

Physical Literacy:
A Paradigm Shift
towards an Active
& Healthy India

Concept understanding,
Potential Implementation
Approach and Contextualized
Solutions for India



Foreword

In the last few years as a country, by focusing on alphabetic and numeric literacy, we have lost on an equally critical aspect of focus, that being our physical literacy.

Today our country is facing lifestyle diseases and its burden (health, economic) more than ever before. Our citizens are less active, and they are not benefitting from the holistic benefits that come from engaging in physical activity.

We may not have used the word "physical literacy" but as a country, we always had the culture of physical activities in all our daily routines and rituals. It is time to revive our engagement in daily physical activity.

It is critical for all stakeholders, government, corporate organisations, and communities to build on physical literacy so that whole Indian population is healthy and active for life.

Thanks & regards
Pullela Gopichand
Chief National Coach for the
India national badminton team



Foreword

Physical activity is declining at an alarming rate globally as more people live sedentary and inactive lives. Covid emphasised the importance of being physically active for holistic health and wellbeing. Physical literacy provides a new focus that intends to nurture lifelong engagement in physical activity, contributing positively to an individual's overall quality of life.

Physical literacy encourages us to look at physical activity engagement through a different lens. It considers everyone's physical, emotional, and mental engagement in physical activity; how they behave, think, and take part. It promotes the skills, knowledge and attitudes required to live a healthy, active lifestyle.

Regular physical activity promotes growth and development and has multiple benefits for physical, mental, and psychosocial health. Physical literacy is a concept which celebrates everyone's uniqueness and encourages individuals to live meaningful and healthy lives through physical activity, sport, play, recreation, and leisure. However, it is essential that people have positive experiences in and around physical activities, so they are more likely to commence and continue to engage throughout their lives.

Policies Makers, Physical Education, Physical Activity and Sport providers, should have a clear understanding of the concept of physical literacy so that they can provide appropriate environments that encourage everyone to be active. Communities should understand the importance of physical literacy to an individual's holistic development and be encouraged and supported in providing rich and varied opportunities for everyone to engage in physical activity. India has an opportunity to change practices & provision so that a population can be physically active for life.

Thanks and regards,

Mr. Nigel Green
Chair - IPLA



Foreword

The value of being active in order to lead a healthy life is well established and very widely spoken about. Yet it is a daily challenge for most people to be active. The gap between thought and action needs to be bridged - urgently. That gap, can be addressed through the physical literacy approach.

Unlike a sports based physical education program that is aiming towards results, a physical literacy based approach is more centred towards outcomes. The difference is this - results tell you that you have failed or succeeded. Outcomes, on the other hand promotes learning - irrespective of winning or losing. This approach of working on the process, rather than focussing on the results, will create the mindset to be active for being active's sake, and not for the purpose to showcasing a medal.

As a professional classical dancer for over forty years, I firmly believe it is time to bring in art into physical education. In today's fast-paced world always running against time, with academic pressure and sports pressure to perform, we need to provide children the opportunity to slow down. You cannot paint in a hurry or write a poem with a deadline. If we can bring in that quality of art into our physical education, not learning a sport to achieve a goal, but cherishing and relishing the act of the movement, that quality will help everyone willingly choose to be active for life.

The physical literacy approach of motivating and building confidence thereby addressing the affective domain, instilling the knowledge and understanding thereby working on the cognitive domain and simultaneously building the competence in the physical domain will be beneficial to all, especially the school students, in creating the foundation for valuing their health and choosing to be active for life.

As the curator of India's first physical literacy informed curriculum in schools since 2014, I deem it a privilege and honour to partner with the International physical literacy association (IPLA) UK, and other like-minded people to advocate, train and execute programs to enhance physical literacy in India.

Jai Hind

Mrs. Gita Krishna Raj
Managing Director, Maverick Literacy (P) Ltd
India Ambassador, IPLA



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Choosing Physical Activities for life

Physical activity is declining at an alarming rate in India. More people live sedentary and inactive lifestyles, leading to obesity, NCDs (non-communicable diseases) and premature death. The problem of increasing physical activity has been attempted to be solved by focusing on elite sports and fitness benchmarks. This is not the way to encourage a population to be physically active.

Physical literacy challenges the way in which individuals engage in and understand physical activity. It offers holistic methods to encourage people to engage in physical activities for life, to slow and reverse this trend of inactivity, and improve holistic health and wellbeing.



Physical Literacy highlights the key elements necessary for an active and fulfilling life. Confidence to take part in diverse physical activities, physical competence to perform activities, knowledge and understanding for improving self-participation and to value physical activities will lead to the motivation to be active for life.

Rather than comparing, judging, commenting, and excluding participants, physical literacy offers a liberal, realistic, and inclusive model for everyone to be part of.

