



Exploratory analysis of career prospects in physical education and sports

Dr. Pawan Singh Raghav

Assistant Professor, Department of Physical Education, Saket College of Physical Education, Gondia, Maharashtra, India

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Abstract

A degree or diploma in Physical Education serves as an invaluable asset across professions centered on nurturing, educating, and tending to individuals' needs. Its profound impact extends to roles demanding adept presentation, adept interpersonal aptitude, and proficient leadership skills. Within the realm of this discourse, graduates and postgraduates specializing in physical education acquire a repertoire of competencies tailored to equip them for diverse employment prospects. These encompass a spectrum of career pathways, spanning not only within educational domains but also reaching into the expansive spheres of national and regional sports and recreational entities, local governmental bodies, the burgeoning health and fitness industry, as well as the realm of sports coaching.

Keywords: Physical education, career opportunities, management, and leadership

Introduction

Physical education stands as a fundamental facet within the educational framework, aimed at harnessing the physical capabilities of the human body. It is intricately interwoven into the foundational and secondary phases of education, fostering psychomotor learning through a dynamic interplay of play and movement exploration, all in service of promoting holistic health. The objectives and aspirations of physical education are deeply entwined with the societal metamorphoses, be they political, economic, or social. These changes steer its goals toward multifaceted ends, including the cultivation of organic fitness, the refinement of neuromuscular skills, and the nurturing of character and personality traits. The ultimate ambition? To mold and prepare adept leaders who champion the domains of physical education and sports.

In the educational milieu, the role of physical education is unequivocal. It stands as an indispensable component without which the comprehensive development of a child remains unattainable. The contemporary landscape offers promising prospects for professionals navigating the realms of physical education and sports. Institutions, both governmental and private, recognize the significance of physical education, evident in the recruitment of proficient educators within this domain. The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), for instance, mandates physical education as a compulsory subject at the higher secondary level, emphasizing its pivotal role from the earliest stages of education, underscoring its universal relevance.

Considering career prospects, educational institutions emerge as lucrative arenas, offering expansive and rewarding opportunities. Governmental, semi-governmental, public, and private establishments actively seek qualified physical education teachers, offering enticing remuneration and incentives. To excel in this field, candidates must possess a diverse skill set encompassing knowledge of

human movement, health, and physical activity. An adept understanding of other academic disciplines adds depth, while holistic comprehension of health and movement forms a foundational pillar. Coaching prowess, effective teaching methodologies, interpretive acumen, analytical reasoning, organizational finesse, adept leadership, interpersonal finesse, and the ability for critical reflection form the bedrock for success in this vocation.

Evidently, physical education transcends mere physical activity; it embodies an educational philosophy aimed at nurturing holistic development. Despite historical societal biases that segregated physical education from mainstream academia, its enduring journey has transformed it into an indispensable curricular component. From its inception as a teacher education program to its contemporary status as a recognized curricular subject in schools and select colleges, physical education has ascended against the odds, securing its pivotal role in shaping well-rounded individuals within the educational landscape.

Physical Education on Professional Touchstones

The assertion of physical education as a bona fide profession holds indisputable merit. Physical education instructors undergo a comparable teacher education program akin to instructors of other subjects. Prescribed national standards mandate specialized training encompassing a wide spectrum—from diverse physical activity domains to teaching methodologies, sport sciences, and management protocols. Committed to societal service, they align themselves with professional bodies such as the National Association for Sport and Physical Education and the International Association of Teachers of Physical Education. Their objectives encompass safeguarding professional interests, generating and disseminating pertinent knowledge within their field, and staying abreast of evolutionary changes through active participation in national and international seminars, conferences, symposia, and workshops. Thus,

physical educators epitomize professionalism, meeting the benchmarks indicative of a recognized profession.

A profession is characterized as an occupation demanding specialized training in an intellectual field dedicated to societal betterment through service to others. This delineation encompasses disciplines like medicine, engineering, defense, management, and teaching—established professions that have garnered credibility and prominence through their invaluable contributions and the ongoing acquisition of requisite competencies. These criteria serve as yardsticks measuring the esteem a profession commands at any given time. In the public's perception, education, notably teaching, remains one of the most revered professions. Teachers, molding characters and personalities from raw human potential, epitomize nobility in service to society. While the concept of play has historically held significance in education, the institutionalization of organized physical education, primarily for its health and fitness benefits, is a relatively recent development within formal education systems.

