



## Life Skill Development in Physical Education

**Dr. Nilesh Lohar**

Assistant Professor

Department of Physical Education,

University of Mumbai

E-Mail- dr.nileshlohardpeum@gmail.com

### ABSTRACT

*Physical Education is all about equipping an individual with the tools for handling the challenges of life. Life is full of surprises, unexpected hurdles and obstacles, unpredictable situations that requires an individual to acquire a variety of skills. WHO defines Life Skills as "the abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable the individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life". A review by UNICEF found that approaches relying on life skills have been effective in educating youth about health-related issues — such as alcohol, tobacco and other drug use, nutrition, pregnancy preventive measures and preventing HIV/AIDS, and other sexually transmitted diseases (STD). Physical Education helps to develop Social or Interpersonal Skills that includes Self Awareness, Interpersonal skills, Effective Communication and Empathy. It also helps to inculcate Cognitive or Thinking Skills that includes Critical Thinking, Creative Thinking, Decision Making, Problem Solving. Physical Education helps to develop Emotional Skills that includes coping stress and managing emotions. According to D.A. Wuest and Charles A. Bucher, Physical Education is defined as an educational process that uses physical activity as a means to help individuals acquire skills, fitness, knowledge, and attitudes that contribute to their optimal development and well-being*

**Keywords: Life Skills, Physical Activities, Social, Cognitive, Emotional**

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**Dr. Nilesh Lohar**

Assistant Professor

Department of Physical Education,

University of Mumbai

E-Mail- dr.nileshlohardpeum@gmail.com

### Introduction

Physical Education is all about equipping an individual with the tools for handling the challenges of life. Life is full of surprises, unexpected hurdles and obstacles, unpredictable situations that requires an individual to acquire a variety of skills.

**WHO** defines **Life Skills** as "*the abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable the individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life*".

**UNICEF** defines **Life Skills** as "*a behaviour change or behaviour development approach designed to address a balance of three areas: Knowledge, Attitudes and Skills*".

**Life Skills** are defined in the **Targeting Life Skills (TLS) Model (Hendricks, 1996)** as "*Skills that help an individual to be successful in living a productive and satisfying life*".

**Yarham** (1919) defined **Life Skills** as "*the personal competence that enables a person to deal effectively with the demands and challenges confronted in everyday life*".

A review by UNICEF found that approaches relying on life skills have been effective in educating youth about health-related issues — such as alcohol, tobacco and other drug use, nutrition, pregnancy preventive measures and preventing HIV/AIDS, and other sexually transmitted diseases (STD). In Indian context, where family pattern, industrialisation, urbanisation, globalisation, technological waves have a sweeping effect on educational institutions. It is not just restricted to imparting knowledge, but needs to focus on holistic development of individual for fulfilling life. Physical Education seeks to inculcate all round development of individuals as well as creating a progressive society that recognizes Life Skills which compliment, supplement and reinforce each other:

### Social or Interpersonal Skills

**Physical Education helps to develop Self Awareness that** includes the recognition of 'self', our character, our strengths and weaknesses, desires and dislikes. The understanding begins with studying physical aspects of one's body, leading to the physiological processes involved

in the functioning of the body. This helps the individual to develop their strengths while overcoming weaknesses for harboring ambitions for success but at the same time accepting defeat with the same humility that creates the character of good human being. As Gardiner and Hatch (1989) observe, self-awareness skill gives access to one's own feelings and the ability to discriminate among them and draw upon them to guide our behaviour. This interpersonal intelligence is the key to self-knowledge. People with this ability can have control over their emotions.

**Physical Education develops Interpersonal skills** that help us to relate in positive ways with people we interact. The ability to deal with people, says Khera (1998), is the greatest ability under the sun that one can ever have.

Interpersonal relationship skill

- (i) helps one to interact with others in a positive way.
- (ii) help one to keep friendly relationship with others, *viz.*, neighbours, colleagues and even with teachers too.
- (iv) is of great importance to one's mental and social well-being.
- (v) helps to make the person capable of putting an end to a relationship constructively.

**Physical Education helps in Effective Communication** means that we are able to express ourselves, both verbally and non-verbally, in ways that are appropriate to our cultures and situations. This means being able to express opinions and desires, and also needs and fears. And, it would also mean being able to ask for advice and help in the time of need. Effective communication skill is the set of skills that enables a person to convey information and also receive and understand in the same manner. When the person makes use of the set of skills to convey and receive information, it can be observed in the form of his or her behaviour. So, an effective communication skills refer to the repertoire of behaviours that serve to convey and receive the information. Effective communication skill is defined as the ability to make exchange of information between two or more persons in such a way that it creates understanding. Communication is either verbal or non-verbal; and it is a process that includes two persons — one is sender and another is receiver. When this process of communication is carried out effectively, it is known as effective communication. Sender and receiver play different roles in the communication process. Communication is the basic requirement for socialisation. To adjust well in society, effective communication is a must. Communication

skill includes many sub-skills like reading, writing, speaking, listening, expression emotions, etc.

**Physical Education creates Empathy** in an individual for developing a successful relationship with loved ones and society at large. Empathy helps the individual to establish communication with others, accepting and respecting others point of view, at the same time presenting one's view with conviction. Specifically, empathy is essential to improve social interactions with the ethnic or cultural diversities. Physical Education nurtures positive attitude for people with physical disability, mental challenges, emotional stigma, socially ostracized and moreover, it teaches to take care and give assistance to not only individuals but also lead to resolve social issues such as creating awareness on global warming, pollution control, gender discrimination etc.

