



# The Reformist Role of Physical Education in Social Development a Historical and Philosophical Analysis

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**Abstract:** *This study explores the historical role of physical education as a tool for social reform through a comparative analytical examination of its trajectories across ancient civilizations Islamic systems the European Renaissance and into the modern era shaped by the challenges of globalization. The research shows that physical education has never been merely a motor activity but a multifaceted societal instrument used to instill discipline integrate marginalized groups support national identity and promote mental and social well-being. The study adopts a historical analytical methodology based on a critical review of intellectual philosophical and social sources surrounding the origins and development of physical education. It analyzes how value systems in each era influenced the content of sport and its reformist function. The findings conclude that physical education has always served as a flexible pillar of social reform constantly interacting with systems of power culture and identity. It deserves to be recognized as a core component in educational and social policy rather than being treated as a marginal subject.*

**Keywords:** *Physical Education, Social Reform, Educational History, Body Globalization, Marginalized Groups.*

## Introduction

Physical education stands as one of the foundational pillars in shaping societies. It extends far beyond the development of physical abilities to encompass the psychological social and cultural formation of individuals and communities. Since the dawn of civilizations physical activity has been associated with values such as discipline obedience cooperation and courage making it an effective means of socialization and reform within various societal structures (Abdul Hamid, 2018; Saleh, 2021).

Ancient societies including Greek and Roman civilizations recognized the significance of physical education in shaping civic identity and promoting the values of good citizenship. In Sparta for instance physical education was militaristic and focused on combat readiness whereas in Athens it took on a more civic and cultural character reflecting divergent philosophical and social orientations (Guttmann, 2004). Islamic civilization also placed great emphasis on physical education through a comprehensive perspective that linked bodily development with moral guidance. This is reflected in prophetic traditions that encourage horse riding swimming and archery as well as practical applications within formal educational institutions and centers of learning (Al-Subti, 2016; Abdulaziz, 2019).

With the evolution of modern political and economic systems and the emergence of nation-states and comprehensive reform ideologies physical education became a strategic instrument employed by official institutions including schools armies and youth organizations to address social challenges such as violence delinquency and class-based discrimination. For example, movements such as the YMCA in the United States during the late nineteenth century promoted sport as a means to morally reform boys in industrial neighborhoods (Clarke, 2006). Similar initiatives emerged in postwar Europe where physical education was integrated into youth rehabilitation programs.

In the twenty-first century physical education has acquired a broader dimension and now serves as a central tool to enhance mental health support marginalized groups such as persons with disabilities and refugees and reinforce principles of equality and social inclusion (UNESCO, 2015; Bailey et al, 2009). International organizations including the United Nations have incorporated sport into their development agendas affirming a fundamental shift in the understanding of physical education from a purely physical discipline to a key pillar in social reform and cohesion.

This study seeks to examine the reformist role of physical education across history by tracing its philosophical and functional transformations and analyzing historical examples that illustrate how it has helped reshape collective behavior and mitigate aspects of social fragmentation.

### **Research Problem**

Can physical education be considered a historically effective tool for social reform and how have its meanings and functions changed across different educational and cultural contexts

### **Research Hypotheses**

1. Physical education in each historical era reflected prevailing societal values making it a flexible medium for supporting social reform.
2. The more politically conscious a system was of sport's educational potential the more it employed it to achieve social stability and integration.

### **Objectives of the Study**

1. To clarify the historical shifts in the aims and functions of physical education.
2. To analyze the reformist dimensions of physical education across different societies.
3. To provide a deep analytical view of the connection between physical activity and social cohesion.

