# History, Principles and Foundation of Physical Education

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Dr. Prashant Kumar Rai

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# Preface

Physical Education is primarily intended to serve practitioners working with mentally retarded individuals, therapeutic recreation students, and impaired youths and professors in colleges and universities.

The Olympic Movement is the concerted, organised, universal and permanent action, carried out under the supreme authority of the IOC, of all individuals and entities who are inspired by the values of Olympism.

The Arjuna Awards are given by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of India to recognize outstanding achievement in sports. Started in 1961, the award carries a cash prize of 500,000, a bronze statue of Arjuna and a scroll.

Sports and physical education bring about national and international benefits,sports competitions are known to promote understanding and respect for cultural diversity ,foster international partnership and increase greater awareness of global issues such as human rights, role of women in the society and drug prevention. Sports also create a deeper sense of national pride.

Physical education is one area of study that has always been neglected in this country. Needless to say this field of study is as important as others and deserves the required attention. Speaking from a personal perspective, a healthy mind can function only in a healthy body. On a more sociological aspect, it is only when the mass population in the country is given proper physical education coaching during their childhood can we hope for the nation to produce good sportspersons who will bring laurels to the nation. In fact, physical education is one field of study that has immense potential that not many people are aware of. Contrary to popular

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beliefs that India is a country that focuses exclusively on science and produces only doctors and engineers, this nation does have a number of institutions that impart quality education in the field of physical education.

The word psychology refers to the study of human behavior. Sports psychology denotes such category of psychology deals with the behavior of athletes and teams engaged in competitive sports. Sports psychology is that branch of psychology which is intimately connected with the human behavior on the play field, both under practice and competitive situations, with a view to bring about the qualitative improvement in performance and maintain the same even during the stresses of competition.

The foundation of the society is based on education since it brings economic and social prosperity. Gaining education enhances an individual to live a respectful life in the society. This is because education offers a setting in which culture and values of a society are developed. In this respect, education in modern society provides a forum where the society examines its issues and identifies solutions. The advancement of a society both economically and socially is by gaining education which consequently enables them to run a modern society.

The book is intended to be an all-time companion and guide for disabled persons, their instructors and general readers.

**—Dr. Prashant Kumar Rai**

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# 1

# History of Physical Education

## ANCIENT GREECE- SPARTA, ATHENS, INTRODUCTION AND DIFFERENCE

### The objectives of education in Ancient Sparta, and how did education prepare students for their roles in society

Spartans believed in a life of 'discipline, self denial, and simplicity,' and so the purpose of education was, simply, to produce an army. When babies were born, soldiers came to check the child. If it appeared healthy and strong, they would be assigned to a 'brotherhood' or a 'sisterhood,' however if the baby appeared weak and small, the infant would be left to die on a hillside or taken away to be trained as a slave. It was 'survival of the fittest' in Ancient Sparta.

#### *Boys*

Male Spartan children were sent to military school at the age of six or seven. They lived with their brotherhood.School courses were very hard and painful for boys, and school was described as a 'brutal training period.'

Between the age of 18 and 20, Spartan males had to pass a fitness test that consisted of fitness, military ability, and leadership skills. If he didn't pass, he becams a person who had no political rights and was not even considered a citizen called a perioidos. If he did pass, he would continue to serve in the military and train

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as a soldier until he was 60, when the soldier could retire to live with his family.

### *Girls*

Girls were trained in their sisterhood, and were taught physical education. They also started school at the age or six or seven. It is unknown as to whether their school was as rough and hard as the boys', but some historians believe the two schools were very similar in their objectives, to produce a strong group of women.

At age 18, the Spartan girl also had to pass a fitness test. If she passed, a husband would be assigned to her, and she would be allowed to go home, however if she failed she would also become a perioidos.

A woman in Sparta things were very different for citizen women than they were in other Greek cities, where women would stay home most of their lives and be controlled by their husband. In Sparta, women had a lot of free will and were almost as good fighters as the men.

What subjects did students take in Ancient Sparta and why? In ancient Sparta, reading and writing were not very important, so they were taught as a secondary skill for both boys and girls. Education was very military focused for boys and girls, so most of the skills they learnt in school were combative and war centered.

The boys learnt survival skills and other skills vital to being a soldier. Because the Spartan government wanted Spartans to be tough and strong, they weren't given enough food or clothing, so they were encouraged to steal, but if they were caught they were beaten. That was the Spartan way: Lie, cheat, steal, and get away with it, or else.

For girls, school was also very similar. They were taught physical education, which included wrestling, gymnastics, and combat skills. Spartans believed that healthy women would produce healthy babies. Even though Spartan women never had to join the military or the navy, they grew up to be very strong and very good with combat skills.

