

DEVELOPMENT OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION IN INDIA AND THAILAND (SIAM): AN OVERVIEW

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ABSTRACT

The objective of the present study, titled “Development of Physical Education in India and Thailand: A Philosophical Overview,” is to establish cultural and emotional unity through the teachings of Indian sages, reduce regional disparities, and promote human dignity. Physical education is an educational process through which human beings study their physical activities and, through physical exercise, yoga, sports, recreation, and mental, spiritual, and social development, achieve a healthy, capable, and balanced lifestyle. Through physical education and yoga, individuals acquire knowledge, skills, and values that help them attain the fourfold objectives of life—dharma, artha, kama, and moksha.

Therefore, while defining health, the World Health Organization (WHO) has stated that health does not merely mean the absence of disease or infirmity, but a state of complete physical, mental, spiritual, and social well-being. In the modern era, human development is viewed through various dimensions, such as:-Curative and Preventive, Environmental. Physical, Mental, Spiritual, Social, Coordinational, Vocational, Emotional, Educational, Nutritional and Well-being dimensions

Keywords: Physical Education, Sports, development, India, Thailand

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1. INTRODUCTION

Keeping these facts in view, eminent Indian sages and thinkers such as Dhanvantari, Charaka, Sushruta, Vagbhata, Patanjali, and the Saptarishis—Vashishtha, Kashyapa, Atri, Jamadagni, Vishwamitra, Gautama, and Bharadwaja—made significant contributions to human welfare and physical–mental development. A major link in this tradition is the propagation of Buddha's Dharma Chakra, which remains influential even today.

Thailand (Siam) stands as a living example where Buddhism has continued uninterrupted, unlike India, which faced repeated invasions and destruction during medieval times. Even today, historical examples remain that testify to these events.

2. PHYSICAL EDUCATION IN INDIA

In the development of physical education, the contributions of Western educationists such as Charles A. Bucher, C. C. Cowell, Cassidy, J. B. Nash, Williams, and R. A. Seaman cannot be ignored. In India, from ancient times, special emphasis was laid on physical education in Gurukuls and royal courts.

Archery of Dronacharya, Patanjali's yoga system, wrestling, mace fighting, swordsmanship, dance, music, and athletic excellence described in epics like the Ramayana, Mahabharata, and the works of Valmiki and Kalidasa are globally renowned. Characters such as Rama, Lakshmana, Arjuna, Karna, and Ekalavya were experts in archery, while Hanuman, Bhima, and Duryodhana excelled in wrestling and mace combat.

In 1859, the British established gymnastic institutions in India to promote physical training. In 1920, H. C. Buck founded the YMCA to provide physical education training. In 1914, the Hanuman Vyayam Prasarak Mandal was established by Ambu and Pant brothers at Amravati (Maharashtra) for the promotion of physical education, inaugurated by Mahatma Gandhi. This institution revived and promoted Mallakhamb and indigenous physical practices worldwide.

Later, government colleges of physical education were established in Hyderabad (1931) and Patiala (1932). After independence, the Government of India made continuous efforts to promote physical education, yoga, and sports. Institutions such as Lakshmibai National Institute of Physical Education (1957) at Gwalior and Morarji Desai National Institute of Yoga, Delhi, have played a vital role. The Government of India, through the Ministry of AYUSH, provides substantial financial support for these initiatives.

Today, the world recognizes that solutions to many global problems lie in education, yoga, and value-based physical activity. As a result, 177 countries unanimously accepted June 21 as the International Day of Yoga, promoting human values and ecological balance.

3. PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORTS IN THAILAND

Thailand, surrounded by Myanmar, Laos, Malaysia, and Cambodia, has access to coastal regions where swimming, boating, wrestling, archery, and other physical activities have flourished. Performing arts, sculpture, temple architecture, and dance are deeply embedded in Thai culture.

The Ramayana is artistically depicted in Thailand, Cambodia, and Indonesia during auspicious occasions. Buddhism spread widely in Thailand, yet no violent conflict occurred with the earlier established Sanatan Brahmanical culture.

Thailand's National Sports University integrates education systems, expands sports science, implements health protection policies, and operates under the Ministry of Tourism and Sports. The Institute of Physical Education (IPE), established in 1935 and later developed

into the Thailand National Sports University (TNSU), has played a key role in promoting sports and research throughout the country.

Thailand has also developed national activity plans to combat non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and improve public health. Community education centers actively involve youth, women, and the elderly in fitness, life skills, and wellness programs. Thailand has successfully hosted several international sporting events and produced internationally recognized athletes.

In 2025, Thailand imposed a complete ban on corporal punishment of children. The country represents a harmonious blend of Sanatan and Buddhist cultural values, offering lessons not only to India but to the entire world.

4. CONCLUSION

Despite achieving immense material progress, modern humans have become physically, mentally, spiritually, and socially weaker. The present research attempts to address this imbalance. The true impact of this research will be assessed by future generations; however, it is evident that this work has completely transformed the researcher's own lifestyle, daily routine, and values in accordance with ancient wisdom.

The research was initiated with the aspiration of "self-welfare," and that aspiration has been fulfilled. Today, the cordial relations between India and Thailand continue to bless humanity with mutual goodwill and cooperation.

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