### **Significance of the Study**

This study is significant in that it combines historical philosophical and sociological dimensions aiming to offer a scientific interpretation of physical education's role in social reform particularly in a time when there is increasing need for unconventional approaches to address contemporary societal challenges

## **Definition of Physical Education: Concept Goals and Scope**

Physical education is a branch of education that aims at the holistic development of the individual through the use of structured physical activity as a pedagogical tool. The concept of physical education has evolved over time from simple bodily exercises aimed at improving fitness to a comprehensive system intended to build balanced personalities and enhance social interaction. Scholars agree that physical education contributes to physical psychological cognitive and social growth thus forming an integral part of the broader educational process (Abdelmajid, 2017; Bailey, 2006)

Arnold defines it as an educational experience designed to promote human potential through movement within interactive social environments (Arnold, 1979) while Siedentop views it as a means of learning values and social skills through organized physical activity (Siedentop, 1998)

The goals of physical education vary according to cultural and educational contexts yet generally include the following:

- a. Development of physical fitness and motor skills.
- b. Promotion of mental and emotional health.
- c. Formation of character and instilling of values such as cooperation discipline and respect.
- d. Enhancement of teamwork and a sense of belonging.
- e. Reduction of negative behaviors among children and adolescents (Hardman and Marshall, 2000).

As for its scope physical education has expanded beyond the boundaries of schools to include club social institutions national programs and community development initiatives making it intersect with public health social policy and urban planning

Thus physical education is no longer a purely physical activity but a strategic tool for socialization and the formation of individuals as active members of their communities in alignment with broader human development goals

## **Physical Education in Ancient Greece: The Models of Sparta and Athens**

### **General Introduction**

Ancient Greece was among the earliest civilizations to articulate clear concepts of physical education not merely as bodily activity but as a philosophical social and political tool for shaping citizens and reforming society. These concepts diverged notably between Sparta and Athens the two most influential city-states in forming the military and civic models of physical education in classical history. Sport was not a form of entertainment alone but part of the dominant value system that governed individual social and political life

#### **A. First: Physical Education in Sparta – The Model of Strength and Discipline**

Sparta represents the clearest example of using physical education as a means of social control and shaping obedient disciplined individuals. It established an institutional system known as the *Agoge* regarded as one of the earliest military education systems in the world starting at age seven and continuing until twenty.

Boys were trained in physical endurance pain tolerance blind obedience and total loyalty to the state (Cartledge, 2003)

This system imposed harsh methods including controlled hunger sleeping outdoors constant wrestling and even stealing as a survival skill provided they were not caught promoting cunning and deception as vital strategies. Failure to complete the training stages was considered a disgrace excluding one from full citizenship

Sparta did not exclude women from this regime. Girls were also trained in physical activities such as running wrestling and javelin throwing aiming to strengthen their bodies to produce strong warriors. This physical equality was justified not as a form of personal liberation but as a national necessity (Pomeroy, 1995). The body in Sparta was entirely politicized and subordinated to the state.

In Sparta the body did not belong to the individual but to the state and physical education was a tool of discipline not refinement (Cartledge, 2003)

### B. Second: Physical Education in Athens – The Model of Balance and Virtue

In contrast Athens adopted a more humanistic educational approach to physical education. Sport was not merely a military function but a means of developing a well-rounded individual in mind body and spirit based on the concept of *Kalokagathia* which combines physical beauty with moral goodness.

Training in Athens took place in educational institutions called *Gymnasion* where students practiced sports while engaging in philosophical discussion and intellectual reflection. Philosophers such as Socrates Plato and Aristotle were key figures in linking physical education to ethical philosophy. Plato for example believed that a weak body hinders the refinement of the soul and that sport is essential for regulating desires and instincts (Plato, Republic, Book III).

Physical activity in this context was not an end in itself but a means to attain balance and justice values that the democratic Athenian state sought to instill in its citizens. The educational system emphasized individual freedom and self-awareness unlike the Spartan model based on obedience and submission.

