International Journal of Enhanced Research in Educational Development (IJERED)
ISSN: 2320-8708, Vol. 14 Issue 5, September-October, 2026

Role of Physical Education in Developing Leadership Qualities among College Students: to NEP 2020

Mr. Raj Kumar Pal

Assistant Professor, Department of Physical Education, Raath Mahavidyalaya Paithani Pauri Garhwal Uttarakhand

DOI: https://doi.org/10.55948/IJERED.2026.0926

ABSTRACT

Physical education holds an important place in the development process of college students. Physical education does not only make individuals physically fit but also inculcates in them qualities like leadership, teamwork, discipline, communication, decision-making, responsibility and self-confidence. The NEP 2020 stresses on holistic education, life skills, teamwork, cooperation, resilience and integrated sports education. Long gone are those times when Physical education was considered as something that made people physically fit. In the realm of higher education, Physical education plays a very important role as a developmental space where individuals learn discipline, cooperation, communication, decision-making, self-control and responsibility. Such qualities form the core of leadership, and are of utmost importance especially at the level of colleges when youth begins preparing themselves for their professional, civic and social roles.

In accordance with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, Physical education (PE) has always been an important part of holistic education, contributing to not only the physical fitness of individuals but also their psychosocial development. In the Indian context, the PE takes on added significance in terms of being an important tool in developing leadership qualities among college students. This chapter demonstrates how structured physical education programs that are based on NEP 2020 could foster important leadership qualities like communication, cooperation, resilience, decision-making, and ethics. The chapter ends with the suggestions about how physical education should be incorporated into the higher education curriculum in order to prepare future leaders who will bring transformation to society. Leadership is not only a matter of authority, but a complex process of influencing others. University studies become a period when a student becomes an adult person and acquires skills which he or she will use at work and in his or her private life. Physical education is not often appreciated for its importance for the development of leadership qualities.

Keywords- Physical Education, Leadership Qualities, College Students, NEP 2020, Sports Teamwork, Self-Confidence, Decision-Making Discipline.

INTRODUCTION

It is not considered to be some sort of additional activity but a vital part of the holistic education that ensures intellectual, emotional, social, and physical growth of individuals. Physical Education is an important constituent of education that helps in the physical, mental, emotional, and social development of students. It offers students chances to get involved in physical exercises, games, sports and other recreational activities. Physical Education not only ensures physical fitness of the students but also teaches them many life skills such as self-discipline, cooperation, communication, confidence, etc.

Leadership is one of the qualities that should be present in any college-going student since it allows one to take the lead, take up responsibilities, communicate effectively, make right decisions, and work with other people successfully. In the college life, students should engage in various activities academically, socially, culturally, and through extracurricular activities whereby leadership qualities are very necessary. Physical education and sports create such an environment.

Participation in team games and sports helps children to learn how to collaborate with other team members, respect rules, take responsibility and pursue common objectives. When students take the position of captain, team leader or

organizer, they get the chance to improve their skills in decision making, problem solving, communication and organizing. Likewise, competition helps students to be disciplined, patient, resilient and fair.

Leadership among college students may not only be confined to official posts like class representatives or team captains in sports but also include motivation skills, conflict resolution, team work, taking failures in stride, and proactive approach in a group environment. PE offers endless chances to develop all these traits by playing various games, engaging in physical exercises and participating in organized activities. In this respect, it serves as a practical workshop to hone one's leadership skills instead of being a purely theoretical course. NEP 2020 focuses on a holistic and multidisciplinary approach to education, promoting the inclusion of physical education in regular curriculums. Moreover, it highlights the significance of co-curricular and extracurricular activities in producing rounded citizens. In this regard, physical education acts as a potent vehicle to train future leaders.

1. Concept of leadership

Leadership can thus be said to be the ability to inspire people to work together towards a common aim using vision, behavior, communication and accountability. Leadership in the college setting can be found in teamwork, peer support, problem solving and the capability of guiding performance of groups in difficult situations. This is because physical education promotes such behaviors automatically since most games involve teamwork, trust and following rules.

In contrast to classroom learning which focuses on individual effort, participating in sporting activities allows students to experience leadership within a more fluid social setting. A student can take a lead role in demonstrating proper skills, motivating a team mate, planning practice sessions or making decisions during the actual game.

1.1. Physical education and personality growth

Physical education plays a significant role in developing the personality of the college students. Physical education helps improve physical health, but apart from that, it helps develop emotional stability, strength, discipline, and self-respect. The experience of victory, defeat, uncertainty, and criticism in playing sports is crucial for developing into a responsible leader.

