

## Adult Education and Physical Education in NEP 2020: A Holistic Vision for Lifelong Learning and Well-being

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### ABSTRACT

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 presents education as a lifelong process that extends beyond formal schooling and supports the full development of individuals (Government of India, 2020; *NEP 2020's Commitment to Adult Education*, 2024). This paper examines how adult education and physical education together advance the policy's holistic vision of learning, health, and well-being (*NEP 2020's Commitment to Adult Education*, 2024; *NEP-2020 Physical Education, Sports and Yoga Curriculum*, 2021). It also includes global examples of adult physical education programs, such as community fitness classes and older-adult exercise initiatives, to show how lifelong physical activity is being encouraged internationally (Levy et al., 2020; CDC, 2025). The discussion argues that NEP 2020 connects literacy, skills, physical health, and social inclusion within a single framework of lifelong development (Government of India, 2020; *NEP 2020 on Sports & Yoga*, 2023).

**KEYWORDS:** adult education, lifelong learning, physical education, NEP 2020, yoga, well-being, community fitness.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

NEP 2020 reframes education as a lifelong process rather than a stage limited to formal schooling (Government of India, 2020; *NEP 2020's Commitment to Adult Education*, 2024). In this framework, adult education becomes necessary for literacy, skill development, recognition of prior learning, and social empowerment (Government of India, 2020; *Empowering Adults Through Lifelong Learning: A NEP Perspective*, 2023). Physical education is similarly broadened beyond school sport to include wellness, movement, exercise, yoga, and active living throughout adulthood (*NEP-2020 Physical Education, Sports and Yoga Curriculum*, 2021; *NEP 2020 on Sports & Yoga*, 2023). The policy's holistic orientation makes adult learning and physical well-being mutually reinforcing goals (Government of India, 2020; *NEP 2020 on Sports & Yoga*, 2023).

### 2. Adult Education in NEP 2020

Adult education in NEP 2020 is closely linked to universal literacy, continuing education, and the recognition of prior learning (Government of India, 2020; *NEP 2020's Commitment to Adult Education*, 2024). The policy acknowledges that adults need flexible and practical opportunities to learn because their educational trajectories are often shaped by work, family, and life responsibilities (*NEP 2020's Commitment to Adult Education*, 2024; *NEP 2020 to Introduce Adult and Lifelong Learning Program*, 2022). It also reflects the view that knowledge gained through lived experience should be valued and formally recognized (*Empowering Adults Through Lifelong*

*Learning: A NEP Perspective*, 2023). In this sense, adult education becomes both an equity measure and a strategy for national development (Government of India, 2020; *Adult Education for Nation Development Under NEP 2020*, 2023).

The policy further supports adult education by promoting skill development, lifelong learning, and access to educational resources for all sections of society (Government of India, 2020; *NEP 2020's Commitment to Adult Education*, 2024). This approach is significant because adult learning contributes to employability, civic participation, digital inclusion, and personal confidence (*Adult Education for Nation Development Under NEP 2020*, 2023; *NEP 2020's Commitment to Adult Education*, 2024). By linking literacy with lifelong capability building, NEP 2020 presents adult education as a foundation for social transformation (Government of India, 2020; *NEP 2020's Commitment to Adult Education*, 2024).

### **3. Physical Education and Well-being**

NEP 2020 also gives physical education, sports, and yoga a prominent place in the education system (*NEP-2020 Physical Education, Sports and Yoga Curriculum*, 2021; *NEP 2020 on Sports & Yoga*, 2023). These are presented not merely as activities for recreation, but as core elements of holistic growth, discipline, emotional balance, and health (*NEP-2020 Physical Education, Sports and Yoga Curriculum*, 2021; *NEP 2020 on Sports & Yoga*, 2023). The policy thus recognizes that education must nurture the body as well as the mind (Government of India, 2020; *NEP 2020 on Sports & Yoga*, 2023). This is especially relevant for adults, whose health and work capacity are strongly influenced by physical activity (CDC, 2025; Levy et al., 2020).