### C. Third: Analytical Comparison between the Two Models

**Table 1.** Analytical Comparison between the Two Models

Criterion	Sparta	Athens
<b>Purpose of Physical Education</b>	To shape a strong obedient soldier for the state	To shape a free citizen balanced in mind and body
<b>Educational Approach</b>	Harsh military system based on discipline	Balanced system integrating body mind and art
<b>Role of Women</b>	Equal training to ensure strong offspring	Very limited mostly among aristocratic circles
<b>Learning Environment</b>	Collective closed disconnected from the family	Open respectful of individual family and civic life
<b>Social Function</b>	Tool for control and producing soldiers	Tool for refinement education and civic awareness

#### D. Fourth: Conclusion

Sparta and Athens offered two contrasting models of physical education as a tool for social reform. While Sparta used sport to reinforce discipline and political control Athens employed it to promote balance virtue and conscious civic participation. This duality between control and cultivation continues to define the ongoing debate in the history of physical education. Is it meant to produce compliant citizens or autonomous individuals

Both models left a lasting impact on Western educational philosophy. Thinkers in the modern era such as Rousseau and Pestalozzi revived the Athenian model while certain authoritarian regimes later adopted features of the Spartan approach in their collective educational projects

### Chapter One: Physical Education in Islamic Civilization

#### Legal and Social Perspectives on Sport

##### A. First: The Legal Framework of Sport in Islam

Islam presents a comprehensive view of the human being as a creature with both material and spiritual dimensions. This holistic outlook emphasizes the importance of bodily development as part of religious responsibility. Numerous prophetic traditions encourage physical activities such as swimming archery and horseback riding. It is narrated that the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ raced with Aisha and when she outran him and later he outran her he said this is for that (Ahmad) reflecting a spirit of sportsmanship and family-based physical engagement.

Another narration states The strong believer is better and more beloved to Allah than the weak believer and in both there is good (Muslim) This hadith has been interpreted as a foundational text linking physical strength to faith and highlighting the relationship between fitness and one's ability to fulfill religious and worldly duties. Thus sport was never considered a luxury but a religious and social responsibility aligned with the higher objectives of preserving life intellect and lineage (Al-Qurtubi, 2003; Al-Qaradawi, 2001).

Islamic jurists discussed the permissibility of sports under the category of allowable physical activities with ethical boundaries. These include avoiding activities that delay prayer cause harm or involve gambling indicating a clear moral framework for physical activity in Muslim societies.

##### B. Second: The Social and Educational Dimensions of Sport

In Islamic societies sport was never separated from educational frameworks. It was seen as a method for moral formation and the development of virtues such as patience strength courage and justice. Ibn Khaldun in his *Muqaddimah* highlighted the role of movement in shaping a strong body and a balanced soul warning that societies that neglect physical activity fall into lethargy and civilizational decline (Ibn Khaldun, 1377 AH).

Sport in the Islamic context was closely tied to the concept of *Furusiyya* a fusion of physical skills including horseback riding archery and swordsmanship with

moral traits such as generosity bravery and altruism. It helped to form the image of the Muslim knight a model that united bodily strength with ethical conduct.

In this way sport became a tool for civil education training the self in discipline and self-restraint consistent with the Islamic worldview which regards the human being as a steward on earth responsible for both body and soul.

#### C. **Third: Sport and Collective Identity in the Islamic Community**

Physical education contributed to strengthening the collective identity of the Muslim Ummah through communal activities held during festivals such as wrestling archery and races. Public spaces in Islamic cities often served as venues for these events especially on holidays reinforcing social bonds and a sense of belonging

Islamic education also promoted youth participation in sport for defensive readiness integrating physical activity into a broader civilizational mission that values both spiritual and material strength

#### D. **Fourth: Views of Muslim Scholars and Thinkers on Sport**

- i. Imam Al-Ghazali in his *Ihya Ulum al-Din* emphasized the need to give the body its due share of rest and movement under the principle of moderation in all things
- ii. Ibn al-Qayyim in *Zad al-Maad* affirmed that physical movement aids digestion and health and is part of the natural order of life.
- iii. Avicenna in *The Canon of Medicine* devoted entire sections to the role of sport in bodily balance.

