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PHYSICAL EDUCATION AS AN ART AND AESTHETIC-ETHICAL EDUCATIONAL FIELD

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Abstract: The contemplative basic concepts and principles on which physical education is founded, makes it an art. It is an art as it is imaginative and creative. Drawing on philosophical literature, it is argued that the sporting activities that typically comprise physical educational curricula can afford opportunities to experience and to open the athletic self to epistemic, ethical and especially aesthetic notions. Apart from describing physical education as an art, this paper discusses that physical education has an important axiological role in the development of children and youth, where aesthetic and ethical values also have significance. Also, this paper focuses on how these two fields can be materially related in physical education curricula and then explore physical education as an aesthetic-ethical educational field.

Keywords: Art, Physical education, Aesthetics, Ethics.

Introduction: Relatively little recent philosophical work has penetrated the Physical Education profession by contrast with other disciplines such as psychology, sociology and pedagogy. Earlier, most of the work regarding Physical education was focused on practical knowledge. However, a greater resurgence has been noted of late. There has now been ample work done regarding various aspects of Physical education. In this paper, there is an argument that physical education due to its vivid variety and creativity-is an art, also it has an important axiological role in the development of youth, where aesthetic and ethical values have significance. This paper offers critical reflection that starts with the reference that physical education is an art and then explores physical education as an aesthetic-ethical educational field concerning the development of human sensibility through sports and physical education.

Physical education as an art:

Art can be described as a method of doing something beautifully. People who do things beautifully may be called artists. Art implies that actions are performed with such principles of taste and imagination and with such aesthetic qualities, that they express beauty grace and poise. A perfect dive (in aquatics), a perfect gymnastic exercise, a beautiful painting, a colorful rainbow or a melodious song excites an emotional response in us. This emotional response is received by us through our various sensory organs such as ears, eyes, nose etc. Such responses evoke delight and excite admiration within us because of the humanistic values and aesthetic qualities of the object or the experience. While listening to the music, our auditory perception is involved, when we see a beautiful piece of art- the sensory perception involved is visual, the perception involved in smelling the food or smelling the odor of any object is our olfactory perception, similarly in athletics our kinesthetic perception is involved which helps recognize or detect changes in body position and movements. It is the quality of perception that evokes aesthetic response so as to term it an art. Also, the person who is associated with such actions or performs any movement or action gracefully, creatively and beautifully is termed as an artist. The teacher or the guide who creates such congenial learning environment which encourages and stimulates his disciple to achieve perfection and beauty in performance is also an artist. An athlete who sails over the high jump bar skillfully, beautifully with grace and poise is an artist and the teacher who taught him with his soaring imagination and stimulating ideas is also an artist.

Art has two main principles, 'form' and 'organisation' and physical education satisfies both these principles. Form is considered an indispensable quality of pleasing activity in physical education. The teacher is able to evaluate the strong, supple physical form as well as the skilled activity- as to its good form. Physical education also satisfies the second principle of 'organisation' which is a function of imagination and creativity. Physical education contributes to creativity and appreciation of the same by providing different modes of expression through movements and also by allowing for individual differences of the participants at the same time. These two principles are generally responsible for beautifying the programme of physical education extrinsically and intrinsically. It can thus be said that physical education is an art.

Physical education and the evolution of aesthetic insight:

Aesthetics is a branch of philosophy which deals with questions of beauty and artistic taste. It includes a set of principles concerned with the nature and appreciation of beauty especially in art. However, in sports, aesthetic acclaim is reserved for economy and efficiency of efforts. The application of the term 'aesthetic' is generally used in conjunction with smooth actions and the disciplines of sport which are more aesthetic in nature includes Gymnastics, Figure Skating, Diving, Trampolining etc. These sports are judged for the beauty, grace and poise with which they are performed. Such events indeed bring out the aesthetic side of physical activities and sports.

Physical activities & sports is characterized as the most important means and a condition of aesthetic education, considered as an aesthetic phenomenon from the point of view of its genesis, internal structural organization and logic of development. The aesthetic content of sport manifests more and more as far as humanistic ideals are embodied in it. Therefore, exactly in conditions of a modern democratic society, when each of its members has sufficient possibilities for free and versatile development, in which physical perfection has an important and socially, and personally significant role, beauty of sports becomes one of the most attractive factors of special attention to it and participations in it. As far as sportsmanship of participants of competitions increases and reaches a certain level, the aesthetic side of sport becomes more distinctive and directly influences its development. It manifests in perfection of sports movements, in their technical and composition organization, in high emotional tension of competitions.