As per NEP 2020, sports integrated learning as a pedagogic strategy helps in developing self-discipline, self-direction, teamwork, responsibility, citizenship, and collaboration. These do not only contribute to the health benefits, but these also contribute to developing behavior and character of the learners. This is why, as the students keep experiencing these traits through physical education, they develop the skills required for being an effective leader.

2. Conceptual Framework: Leadership and Physical Education

2.1 Defining Leadership Qualities

Leadership qualities encompass a range of attributes:

- **Vision and Goals**
- **Effective Communication**
- **Teamwork and Cooperation**
- **Decision Making and Problem Solving**
- **Adaptability and Flexibility**
- **Ethical Responsibility and Integrity**

2.2 Physical Education as a Leadership Laboratory

PE provides experiential learning environments where students practice these qualities:

- **Sports Teams:** Foster teamwork and strategy.
- **Fitness Challenges:** Promote resilience and self-discipline.
- **Outdoor Pursuits:** Cultivate adaptability and problem solving.
- **Leadership Positions within Clubs:** Provide practice in organization management.

3. Leadership qualities developed through physical education

There are several ways through which physical education enables students to develop leadership skills. One way in which physical education fosters such skills is through improved decision-making owing to the fact that sports involve decisions in the course of play. Secondly, physical education improves communication since the students are required to coordinate themselves with other players and the coach.

Physical education helps in developing discipline through practice, adhering to rules, punctuality, and body control. Discipline is achieved through responsibility as students will have to take care of their own health and perform team tasks and the responsibilities allocated to them. Confidence is developed through physical education as it enables students to experiment with their abilities and accomplish something.

Resilience is another critical leadership quality developed through physical education. Students are taught how to bounce back from their mistakes, losses, and failures without losing hope and confidence in order to continue playing effectively in future. Resilience is an important aspect of leadership as it helps in performing effectively even when faced with tough conditions.

4. Physical Education and Leadership Qualities: Dimensions

4.1 Communication Skills

The sports world requires communication in planning as well as inspiring one's team members. Through physical education games, one learns verbal as well as nonverbal communication skills.

4.2 Teamwork and Collaboration

Team games represent collective work. Through team games, students learn to appreciate diversity, coordination, and goal achievement—all elements of good leadership.

4.3 Decision-Making

Sporting events require quick decision-making skills. Analytical thinking and risk management skills are gained through decision-making in sports, and these can be used as a leader.

4.4 Resilience and Adaptability

Physical trials can be used to gauge endurance. Learning how to overcome obstacles in sporting activities can help one become resilient, an important characteristic of any leader.

4.5 Ethical Responsibility

Ethics are developed through fair play and good sportsmanship. Those leaders who develop from physical education are likely to have integrity and justice.

6. Mechanisms of leadership development

Leadership in physical education is learned by doing, not listening. When students become involved in games, competitions, exercises and group projects, they find themselves in actual situations where leadership is needed. The captain who leads the team, the student who encourages classmates when they are tired, and the person who deals with conflicts in a respectful way – all of them are practicing leadership.

In addition, social context in physical education plays a vital role. Physical education puts students in the position where they need to work with people with various characters, deal with the spirit of competition and combine personal achievements and team achievements. Such situations provide emotional development and understanding of other people; both of which are essential for becoming a leader.

7. NEP 2020 perspective

The policy backing sports-integrated and holistic education is evident through NEP 2020. Education in the current era has to enable students to realize their complete human potential; sports have been considered an integral component that will help in fostering cooperation, initiative, self-reliance, self-control, teamwork, responsibility, and citizenship. Therefore, the relevance of physical education does not only lie in the field of schooling, but even in colleges and universities whose main objective is producing competent and well-rounded graduates.

According to the NEP 2020, leadership is one of the components of holistic development. Physical education is among the most effective ways of fostering the integration between theoretical knowledge, life skills, and values. By integrating physical education in the curriculum, institutions can facilitate the development of leadership through a systematic and inclusive process.

Physical education is consistent with the student-centered and activity-based learning approach. This is important considering the fact that leadership is formed through active engagement of students rather than passive instruction.

The NEP 2020 focuses on combining academics with physical, emotional, and social well-being. The importance of Physical Education is seen in the aspect that it forms an integral part of the development of life skills and leadership.

This policy focuses on experiential and participative education. PE activities provide practical opportunities in developing leadership skills.

This policy promotes multi-disciplinary education. The field of PE combines psychology, management and other social sciences which helps in leadership development.

As per the NEP 2020, the higher educational institutions need to enhance the facilities related to sports and physical education.