This rich Islamic intellectual heritage demonstrates that physical education was not a marginal activity but a tool for reform balance and holistic individual and societal development fully embedded in the Islamic vision of human growth

## **Chapter One: Europe in the Age of Renaissance and Enlightenment**

### **The Emergence of School-Based Sports Systems in Britain Germany and France**

#### **Introduction**

The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries witnessed a major shift in how physical education was perceived across Europe. With the rise of the modern state and the expansion of formal education systems physical education became an official part of school curricula. This transformation was driven by three main factors the advancement of science and pedagogy the rise of nationalism and the need for social discipline within increasingly complex industrial societies.

Britain Germany and France emerged as leading models in developing structured educational sports systems which reflected their educational philosophies and shaped national identities (Green, 2008).

The politicization of the body through sport was not an elitist choice but a necessity imposed by the modern European order to produce a productive and disciplined citizen (Green, 2008, p. 22).

#### **A. First: Britain – Sport and the Elite Educational System**

In Britain school-based sports systems developed within the context of elite public schools such as Rugby and Eton which catered to the political and social upper classes. Thomas Arnold the renowned headmaster of Rugby School in the mid-nineteenth century introduced the philosophy of *Muscular Christianity* promoting sport as a means of moral formation and self-discipline for youth (Mangan, 1981).

Sport was not merely for play but for disciplining the soul nurturing courage and instilling a spirit of service (Arnold in Mangan, 1981).

Sports such as football cricket and athletics were used not just for entertainment but to train future leaders of the British Empire linking physical strength with moral leadership and reinforcing imperial ideology.

**B. Second: Germany – Gymnastics and National Discipline**

In Germany the *Turnen Movement* was founded by Friedrich Ludwig Jahn in the early nineteenth century advocating gymnastics as a tool to revive German national consciousness after Napoleon’s occupation. Jahn established *Turnplatz* schools focused on strict regimented exercises aimed at promoting collective discipline and national spirit (Pfister, 2003).

The Prussian state embraced gymnastics as an effective means to prepare a generation ready to defend the homeland. Physical education was integrated into both civilian and military schools under direct state supervision becoming a core element of the national strength-building project.

**C. Third: France – Physical Education under Secular Republicanism**

In France physical education was shaped by the ideals of the French Revolution and its republican values. The government aimed to form strong healthy and disciplined citizens. François Amoros played a major role in introducing state-supported gymnastics programs in schools beginning in the 1830s

France blended German discipline with British sports values but added a secular republican character using sport to cultivate citizens aware of their rights and responsibilities and capable of defending the republic and participating in public life (Arnaud, 1990).

**D. Fourth: Comparative Analysis of the Three Systems**

**Table 2.** Comparative Analysis of the Three Systems

Country	Educational Philosophy	Type of Sports	Main Objective
Britain	Muscular Christianity	Team sports such as football and cricket	Forming morally upright elite leaders
Germany	Nationalist Gymnastics	Individual and group exercises	Instilling discipline and national identity
France	Secular Republicanism	Military and school-based gymnastics	Shaping strong republican citizens

**E. Fifth: Conclusion**

The emergence of school-based sports systems in Europe marked a pivotal moment in the evolution of physical education. Sport became a tool for shaping the modern citizen whether as an imperial leader in Britain a patriotic soldier in Germany or a republican civic agent in France. These systems represented one of the earliest and most comprehensive uses of sport as an integrated political social and reformist project

## **Chapter One: Post–World War Era Physical Education in the Service of Rebuilding Societies**

### **Introduction**

Following the devastation of World War I (1914–1918) and World War II (1939–1945) European and American societies faced massive challenges in rebuilding their social psychological and economic structures. The damage extended beyond material losses to profound human dislocation marked by the collapse of social ties and widespread moral and psychological trauma especially among youth.

In this context physical education emerged as an effective reformist tool employed to rebuild national identity instill discipline and unify broken societies under renewed values of belonging and collective effort (Krüger, 1993; Kirk, 1998).