Community-based exercise programs have been shown to improve physical activity, mobility, function, and general health outcomes among older adults (Levy et al., 2020; CDC, 2025). Such programs are often affordable, accessible, and socially supportive, which makes them effective for lifelong participation (Levy et al., 2020; CDC, 2025). This evidence aligns well with NEP 2020's emphasis on integrated well-being through movement, fitness, and yoga (*NEP-2020 Physical Education, Sports and Yoga Curriculum*, 2021; *NEP 2020 on Sports & Yoga*, 2023). Physical education therefore supports not only bodily health but also mental resilience and social inclusion (CDC, 2025; Levy et al., 2020).

### **4. Global Examples**

Across the world, adult physical education appears in community fitness programs, senior exercise classes, workplace wellness initiatives, and recreational sports activities (County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, 2023; CDC, 2025). In the United States and other countries, community fitness programs are offered through recreation centers and local public health systems, often with a focus on older adults and middle-aged populations (County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, 2023). These initiatives typically include aerobic exercise, strength training, flexibility work, and social support, making participation more sustainable (County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, 2023; Levy et al., 2020).

International evidence also shows that programs such as community-based exercise models can be successfully implemented and maintained for older adults (Levy et al., 2020; CDC, 2025). Research on community exercise programs has found that accessible, low-cost, and structured sessions help reduce sedentary behavior and improve health outcomes (Levy et al., 2020; CDC, 2025). In Singapore, community-based physical fitness programmes for older adults emphasize strength, balance, flexibility, fall prevention, and active ageing (*Community-Based Physical Fitness Programme*, n.d.). These examples demonstrate that adult physical education is already a

recognized public health and educational practice in many settings (County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, 2023; Levy et al., 2020).

## 5. DISCUSSION

The combined focus on adult education and physical education in NEP 2020 reflects a broader understanding of education as a lifelong social good (Government of India, 2020; *NEP 2020's Commitment to Adult Education*, 2024). Adult education addresses literacy, employability, and inclusion, while physical education addresses health, vitality, and quality of life (*Adult Education for Nation Development Under NEP 2020*, 2023; *NEP 2020 on Sports & Yoga*, 2023). Both are necessary to build capable, adaptive, and healthy citizens in a rapidly changing society (Government of India, 2020; Levy et al., 2020). The policy's holistic vision is therefore strengthened when adult learning and physical well-being are treated as complementary, not separate, priorities (Government of India, 2020; *NEP 2020 on Sports & Yoga*, 2023).

The global examples also suggest that adult physical education should be supported through flexible community-based models rather than school-like structures (County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, 2023; Levy et al., 2020). Such models are more inclusive of older adults, working adults, and learners with limited time or mobility (Levy et al., 2020; CDC, 2025). They show how lifelong well-being can be advanced through practical, affordable, and socially engaging activity formats (County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, 2023; Levy et al., 2020). NEP 2020 can thus be viewed as part of a wider international movement toward lifelong learning and active ageing (Government of India, 2020; *NEP 2020's Commitment to Adult Education*, 2024).

## 6. CONCLUSION

Adult education and physical education are central to the holistic vision of NEP 2020 (Government of India, 2020; *NEP 2020's Commitment to Adult Education*, 2024). Adult education promotes lifelong literacy, skills, and empowerment, while physical education promotes health, movement, and well-being (Government of India, 2020; *NEP 2020 on Sports & Yoga*, 2023). Global examples of community fitness and older-adult exercise programs demonstrate that physical education can successfully extend across the lifespan (Levy et al., 2020; CDC, 2025). Together, these dimensions show that NEP 2020 is not only a school reform document but also a framework for lifelong human development (Government of India, 2020; *NEP 2020's Commitment to Adult Education*, 2024).

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