In the process of development of sport, it became more and more important phenomenon of social life and culture. Now millions of people all over the world actively go in for sports, perform physical exercises, participate in sports competitions. The sport of supreme achievements intensively develops. Mass sport, different forms of physical activity of people (including health-improving jogging, conditioning to cold environment, cross-country skiing, swimming, tourism, etc.) are very popular. Today sport is socially important, as never in the history of humankind. It is no coincidence that sport is often named one of the basic elements of a system of values of modern culture, a mirror of public life. Owing to the mentioned factors Physical education & Sports indeed is a subject of aesthetic analysis. The concept of sport includes a huge diversity of activities that makes it extremely difficult to define. Besides that, each sport has its own internal nature and structure that results from traditions, culture, habits, values, norms, practices, techniques and gestures. Thus, the aesthetic expectation of man regarding any sport, depends on the specific aesthetic criteria that makes sense for that sport in particular. Torres (2014) considers two special types of attitudes that lead to an aesthetic experience of sport in two different directions: the internal and the external one. An internalist attitude assumes that each sport has its own internal spirit, with its own aims and purposes that shapes its aesthetic expression. According to this line of thought, performances which adversely affect this spirit, also deplete the aesthetic value of sport. In its turn, the externalist attitude is based on the idea that sport is not an independent source of values and, thus, any performance that falls within the limits of customs and traditions and accepts the consequences of the rules imposed is ethically and aesthetically acceptable as it is also the expression of contextually accepted values.

Physical education and the evolution of ethical insight:

Ethics is, by definition, the branch of philosophy that deals with praise and blame, good and evil, right and wrong, and so on. The application of this discipline to sports is traditionally associated with sports justice (the standards and rules of each sport that regulate the sportspersons' conduct), fair play, or even the scope of sports' truth (McNamee, 2010). The concept of ethics is technically understood as a branch of philosophy that defines what is good for the individual and society and establishes the nature of obligations, or duties, that people owe themselves and to one another. Sports ethics is a positive concept that guides human action in sports. It is defined as the code of conduct for promoting and ensuring healthy sporting practices. Sports ethics signifies not just a certain form of behavior but also a particular way of thinking. It promotes fair play among children and young persons via educational and preventive measures and encourages the dissemination of good practices to promote diversity in sports and combat all forms of discrimination.

In sports, there is a moral obligation to abide by the rules, in accordance with the principles of fair play. The codes of sports ethics documented by the Olympic Committee and other international and national sports bodies, governments, sports federations and associations, sports sponsoring concerns and specialized research institutions provide a comprehensive view of sports ethics. These clearly suggest that sports ethics is a set of standards that guide the conduct of all concerned with sports — the sports persons, trainers, referees, managers, administrators, parents, teachers, journalists, doctors and pharmacists, nutritional expert, sports sponsoring concerns, top level sportspersons etc. who serve as models and even spectators. These ethical standards are universal and objective and are not based on subjective guidelines. They have been proven over time.

Conclusion: Hence, physical education is no longer a context where it is only necessary to keep students 'happy and busy' with random activities. Rather, it is an educational field where students can get benefited by learning the lessons of moral ethics, understanding the aesthetic values of things and applying these learned values in their life to lead a sociable life ahead. In institutional curriculum especially physical education classes students must have open access to particular activities where they can experience different feelings freely, such as doubts and frustration, joy and satisfaction, anger and aggression to beauty and appreciation etc. that result from sport's senses and meanings, and that contribute not only to a more global and complete aesthetic experience but also to a more real experience, providential to be interchanged more generally to the learner's everyday life. In light of the above made arguments and facts, it is not wrong to say that Physical education is indeed an art and aesthetic-ethical educational field with an axiological role in the all-round development of children and youth.

Author's contributions:

VM had the idea for the article & drafted the work, RM revised the work, VM performed all the literature search.

Declarations:

Data availability statement: 'The study did not report any data' due to the conceptual nature of this paper. However, proper literature review has been done.

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