common play ground. No primary schools had the facility of Gymnasium. Seventy-two percent of the schools followed Govt. syllabus, for physical education. Fifty four percent primary schools provided facilities for football, twenty four percent schools

provided facility of track and field athletics, and eighteen percent schools provided facility for Kabaddi. Cricket, Kho-kho, Yoga, Volleyball, Gymnastics are popular in some schools. Sixty percent schools had football, ten percent schools had cricket ball and bat, and twenty percent schools had indoor game like bagaduli, ludo etc. For purchase of sports equipment, schools used Teaching Learning Material (TLM) Fund. Sixty-two percent of the schools conducted examination for physical education in fifty marks. Eighty percent schools organized daily prayer, thirty two percent schools organized mass-drill with prayer, seventy six percent of the schools provided schools performance facility. All schools organized Annual Sports Meet (Athletic meet) regularly; Eighty-eight percent schools participated in Inter-school competition organized by the West Bengal Government. Physical education classes were looked after by general teachers of the school. The qualified physical education teacher was appointed.

Regarding Healthful Environment

Ninety-six percent schools provided mid-day meal and ninety two percent schools had drinking water facilitate. All schools had toilet facility, but eighty six percent schools had separate toilet for boys and girls and fourteen percent schools had common toilet facility. Eighty-six percent schools had first-aid facility. Eighty per cent schools organized periodical Health checking programme. Cold and cough, bowel complain, skin disease were most prevalent diseases among primary school children. Mal-nutrition was also prevalent in primary schools.

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