Comparing professions with trades may afford a precise definition. Trades are conducted by businessmen or managers proficient in business acumen—economics, consumer behavior, buying and selling strategies, market trends, and more. Mastery in trade is cultivated through experience, observation, formal and informal interpersonal interactions, and the practical application of established procedures. The trajectory of trade revolves around profit maximization, contrasting starkly with professions grounded in a commitment to societal service over monetary gain. Professionals—doctors, engineers, lawyers, architects, technologists, teachers—receive remuneration commensurate with the quality and quantity of service rendered to their clientele. Professionals abide by a stringent code of ethics, while businessmen often formulate ethics based on situational considerations. Teaching, unequivocally a profession, transcends the commodification of education; it involves imparting knowledge to the receptive and needy. A teacher not only educates but influences the thoughts, minds, and souls of students, fostering enduring relationships far removed from the transient interactions between a businessman and a customer. Education, unlike trade or even esteemed professions like medicine, engineering, and management, draws extensively from philosophical and psychological principles. Teaching and learning, intrinsically tied to life's purpose, human needs, and societal ideals, intertwine with physical education and sports, epitomizing educational values in their objectives, content, processes, and methodologies. They cater to fundamental aspects of life education—health, fitness, and overall well-being.

Professions necessitate comprehensive training in both theoretical and practical aspects of the chosen field. Attaining a certain level of proficiency mandates undertaking appropriate courses for prescribed durations and obtaining certification. Teacher education courses are mandated for subject teachers and physical educators alike. Regulatory authorities establish stringent norms and standards for specialized knowledge, skills, and competencies, with limited commonalities among various professions. Each profession embodies a distinct realm of activity, knowledge, and application. Physical education instructors acquire specialized skills—conceptual, communicative, performance based, instructional, and

managerial—unique to their domain. Beyond being an art form, physical education encompasses extensive research, academics, and application, drawing from diverse physical activities and sport sciences.

Professionals in physical education adopt a professional approach, imparting knowledge on learning skills and performance across various activities and sports. Their perpetual objective remains the development of efficient individuals through proficient movement, ensuring good health and reasonable fitness for all participants while honing the unique attributes of genetically talented individuals. This professional approach underscores the ubiquity, precision, and perfection in their endeavors.

A primary responsibility of professionals in any field involves expanding the knowledge base through research, experiential inputs, and academic collaborations. Research fosters innovation, leading to improved methodologies and ground breaking discoveries. Throughout history, research minded individuals within the physical education community have transformed the landscape by introducing new exercise systems and pioneering innovative sports training technologies.

All professionals and professional bodies adhere to a code of ethics guiding their conduct. Doctors, engineers, lawyers, managers—each profession delineates specific codes of conduct, duties, and responsibilities. Likewise, teachers and physical education instructors must adhere to their codes, founded on principles of societal service, responsiveness, accountability, fairness, integrity, and efficacy. While not always explicit in writing, these unwritten codes of ethics elevate both the professional and societal expectations. A physical education instructor's failure to uphold fairness in the classroom or on the field impinges on their conduct. The global leadership in physical education has collectively formulated a code of ethics for teachers, coaches, and sports administrators to be earnestly followed in both letter and spirit.

Professional Ethics

Professional ethics is concerned with the moral issues that arise because of the specialist knowledge that professionals attain, and how the use of this knowledge should be governed when providing a service to the public. In other words, professional ethics is stated to concern an individual's conduct of behaviour and practice when carrying out such professional work as medicine, engineering, architecture, information technology, education, or athletic coaching. Such work may include consulting, researching, teaching and writing. All professionals – ranging from a clay-potter to a construction engineer, from a primary school teacher to a university professor, from a village quack to a cardiac surgeon, from a primary school play-way teacher to a hi-tech coach of an Olympic soccer team etc. – render some valuable service to the society in their respective field of knowledge and practice; they, also bear some personal responsibility for what they do. When a person joins a particular profession, he does not only gets authority and power befitting his/her status but also puts on him/her some professional, some personal and some moral responsibilities because the clients puts their full faith in him and his ability thinking that the service provided by him/her will benefit them.