What is Physical Literacy

Physical literacy looks at activity engagement from the view of the whole person, which includes your emotional, physical, and mental engagement in physical activity – how you behave, think, and take part. It's about an individual's personal relationship with physical activities. Traditionally, in most physical activity settings, only the physically active part is valued. The experience of the individual within activity is not given due credit. Experiences during physical activity also encompass emotional and cognitive engagement, which is crucial for the repeated willingness of individuals to participate in physical activities for life.

Developing physical literacy is about enjoying moving, being confident to move freely, knowing how to move and why we should move, and being creative in physical activities. It is a unique, personal lifelong journey. You do not need to compare yourself against others as your progress as a holistic person is what is important. Physical literacy includes everyone, no matter how young or old, how capable or what you want to achieve. It is all about fulfilling your potential as you engage in physical activity throughout life.





Who benefits from Physical Literacy?

It is not just for sports people or fitness enthusiasts; physical literacy is for everyone. Its goal is to motivate people to choose physical activity for life. Everyone is welcomed and appreciated as individuals on a unique physical literacy journey. Physical literacy aims to nurture each individual's lifelong journey enriched with experiences to promote holistic health and wellbeing.



Attributes of a person progressing on their physical literacy journey include

- * Wanting to take part in physical activity
- * Having the self-confidence to plan and effect a physically active lifestyle
- * Having confidence when taking part in different physical activities
- * Moving efficiently and effectively in different physical activities
- * Working independently and with others in different physical activities
- * Having awareness of movement needs and possibilities in different physical activities
- * Knowing how to improve performance in different physical activities
- * Knowing how physical activity can improve well-being



Need for Physical Literacy

Click or Scan QR codes for links

There are growing cases of Non-communicable Diseases (NCDs) and decreasing quality of life due to inactive lifestyles within India. One study reported that annually, 6 million people die in India due to NCDs (*QR Code 1*)

Also, there is the double burden of obesity and malnutrition. Almost 40% Indian population is obese (*QR Code 2*)

Malnutrition also impacts on more than 30-35% of children across age groups (*QR Code 3*)

Physical activity levels across all age-groups are getting lower (*QR Code 4 & QR Code 5*)

Inactivity creates a huge financial burden on an inactive population (*QR Code 6*)



QR Code 1



QR Code 2



QR Code 3



QR Code 4



QR Code 5



QR Code 6

Table Lifestyle diseases statistics

| NCD | Impact in India |
|----------------|--|
| Diabetic | 77 million; expected to be double in next 20 years; more than 60% get undiagnosed. almost every Indian prone to this |
| Blood pressure | About 33% urban and 25% rural Indians are hypertensive. |
| Heart issues | 1.6% to 7.4% in rural populations and from 1% to 13.2% in urban populations; more than 5 million deaths every year |
| Cholesterol | high cholesterol is present in 25–30% of urban and 15–20% rural |
| Obesity | more than 40% |

The prevailing situation and potential future trends call for a robust and long term solutions focusing on creating and supporting an active population.





PL in different positioning with PE, Sports, Fitness and Health

Physical literacy, as a term, has been misunderstood by some individuals and organisations. Physical literacy is for all and for life with a clear objective of quality of life and lifetime health. Physical Education is a structured program within school environment. Sports ranges from grassroots to elite levels with a purpose on developing and enjoyment. Health is based on preventive and curative health practices.

Physical literacy on the other hand, is learning to interact holistically with the environment with our entire physicality. It is for all and for life with a clear objective of quality of life and lifetime health. Physical literacy informed practices can be integrated in all areas of physical activities with a purpose of people choosing an active lifestyle. PL does not compete with any arena. Rather it connects all areas with a common objective of active and healthy population.

PL benefits to the community and state

Physical literacy as a concept is inclusive of all age-groups. Physical activity provision across all age-groups and in all communities will improve every citizen's engagement in physical activities for life. Physical literacy understanding would help each community find local solutions to ensure that everyone is active.