#### **A. First: The European Context of Reconstruction through Sport**

In post–World War I Germany sport was integrated into rehabilitation programs for soldiers and youth. Institutions such as the Reich Committee for Physical Exercise were established to use physical education in strengthening national cohesion and bridging class divides. In France physical education became part of the project to *reeducate the nation* focusing on reviving republican values and civic discipline particularly through the public school system (Arnaud, 1990).

In Scandinavian countries such as Norway and Denmark civil society organizations were formed to provide youth affected by war with access to healthy structured physical activities.

#### **B. Second: The United States — Physical Education and Postwar Rehabilitation**

After World War II the United States launched comprehensive programs to reintegrate returning soldiers into civilian life. Physical education played a central role in these initiatives contributing to:

- i. Treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder through physical activity.
- ii. Recovery of physical fitness and general health.
- iii. Social reintegration of veterans through sports clubs and civil-military education programs (Whorton, 1982).

The American educational system also began integrating physical education into general curricula to promote public health leading to the rise of the *Fitness for All* movement which was supported in the 1950s by President John F Kennedy who viewed physical fitness as a national responsibility

### C. Third: Goals of Physical Education in the Postwar Period

**Table 3.** Goals of Physical Education in the Postwar Period

Goal	Explanation
<b>Restoring Discipline</b>	Replacing the collapse of paternal and social authority through school order
<b>Social Solidarity</b>	Uniting different social classes in shared national activities
<b>Psychological Recovery</b>	Using movement to overcome trauma and emotional distress
<b>National Identity</b>	Linking bodily fitness with patriotism and collective effort

### D. Fourth: Outcomes and Evaluation

In this period physical education proved to be more than an auxiliary school subject. It became a vital societal mechanism for reconstructing post-disaster communities. It contributed to:

- i. Supporting social peace within schools.
- ii. Reinforcing values of cooperation discipline and psychological resilience.
- iii. Connecting individual physical well-being with the national rebuilding project.
- iv. As Krüger (1993) noted postwar sport evolved from a tool for bodily strengthening into a means of reconstructing the social contract

## Chapter Six: Physical Education in the Twenty-First Century

### Physical Education as a Tool for Reducing School Violence

#### A. First: Introduction

With the increasing prevalence of school violence in recent decades including bullying physical assaults and behavioral disorders educational institutions have begun seeking effective and non-traditional strategies to confront this phenomenon. In this context physical education has emerged as a promising tool to reduce aggressive behavior and promote collective values and discipline within school environments (Bailey, 2006; Gleave and Cole-Hamilton, 2012).

#### B. Second: School Violence as a Growing Social Issue

Violence in schools is no longer merely an individual issue but a manifestation of broader social disintegration caused by:

- i. Weak collective identity.
- ii. Lack of emotional expression skills.
- iii. Absence of behavioral role models and self-discipline.
- iv. Fragmented or neglectful family environments.

Scientific studies have shown that group-based physical activities contribute to:

- i. Positively channeling students' excess energy.
- ii. Creating cooperative environments that reduce tension.

iii. Building positive student-teacher relationships.

Physical education is not merely a tool for burning energy but a tool for shaping personalities resistant to violence (Hellison, 2003)

**C. Third: How Physical Education Reduces Violence**

**Table 4.** How Physical Education Reduces Violence

Mechanism	Explanation
<b>Strengthening belonging</b>	<b>group</b> School sports teams reduce feelings of isolation and rejection
<b>Learning discipline</b>	<b>rules and</b> Sports teach respect for rules and lawful behavior
<b>Training self-control</b>	Exercises help regulate aggressive impulses
<b>Psychological ventilation</b>	Physical activity alleviates tension and hostility
<b>Practicing ethical values</b>	Respecting opponents accepting loss helping others and teamwork

A study conducted in US schools found that integrating value-based physical education programs such as TPSR (Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility) led to a 27 percent decrease in aggressive behavior within one year (Hellison and Martinek, 2006).