### **Cognitive or Thinking Skills.**

**Physical Education makes Critical Thinking a habit of an Individual** whereby it develops the ability to analyze information and experiences in an objective manner. According to Mayer (2002), Critical Thinking skill involves judgements based on criteria and standards. So too, Norris (1985) defines Critical Thinking as deciding rationally what to or what not to believe. To Kurland (1996), Critical Thinking is concerned with reason, intellectual honesty and open mindedness as opposed to emotionalism, close-mindedness and intellectual laziness. WHO (1993) states that Critical Thinking is the ability to analyse and sort informations, problems and surrounding situations. A wide variety of physical activities lays the basic foundation of analyzing various skills challenging the cognitive aspects for enhancing one's observational powers, grasping the intricacies of the skills and converting them to behavioural aspects with practice. Thus, contributing to a balanced way of life that helps us to recognize and assess the factors that influence attitudes which gives shape to values and nurtures the acceptable behavior in a normal person.

**Physical Education leads to Creative Thinking** which makes an individual in seeing or doing things differently by generating new ideas or conceiving something new or building on others' ideas that allows to shift one's perspective effortlessly. The creative thinking skill is said to be consisting of

(i) **Collecting:** It is important to collect similar ideas for creative thinking; and from the collection of ideas, creative thinking begins. It is a mental process.

**(ii) Classifying:** On the basis of the ideas collected the second step is to classify those ideas as per its relevance so it will provide certain meaning.

**(iii) Organising:** Classified ideas are organised to gain meaning out of those ideas. The organizing is done on the basis of relevance of ideas.

**(iv) Manipulating:** Those classified and organised ideas are manipulated in such a way that it provides meaning and this meaning is different from traditional and original one.

**(v) Presenting:** After the completion of above four steps, presentation takes place. This is the important part of creative skill. Presentation of ideas decides uniqueness.

**Physical Education helps in Decision Making** by teaching people to deal constructively with a healthy assessment of different options and their effects in our lives.

- (i) One must identify the purpose of his or her decision.
- (ii) One must then gather information.
- (iii) One must identify the principles to judge the alternatives.
- (iv) One must list different possible choices.
- (v) One must determine then the best alternative.
- (vi) One must then put decisions into action.
- (vii) Lastly, one must evaluate the outcome of his or her decision making skill and judgement

**Physical Education helps in Problem Solving** by dealing constructively with our problems. Significant problems that are left unresolved can cause mental stress and give rise to accompanying physical strain. To solve any problem, some steps are involved in problem solving process. They are:

- (i) Recognising : The individual must first try to recognise the problem; then only he or she is able to solve the problem
- (ii) Identifying : The identification of the problem describes the specification of the problem in the mind of the individual.
- (iii) Collecting : Collecting and then preparing the list of relevant choices helps the individual for the further process of decision making.

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- (iv) Organising : When collected relevant choices are organised, it becomes the first decision making process.
- (v) Analysing : In this, those collected and organised choices are analysed to identify its potential.
- (vi) Assessing : The assessing is done on the basis of analysing each choice.
- (vii) Judging : As per assessment of each choice, its relevance to the situation is judged with its importance to the situational application.
- (viii) Synthesizing : The judgement of each choice is synthesized with reference to the situation.
- (ix) Selecting :As per the combination of different choice, appropriate choice is selected as decision.
- (x) Applying : To apply taken decision to solve the problem, requires skill.
- Success of problem solving process depends on implementation of the decision.
- (xi) Verifying : The verification is feedback from the implementation of the decision.

### **Emotional Skills.**

**Physical Education helps with management of Stress** means recognizing the sources of stress in our lives, recognizing how they affect us, and how we act in a way that helps us control our levels of stress by changing our environment or lifestyle, and learning how to relax. Stress is the emotional and physical strain caused as a result of our response to what happens around us. Stress is a result caused by the needs of changing various events affected to physical and mental health due to pressure. Stress is an emotional and physical reaction to change.

**Physical Education develops Emotional Management** means recognizing emotions within us and others, being aware of how emotions influence behaviour and being able to respond to emotions appropriately. Intense emotions like anger or sadness can have negative effects on our health if we don't respond to them appropriately. World Health Organisation (1993) defined coping with an emotion as an ability to assess emotion and being aware of its influence upon individual's behaviour, select suitable means to manage emotion and as an ability to recognise

cause of tension and how to cope with it, how to release, avoid and shift tension to other desirable behaviours. Causes of stress vary from person to person.

All these skills are interrelated and reinforce each other. Together, they are responsible for our psychosocial competence; build our self-esteem and self-efficacy and nurture holistic development.

According to Harold M. Barrow, and Rose Mary Me Gee, Physical Education may be defined as an education through the physical where many of the educational objectives are achieved by means of big muscle play activities. It is a vital phase of education and an integral part of the total Educational process.

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

According to D.A. Wuest and Charles A. Bucher, Physical Education is defined as an educational process that uses physical activity as a means to help individuals acquire skills, fitness, knowledge, and attitudes that contribute to their optimal development and well-being

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Paper Received : 1<sup>st</sup> January, 2020

Paper Reviewed : 15<sup>th</sup> April, 2020

Paper Published : 1<sup>st</sup> June, 2020