A code of ethics means formalization of experience into a set of rules. It is adopted by all members of a professional

organization agreeing to abide by the laid-down rules, including the restrictions that apply. Disciplinary codes allow a profession to draw a standard of conduct and ensure that individual practitioners meet this standard by disciplining them from the professional body if they do not practice accordingly. It also maintains the public's trust in the profession, meaning that the public will continue to seek their services. However, it should be noted that some professions like Information Systems, physical education and sports are uncontrolled professions whose members follow code of ethics voluntarily, and if do not, they are not punished. But professions like Medicine and Law are controlled professions, where a person violating code of ethics is liable to lose membership, which mean losing the right to practice

Professional Ethics in Physical Education

In the realms of health, physical education, recreation, and sport, a uniform code of ethics does not exist, yet several subfields within this collective have established their own. School educators, for instance, adhere to a code set by educational authorities that transcends specific disciplines, offering generalized guidelines. Diverse professional groups, such as sport psychologists, physiotherapists, referees, coaches, media personnel, and managerial staff, conform to distinct codes prescribed by their respective governing bodies.

Within educational institutions, particularly in schools and higher learning establishments, physical educators often encounter scenarios where shared values and professional responsibilities supersede their designated roles. Consequently, they routinely navigate situations that necessitate moral reasoning. Lessons concerning personal health, encompassing areas like sexual behavior and substance use, physical fitness, fair play, and even leisure activities, prompt moral deliberation and the vocalization of inherent values.

However, codes of ethics alone do not encapsulate the entirety of professional conduct or necessarily embody the foundational values on which these specialized domains—such as teaching, health instruction, sports organization, coaching, recreation leadership, and sports and exercise science—are founded. A cohesive underlying foundation rooted in shared values is discernible across these diverse fields. Notably, teaching as a profession inherently intertwines with values; teachers serve as conduits through which values are imparted to students. Whether within the classroom or on the sports field—be it baseball, gymnastics, nature hikes, or fitness programs—ample opportunities exist for educators to instill ethical principles regardless of the activity or sport engaged in.

When engaging with young individuals, a physical education teacher ought to prioritize the health, safety, and well-being of the child or young athlete above institutional achievements or reputations. Their focus should center on providing activities that foster a lifelong commitment to health-related physical pursuits, acknowledging the physical and psychological changes during maturation that can affect sporting performance. It is imperative to avoid setting unrealistic expectations unrelated to a child's capacity, prioritizing the enjoyment of participants without exerting undue pressure that infringes upon a child's right to choose participation. Encouragement should extend equally to those less gifted, fostering credible skill and achievement in

competitive sports while nurturing creativity through the formulation of individual games and rules. Educators also bear the responsibility of providing comprehensive information to the child and their family regarding the potential risks and attractions associated with attaining high performance levels. Furthermore, they must ensure safeguards against various external and social hazards and ensure that all involved in teaching and sports organizations are well-qualified and comprehend the biological and psychological changes linked to children's maturation.

Professional Preparation in Physical Education delineates the role of physical education teachers in facilitating and encouraging the physical development of children and young adults. Their responsibilities encompass motor and social development through meticulously planned activities that promote physical fitness and nutritional awareness. As prospective educators, their training involves delving into the subject matter—both theoretical and practical aspects—alongside methods and techniques for imparting activity-based training across different age groups.

However, a career in physical education faces challenges and limited interest compared to fields like medicine, engineering, and management. This murky situation owes itself to swiftly evolving socio-economic values, entrenched social status perceptions, the burgeoning materialistic ethos, and inadequate awareness and guidance for career planning. In the hierarchy of academic disciplines and career options, physical education and sports often occupy the least prestigious positions.

The evolution of teacher education programs, particularly in physical education, has transitioned from an initial focus on activity to a more comprehensive approach encompassing the child's holistic development. Gradually, as educational methodologies became more realistic, scientific, and systematic, several thematic shifts occurred. Notably, in the United States and Europe during the 1960s and 1970s, teacher education programs shifted to a competency-based and performance based model. Embracing a behaviorist approach, these movements stemmed from a desire for accountability in education—a concern persisting into the twenty-first century. Although the nomenclature of these movements has faded, the fundamental concerns regarding accountability endure. Some programs now prioritize a developmental approach, integrating field experiences with coursework, classroom analyses, journal writing, and reflective practices.