**D. Fourth: Global Experiences**

i. **Finland**

Finland has led efforts to integrate physical education into school reform particularly to counteract aggressive behavior and physical inactivity. The government launched the *School on the Move* initiative aimed at increasing daily physical activity in schools. The program’s final report indicated a reduction in violence and isolation and improved student engagement and classroom interaction (Finnish Schools on the Move, 2020) Organized movement in schools does not only produce healthier students but more peaceful and cooperative ones (Ministry of Education and Culture, Finland, 2020)

ii. **South Korea**

The Korean Ministry of Education implemented the *Preventive School Sports Clubs* project to involve students from complex social backgrounds in organized sports. Research by Lee et al (2018) found that the program improved student relationships and significantly reduced violence in high-density urban schools

**Chapter Seven: Comparative and Philosophical Analysis**

**Comparing the Functions of Physical Education in Ancient and Modern Times**

**A. First: Physical Education in the Past – From Discipline to Social Cohesion**

In ancient contexts physical education served the political or ideological goals of society. In Sparta it shaped warriors and in Rome it trained citizens in obedience and discipline. In Eastern and Islamic civilizations sport was tied to religious and

spiritual values and included in moral and physical training systems (Cartledge, 2003; Ibn Khaldun, 1377 AH).

Its main functions included:

- i. Reinforcing loyalty to ruling systems.
- ii. Preparing groups for defense or labor.
- iii. Promoting collective values such as strength courage and obedience

**B. Second: Physical Education Today – From Discipline to Empowerment**

In the twentieth and twenty-first centuries physical education evolved toward a more humanistic and inclusive orientation. Sport is now seen as a tool for building mentally and socially resilient individuals and for addressing exclusion and marginalization. Today sport serves as.

- i. A means of social inclusion for persons with disabilities refugees and women
- ii. A method for teaching democratic values such as respect and tolerance
- iii. A component of mental health strategies to reduce stress and violence
- iv. A channel for community development and sustainability (UNESCO, 2015; Bailey et al, 2009)

**C. Third: A Paradigm Shift in the Philosophy of the Body**

**Table 5.** A Paradigm Shift in the Philosophy of the Body

Era	Concept of the Body	Primary Function of Physical Education			
Ancient	Body serving power or faith	Producing obedience strength or virtue			
Modern	Body as source of selfhood	Empowerment	expression	healing	social growth

**Analyzing the Philosophies of Physical Education Across Contexts**

**A. First: Military and Political Philosophy**

In authoritarian or totalitarian regimes such as Nazi Germany or the Soviet Union physical education was part of a political project to unify bodies into the state’s narrative and produce loyal strong citizens who would not oppose authority (Riordan, 1991).

**B. Second: Moral-Educational Philosophy**

Emerging strongly in ancient Athens and revived during the Enlightenment physical education was viewed as a moral tool for building well-rounded individuals. Educational theorists such as Rousseau Pestalozzi and Dewey saw sport and play as paths to freedom interaction and respect for internalized norms.

**C. Third: Humanistic and Rights-Based Philosophy**

With the rise of feminist and disability rights movements sport became part of the discourse on bodily rights and the right to play and move without discrimination. This led to the framing of physical education within the broader concept of social empowerment giving rise to initiatives such as *Sport for Development and Peace (SDP)* now supported by the United Nations (UN, 2003).

**The Role of Values in Shaping the Reformist Content of Sport**

### **A. First: Religious and Traditional Values**

In Islamic and Eastern traditions physical education embodied values such as humility balance self-discipline and inner struggle. Sport was a path to elevation not showmanship. In classical European Christianity sport was long subject to moral suspicion before being incorporated into reformist ethics like Muscular Christianity in Britain.

### **B. Second: Nationalist and Political Values**

In the nineteenth century sport served nationalist goals strengthening the body for the sake of the nation. It was tied to projects in Germany Britain and France producing disciplined patriotic citizens.

### **C. Third: Modern Values – Rights Inclusion Sustainability**

In the twenty-first century the values guiding physical education include

- i. Inclusion the right to participate regardless of background
- ii. Sustainability aligning sport with environmental and social goals
- iii. Social justice bridging class divides through shared physical activity
- iv. Psychological empowerment building the self-worth of marginalized groups through movement (Kay, 2009).