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## Athenian system

### *Classical Athens (508–322 BCE)*

Old Education : Old Education in classical Athens consisted of two major parts – physical and intellectual, or what was known to Athenians as "gumnastike" and "mousike." Gumnastike was a physical education that mirrored the ideals of the military – strength, stamina, and preparation for war. Having a physically fit body was extremely important to the Athenians. Boys would begin physical education either during or just after beginning their elementary education. Initially, they would learn from a private teacher known as a paidotribe. Eventually, the boys would begin training at the gymnasium. Physical training was seen as necessary for improving one's appearance, preparation for war, and good health at an old age. On the other hand, mousike was a combination of modern-day music, dance, lyrics, and poetry. Mousike provided students with examples of beauty and nobility, as well as an appreciation of harmony and rhythm.

Students would write using a stylus, with which they would etch onto a wax-covered board. When children were ready to begin reading whole works, they would often be given poetry to memorize and recite. Mythopoeic legends such as Hesiod and Homer were also highly regarded by Athenians, and their works were often incorporated into lesson plans. Old Education lacked heavy structure and only featured schooling up to the elementary level. Once a child reached adolescence his formal education ended. Therefore, a large part of this education was informal and relied on simple human experience.

### *Higher Education*

It was not until about 420 BC that Higher Education became prominent in Athens. Philosophers such as Socrates (*c.* 470–399 BCE), as well as the sophistic movement, which led to an influx of foreign teachers, created a shift from Old Education to a new Higher Education. This Higher Education expanded formal education, and Athenian society began to hold intellectual capacity in higher regard than physical. The shift caused controversy

between those with traditional as opposed to modern views on education. Traditionalists believed that raising "intellectuals" would destroy Athenian culture, and leave Athens at a disadvantage in war. On the other hand, those in support of the change felt that while physical strength was important, its value in relation to Athenian power would diminish over time. Such people believed that education should be a tool to develop the whole man, including his intellect. But Higher Education prevailed. The introduction of secondary and post-secondary levels of education provided greater structure and depth to the existing Old Education framework. More focused fields of study included mathematics, astronomy, harmonics and dialectic – all with an emphasis on the development of philosophical insight. It was seen as necessary for individuals to use knowledge within a framework of logic and reason.

Wealth played an integral role in classical Athenian Higher Education. In fact, the amount of Higher Education an individual received often depended on the ability and the family's willingness to pay for such an education. The formal programs within Higher Education were often taught by sophists who charged for their teaching. In fact, sophists extensively used advertisements in order to reach as many customers as possible. In most circumstances, only those who could afford the price could participate and the peasant class who lacked capital were limited in the education they could receive. Women and slaves were also barred from receiving an education. Societal expectations limited women mostly to the home, and the widely-held belief that women have inferior intellectual capacity caused them to have no access to formal education. Slaves were legally disallowed access to education.

After Greece became part of the Roman Empire, educated Greeks were used as slaves by affluent Romans – indeed this was the primary way in which affluent Romans were educated. This led to the continuation of Greek culture in the Roman sphere.

## Classical Athenian educators

### *Isocrates (436–338 BC)*

Isocrates was an influential classical Athenian orator. Growing up in Athens exposed Isocrates to educators such as Socrates and

Gorgias at a young age and helped him develop exceptional rhetoric. As he grew older and his understanding of education developed, Isocrates disregarded the importance of the arts and sciences, believing rhetoric was the key to virtue. Education's purpose was to produce civic efficiency and political leadership and therefore, the ability to speak well and persuade became the cornerstone of his educational theory. However, at the time there was no definite curriculum for Higher Education, with only the existence of the sophists who were constantly traveling. In response, Isocrates founded his school of Rhetoric around 393 BCE. The school was in contrast to Plato's Academy (c. 387 BCE) which was largely based on science, philosophy, and dialectic.

## *Plato (428–348 BC)*

Plato was a philosopher in classical Athens who studied under Socrates, ultimately becoming one of his most famed students. Following Socrates' execution, Plato left Athens in anger, rejecting politics as a career and traveling to Italy and Sicily. He returned ten years later to establish his school, the Academy (c. 387 BCE) – named after the Greek hero Akademos. Plato perceived education as a method to produce citizens who could operate as members of the civic community in Athens. In one sense, Plato believed Athenians could obtain education through the experiences of being a community member, but he also understood the importance of deliberate training, or Higher Education, in the development of civic virtue.

Thus, his reasoning behind founding the Academy – what is often credited as the first University. It is at this school where Plato discussed much of his educational program, which he outlined in his best known work – the *Republic.* In his writing, Plato describes the rigorous process one must go through in order to attain true virtue, and understand reality for what it actually is. The education required of such achievement, according to Plato, included an elementary education in music, poetry, and physical training, two to three years of mandatory military training, ten years of mathematical science, five years of dialectic training, and fifteen years of practical political training. The few individuals equipped

to reach such a level would become philosopher-kings, the leaders of Plato's ideal city.