8. College students and leadership needs

It is a time in the lives of the college students when their future leadership potential can be significantly influenced. College students are in the process of developing their professional identity, are adapting themselves to new social demands, and getting ready to start their careers, which require communication, adaptation, and good moral values. Physical education plays an essential role in this process providing the college students with a chance to demonstrate their leadership potential by leading teams, managing competition, and participating in the organized physical activity. This is especially relevant since in the adult life the development of the leadership skills does not depend solely on the academic success of the person.

9. Educational and social benefits

In addition to benefiting the students on an individual level, the value of leadership associated with physical education benefits the college environment as well, as it encourages discipline, inclusion, mutual respect, and social responsibility. The students who acquire leadership skills through sports will also be able to make a positive contribution to the life of the student organizations and the community in general.

Moreover, physical education facilitates socialization. The students from different backgrounds can cooperate in teams and thus overcome any social barriers and share common goals. Socialization is especially important in the process of higher education since democratic leadership presupposes collaboration and respect for diversity.

10. Challenges and Barriers

- **Academic Pressure:** Students prioritize academics over PE.
- **Infrastructure Deficit:** Many colleges lack adequate sports facilities.
- **Cultural Attitudes:** PE is often undervalued compared to academic subjects.
- **Policy Implementation Gaps:** NEP 2020 directives face challenges in execution.

11. Challenges in implementation

Although physical education has high significance, its implementation in many colleges encounters problems like poor infrastructure, insufficient time allocation, non-availability of trained instructors, and the notion that sport should not come before studies. Such problems restrict the development of leadership abilities through physical activities. If institutions consider physical education to be secondary, then they lose one significant way of developing their students.

Another problem is discrimination in participation. There might be certain students who would take part in sports more often compared to others due to lack of self-confidence or gender disparity or because of discouragement from teachers. In order to cultivate leadership skills among students, physical education has to be inclusive.

12. Suggestions for colleges

Colleges can strengthen leadership development through physical education by taking several steps:

- Include the aspect of leadership roles in the sports and activities programme, like being the captain, organizing events, and mentorship from peers.
- Create an inclusive environment for all students and not just those who are excellent in their sports skills.
- Link physical education classes to reflect on the practice and understand the leadership lessons involved.
- Train the teachers of physical education to consciously foster the development of life and leadership skills.

An example of how to implement this idea can be found in the college intramural tournament, where students switch off different leadership responsibilities like being a team leader, warm up leader, scorekeeper, and communication leader. In this way, more students get an opportunity to develop leadership skills through practical application.

CONCLUSION

Physical Education is a crucial factor in helping students in colleges develop leadership skills since it comprises physical activity with cooperation, discipline, communication, perseverance, and responsibility. The significance of Physical Education is enhanced by the fact that NEP 2020 has highlighted the integration of sports and physical activity under holistic education and life skill education.

In the case of college students, physical education is not just an activity aimed at achieving fitness but a platform to groom leaders in personal, academic, and social life. It can help in grooming confident, cooperative, ethical, and responsible leaders when it is conducted successfully.

Physical Education is not limited to physical fitness alone but an ideal platform for developing leaders. The context of NEP 2020 makes Physical Education assume strategic significance in developing future leaders. Through the integration of Physical Education in higher education programs, India will be able to raise resilient and visionary leaders.

REFERENCES

1. National Education Policy 2020, Government of India.
2. "Sports Integration— Cross Curricular Pedagogical Approach in School Education," *Journal of Indian Education*.
3. "Leadership Through Sports and Physical Education.
4. "Development of Human Values through Physical Education with reference to NEP 2020."
5. "Role of Physical Education in Achieving Holistic Development as per NEP 2020." "Redefining Physical Education: The Vision of NEP 2020."
6. "Life Skills Development through Physical Education and Sports."
7. Gould, D., & Voelker, D. K. (2010). *Youth sport leadership development: A grounded theory*. Journal of Sport & Exercise Psychology.
8. Sharma, R. (2021). *Impact of physical education on leadership qualities among Indian college students*. Indian Journal of Physical Education.
9. Ministry of Education, Government of India. (2021). *Implementation guidelines for NEP 2020 in higher education*.
10. National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. Government of India.
11. Weinberg, R., & Gould, D. (2018). *Foundations of Sport and Exercise Psychology*. Human Kinetics.
12. Ministry of Education, Government of India. (2020). National Education Policy 2020: Transforming Education in India. Government of India.
13. Bucher, C. A., & Krotee, M. L. (2002). Management of Physical Education and Sport. McGraw-Hill.
14. Chelladurai, P. (2006). Human Resource Management in Sport and Recreation. Human Kinetics.
15. Martens, R. (2012). Successful Coaching (4th ed.). Human Kinetics.