In India, the advent of the teacher training program in physical education took root with the establishment of the YMCA College of Physical Education in Madras (Chennai) in 1920, offering certificate and diploma courses. Subsequently, colleges in Hyderabad, Lucknow, and Kandivili (Bombay) emerged, mirroring the YMCA college's framework. Throughout its formative years, the teacher training program in physical education maintained parity with general education programs, particularly concerning course duration, expected teacher competencies, and placement scope in educational institutions. The course content and teaching methodologies, however, diverged between the training courses for physical education and general education personnel—physical education being more field-oriented, while general education centered primarily on classroom teaching.

The landscape of physical education underwent significant changes with the formulation of the National Plan of

Physical Education and Recreation in 1956 by the Central Advisory Board of Physical Education. This initiative provided guidelines for professional preparation in physical education, marking a pivotal moment in teacher education. Subsequent milestones included the establishment of the National College of Physical Education in Gwalior in 1957, introducing a revolutionary 3-year bachelor of physical education program instead of traditional certificate or diploma courses. Additionally, the advent of the National Institute of Sports in Patiala in 1961 inaugurated a new chapter in coach education.

Landmark policies and councils like the National Sports Policy (1984) and its revised versions, the National Education Policy (1986) with subsequent policy formulations, and the establishment of the National Council of Teacher Education (1995) significantly transformed teacher education programs in both general and physical education. These developments ensured the integration of physical education as an essential part of the school learning experience and standardized teacher training programs concerning course types, duration, content, admission criteria, teacher qualifications, and more.

Despite these advancements, the landscape of teacher education in India has witnessed limited changes since its inception in the early 1920s. The number of recognized institutions offering teacher training courses was severely limited until the establishment of the National Council of Teacher Education in 1995. However, there has been an exponential growth of institutions offering teacher training courses across the country, predominantly in the private sector. The courses offered and their structures have seen slight modifications, such as the transformation of a 1-year certificate course into a 2-year diploma, the extension of the 3-year bachelor in physical education into a 4-year integrated course in physical education and sports, and the uniformization of the master's degree course duration to two years.

Physical Education and Sports Science Experts as Coaches

Coaching represents a broad domain within the realm of physical education and sports, engaging experts in the field. Individuals proficient in a specific sport can undergo coach training at the National Institute of Sports under the Sports Authority of India (SAI). Possessing a degree or master's in physical education enhances suitability for a coaching profession. Coaches are highly sought after in government, semi-government, and private institutes like SAI, sports schools, various statesponsored associations, clubs, gyms, and fitness centers. Nowadays, many academic institutions also employ coaches to train students in particular sports or events.

Scope in College Teaching

Physical education holds a distinguished position in higher education. Besides teaching in colleges, it has been included as an elective subject in degree courses (B.A., B.Sc.). Professionals with master's degrees who have qualified NET, SLET, or possess M.Phil or Ph.D. degrees may secure positions as Assistant Professors or Lecturers in colleges.

Job Opportunities in Sports Fields for Physical Education: The scope for physical education in sports encompasses various roles such as physical education

teacher, outdoor education instructor, school sports director, recreational programmer, personal trainer, policy analyst in recreation, sports development officer, and youth worker.

Physical Education and Sports Science Beyond Schools and Colleges

The professional scope of physical education and sports science extends widely to spas, fitness and health clubs, yoga centers, technical institutes (IIT, NIT), and even mass media (sports journalism). Given that physical education draws principles from physics, chemistry, biology, social sciences, etc., it offers substantial potential for research in areas like biomechanics, exercise physiology, anthropometry and sports, sports psychology, and sports sociology.

Top Colleges Offering UG/Pg/Other Courses

Numerous academic institutions under the SAI provide training to young students, nurturing them into skilled sportspersons. Some notable sports institutes in India include Lakshmibai National Institute of Physical Education in Gwalior, Lakshmibai National College of Physical Education in Thiruvananthapuram, MRP Pace Foundation in Chennai, Tata Football Academy in Jamshedpur, National Cricket Academy in Bengaluru, and Gujarat University in Ahmedabad.

The remuneration of sportspersons is contingent on their chosen sport. In this competitive field, a sportsperson's capability to consistently deliver exceptional performances matters more than simply the number of years of experience.

Conclusion

The sports arena presents abundant career opportunities for young talent in India. After receiving training from various sports academies, one can opt to build a career as a sportsperson, starting at the state level and then progressing to national and international levels. Besides playing, experienced sportspersons can venture into coaching, team management, fitness instruction, umpiring or refereeing, sports commentary, sports photography, sports equipment supply or manufacturing, and consultancy.

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