### *Aristotle (384–322 BC)*

Aristotle was a classical Greek philosopher. While born in Stagira, Chalkidice, Aristotle joined Plato's Academy in Athens during his late teenage years and remained for nine-teen years, withdrawing following Plato's death. His departure from the Academy also signaled his departure from Athens. Aristotle left to join Hermeias, a former student at the Academy, who had become the ruler of Atarneus and Assos in the north-western coast of Anatolia (present-day Turkey). He remained in Anatolia until, in 342 BCE, he received an invitation from King Philip of Macedon to become the educator of his thirteen-year-old son Alexander. Aristotle accepted the invitation and moved to Pella to begin his work with the boy who would soon become known as Alexander the Great. When Aristotle moved back to Athens in 352 BCE, Alexander helped finance Aristotle's school – the Lyceum. A significant part of the Lyceum was research. The school had a systematic approach to the collection of information. Aristotle believed dialectical relationships among students performing research could impede the pursuit of truth. Thus, much of the school's focus was on research done empirically.

## Spartan system

The Spartan society desired that all male citizens become successful soldiers with the stamina and skills to defend their polis as members of a Spartan phalanx. There is a misconception that Spartans killed weak children, but that is not true. It was a rumor started by Plutarch, a Greek historian, who evidently got his history wrong. After examination, the council would either rule that the child was fit to live or would reject the child sentencing him to a death by abandonment and exposure.

### *Agoge*

Military dominance was of extreme importance to the Spartans of Ancient Greece. In response, the Spartans structured their educational system as an extreme form of military boot camp,

which they referred to as *agoge*. The pursuit of intellectual knowledge was seen as trivial, and thus academic learning, such as reading and writing, was kept to a minimum. A Spartan boy's life was devoted almost entirely to his school, and that school had but one purpose: to produce an almost indestructible Spartan *phalanx*. Formal education for a Spartan male began at about the age of seven when the state removed the boy from the custody of his parents and sent him to live in a barracks with many other boys his age. For all intents and purposes, the barracks was his new home, and the other males living in the barracks his family. For the next five years, until about the age of twelve, the boys would eat, sleep and train within their barracks-unit and receive instruction from an adult male citizen who had completed all of his military training and experienced battle.

The instructor stressed discipline and exercise and saw to it that his students received little food and minimal clothing in an effort to force the boys to learn how to forage, steal and endure extreme hunger, all of which would be necessary skills in the course of a war.

Those boys who survived the first stage of training entered into a secondary stage in which punishments became harsher and physical training and participation in sports almost non-stop in order to build up strength and endurance. During this stage, which lasted until the males were about eighteen years old, fighting within the unit was encouraged, mock battles were performed, acts of courage praised, and signs of cowardice and disobedience severely punished.

During the mock battles, the young men were formed into *phalanxes* to learn to maneuver as if they were one entity and not a group of individuals. To be more efficient and effective during maneuvers, students were also trained in dancing and music, because this would enhance their ability to move gracefully as a unit. Toward the end of this phase of the *agoge*, the trainees were expected to hunt down and kill a Helot, a Greek slave. If caught, the student would be convicted and disciplined-not for committing murder, but for his inability to complete the murder without being discovered.

### *Ephebe*

The students would graduate from the *agoge* at the age of eighteen and receive the title of *ephebes*. Upon becoming an *ephebe*, the male would pledge strict and complete allegiance to Sparta and would join a private organization to continue training in which he would compete in gymnastics, hunting and performance with planned battles using real weapons. After two years, at the age of twenty, this training was finished and the now grown men were officially regarded as Spartan soldiers.

### *Education of Spartan women*

Spartan women, unlike their Athenian counterparts, received a formal education that was supervised and controlled by the state. Much of the public schooling received by the Spartan women revolved around physical education. Until about the age of eighteen women were taught to run, wrestle, throw a discus, and also to throw javelins. The skills of the young women were tested regularly in competitions such as the annual footrace at the Heraea of Elis, In addition to physical education, the young girls also were taught to sing, dance, and play instruments often by traveling poets such as Alcman or by the elderly women in the polis. The Spartan educational system for females was very strict because its purpose was to train future mothers of soldiers in order to maintain the strength of Sparta's phalanxes, which were essential to Spartan defense and culture.

## CONTRIBUTION OF EUROPEAN PHYSICAL EDUCATORS - GUTS MUTHS, JOHN SPIESS, FRANK NACHTEGALL, P.H.LING

### History of Physical Education

Physical activity has accompanied man since its inception and has evolved from being a few years, not structured for survival, ie struggle for life, to regard man as a psychobiological unit served in their physical aspects, psychological and intellectual, being therefore an educational reality and offered in Schools. Primitive man needed to be physically fit to survive. Being strong and sturdy