## **Analytical Conclusion**

The transformation in the function of physical education reflects a deeper philosophical shift in how societies perceive the body power and identity. What was once a tool of collective control has become a means of individual liberation. Where it once entrenched loyalty it now builds citizenship. Physical education today is a dynamic platform that fuses reform healing empowerment and belonging all essential for lasting social peace

## **Conclusions**

### **Understanding the Reformist Role of Physical Education**

Through the historical and comparative analysis of the evolution of physical education it becomes clear that this domain has never been neutral. It has always reflected prevailing conceptions of humanity the body power and society. Physical education has played a dual role in some contexts it served as a tool for social control and conformity while in others it was a means for empowerment inclusion and psychological and social reconstruction

The true reformist role of physical education can be summarized as follows:

- a. A mechanism for socialization that promotes positive values such as cooperation discipline and respect.
- b. A therapeutic tool that helps reduce stress violence and behavioral disorders
- c. A channel for social integration allowing the participation of marginalized and vulnerable groups
- d. A source of national identity formation especially during periods of crisis
- e. A bridge for peace and development through programs supported by global organizations such as the United Nations

Thus physical education should not be viewed as a luxury or marginal activity but as a strategic mechanism for social reform that requires integration across educational health and social policies

## **Recommendation**

### **For Researchers in Education and History**

1. Conduct continued historical and comparative research on physical education especially in the Arab and Islamic worlds where documentation and critical analysis remain limited.
2. Integrate philosophical and anthropological dimensions in the study of physical education to explain the relationship between the body and social values
3. Re-examine Islamic educational heritage to understand how sport was used in moral and behavioral formation and how it can be revived for modern curricula.
4. Employ qualitative research tools to study the impact of physical education on vulnerable populations including refugees women and children in conflict settings.
5. Analyze contemporary educational policies through the lens of expanded social reform concepts to assess whether physical education is treated as a structural component or merely a supplemental subject.

### **For Policymakers and Educational Institutions**

1. Fully integrate physical education into school curricula as a subject with reformist value rather than as a secondary or recreational activity.
2. Design targeted sports programs for marginalized groups such as persons with disabilities girls in conservative settings and children in remote areas.
3. Link school-based sports with preventive policies against violence and dropout by adopting successful global programs like TPSR or School on the Move.
4. Encourage partnerships between the education sector and civil sports organizations to activate youth and community initiatives in underprivileged neighborhoods.
5. Develop teaching staff trained philosophically and pedagogically in using sport to support civic psychological and social values.
6. Adopt sport as a component of national mental health strategies particularly in transitional societies and post-conflict communities.

## **Final Remark**

Social reform is not solely a legal or economic endeavor but primarily an educational and cultural project. The body as the primary vehicle of social action is the true entry point for such reform. Therefore, physical education represents a flexible and holistic tool that can be intelligently mobilized in societal transformation provided it is recognized as a science with its own foundations and philosophies not merely as a set of unreflective bodily practices

## **Conclusion**

This study has shown that physical education is not merely a functional or supplementary component of the educational process but a dynamic instrument of social

reform. It has assumed varied roles depending on historical periods governing systems and prevailing cultural values. In ancient times it served to discipline the body in service of the state or faith whereas in the modern era it has become a means of empowerment identity formation and the reproduction of democratic and social values.

The historical comparison between authoritarian and humanistic models reveals that the conscious framing of physical education is always linked to how a society perceives the human being and the cultural meaning of the body. In contexts where the individual is recognized as a full citizen physical education becomes a space for participation and empowerment. In coercive settings however it is reduced to a tool of control and enforced conformity.

In the face of twenty-first-century challenges such as violence marginalization and social fragmentation the role of physical education is poised to expand. This potential can only be realized if it is redefined philosophically and pedagogically as part of a broader project to rebuild society on the foundations of inclusion justice and bodily dignity. Indeed, physical education is not merely a sport but a civilizing language of reform.

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