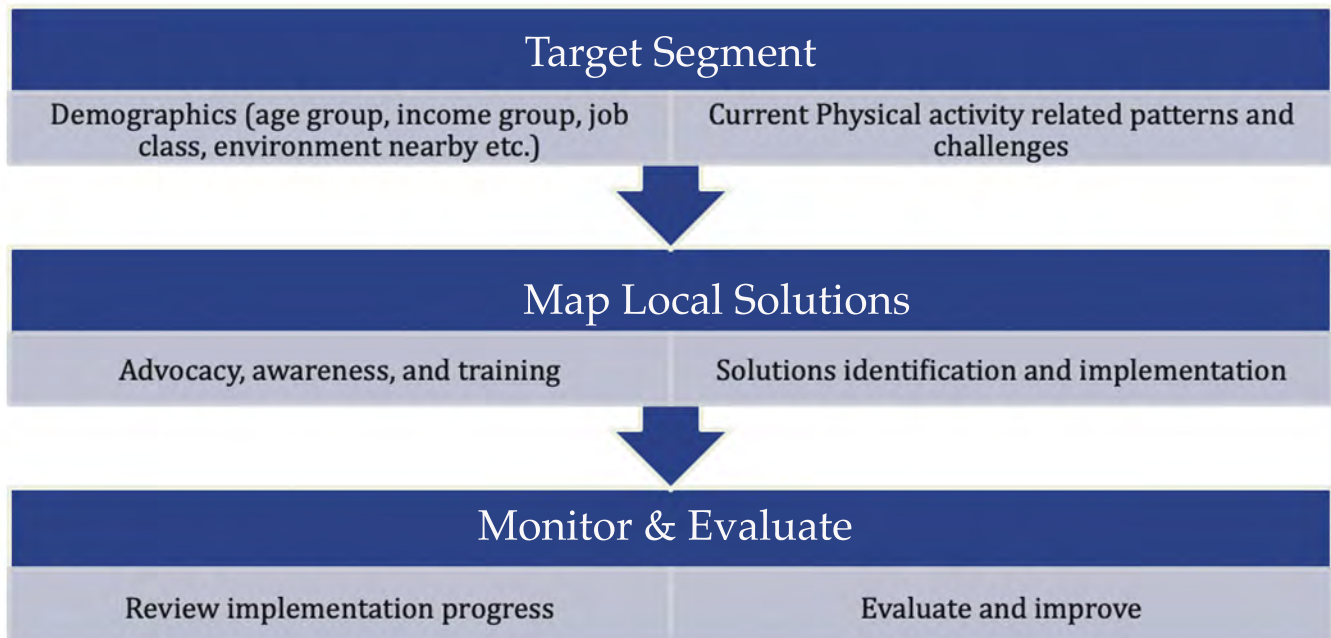
Physical literacy understanding would help each citizen to look at their own journey more empathetically and celebrate the positive impact engaging in physical activity can have. Physical literacy practices have the potential to impact on health, quality of life, social cohesion, longer life span and reduced health expenses in each community.

When all communities adopt positive physical activity practices, at a state level, there would be a definite improvement in healthcare infrastructure needs, spending on healthcare, productivity of individual and GDP of the state.



Potential Implementation Approach in India

Physical literacy can be implemented in India through highly localized and contextualization solutions only. Each state, community, individual is unique and different; and every solution must be mapped to the local needs. As a framework may be used:



As per various physical literacy projects in India, identification and local solutions must be undertaken before full scale implementation. As a logical step, well-considered pilot projects may be initiated in schools/ communities/ offices and as per on-ground impact, pilots may be refined and scaled up in a phased manner.

To drive these pilot projects, it is essential that local experts are trained and each state must develop its local resource persons. Also, physical literacy related locally translated materials must be developed.

At a state level, projects must be championed by meaningful collaboration through many departments such as education, health, sports, urban development, rural development, municipal corporation, and others. Thus, project advocacy needs to be led by the highest office in each state so that desired collaboration and implementation can be achieved.

Hon'ble Prime Minister of India launched the Fit India Movement on 29 Aug 2019 with a view to make Physical Fitness a way of life. Fit India Movement aims at behavioural changes from sedentary lifestyle to physically active way of day-to-day living. A movement with right intentions has been mainly focused on fitness specific events and mandated model of fitness assessment. However, this is treating the body as a machine rather than a holistic being. Physical literacy focuses on the holistic development of individuals. The Fit India movement must integrate physical literacy components mainly on the cognitive and affective aspects to the existing physical aspects. This would make movement more inclusive and holistic.

Role of nutrition

For an active and healthy population, nutrition is extremely critical for any advocacy, training, and implementation. As mentioned above, with India's urban obesity and rural malnutrition issues, any intervention without nutrition will not lead to the desired outcomes.

In the context of government schools, many children come to schools with an empty stomach and making them engage in activities will make them further calorie deficient. It would degrade their health instead of improving. Similar nutrition related issues are there in all communities. Therefore, to ensure that citizens are not just active but healthy for life, nutrition components need to be integrated into initiatives.



Tamil Nadu

Tamil Nadu was the first state to introduce a structured physical literacy curriculum in a private school in India, way back in 2014. Although small in its area of impact, the concept of physical literacy has started becoming acceptable in city schools across Tamil Nadu over the last eight years. The state has also invested in the enhancement of government schools with the help of private players.

While there was a proposal to make physical activity compulsory on a daily basis in state schools (QR code 7), in lieu of the pandemic and physical school not being operational for almost two years in the state, the implementation of this was deferred.

However, with a focus on physical and mental health for the academic year 2022-23 (QR code 8), the need to incorporate the physical literacy approach of addressing the needs of the whole child to enhance their physical, mental and emotional engagement with physical activities becomes crucial.



QR code 7



QR code 8



QR code 9

*Image Courtesy:
Maverick Fit Kids (QR code 9)
India's First Physical Literacy
informed curriculum in
Tamil Nadu schools since 2014*





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