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## Nature, the True Spirit of Physical Education

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### Abstract

We feel pleasure to play in a natural environment. Nature teaches us to be active, to be adjustable and to be open hearted. Echopedagogy symbolises the relationship between man and nature. Advancement of science and technology have changed our living pattern. Mode of play has also been changed. The true spirit of physical education should emerged from nature and echological form of life. Steps should be taken to make physical education activities more natural. Natural activities provide echo understanding and other benefits including wisdom in open air. There are several natural activities. Facilities, infrastructure and management are required for those activities. We must not destroy our ecosystem. Keeping in mind 'Man as a product of Nature', we should organise physical education activities in a naturalistic idea.

**Keywords:** Nature, Echopedagogy, Natural activities, Benefits of natural activities.

### 1. Introduction

The evolution of man from unicellular animal to multicellular form was based on natural process. The primitive man also nurtured in the nature. Nature was the true home of our ancestor. History has shown that our life was deep rooted into nature. Several sporting activities have also developed during man's survival and its existence. Modern culture, which has emerged from the indigenous one are also based on nature and growth of a child depends on natural process. Darwin and Lamerk launched the theory of evolution which advocate the need of exercise for growth and survival. Natural exercises can influence it.

### 2. Nature and Pedagogy

We get pleasure when we are in a natural environment. We often see the smiling face of children when they play in sea-sore or in the snow. Nature teaches us to be active, to be adjustable, to be open hearted.

“Akash amay shiksha dilo  
Udar hote bhaire  
Kormi hobar montro ami  
Bayur kache paire  
Pahar shekhay tahar shoman  
hoi jeno re mouno mohan”  
“Bisshojora pathshala mor shobar ami chatro  
Nanan bhabar notun jinish shikkchi dibaratro”

- Poet Shattyendra Nath Dutta

Ecopedagogy contributes ecological attitude that provides knowledge and understanding to realise the need for nature in our living style. Developing a profound attachment to the nature is the best preventive solution to preserve nature. Ecopedagogy symbolises the relationship between man and nature. Ecological balance is another form of harmonious living where there is a mutual dependency between living and non-living objects. Our life is guided by natural laws that teaches us to be successful. Naturalists gave the idea of Naturalism and thought that play is the natural means of education. Due to advancement of science and technology, living pattern has been changed. Mode of play has taken the same path. At present we are concentrating more on computers. Now-a-days daily activities and play are more and more centered into indoor. We are going away from the nature and facing lots of problem for us. To play is an inherent part of human nature; in free play in a natural environment children gets

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opportunities to understand oneself in relation to the nature. Play in natural form not only helps to develop the physical world of the individual but also inculcate desirable social qualities and understanding of values in our life.

### 3. True Spirit of Physical Education

The true spirit of Physical Education should emerged from nature and ecological form of life. Physical Education activities should be based more on natural form. We will not go back to wild life on the other hand artificial urban life style not to be encouraged. Physical education activities should be offered for exploratory purposes and for the development of natural abilities and self-expression (Bucher 1979) <sup>[1]</sup>.

Following steps to be taken to make physical education activities more natural –

- To protect our nature and ensure a proper understanding of it.
- To preserve and develop the local surroundings.
- Tourism based on local natural and cultural resources be emphasized.
- Children's World of Nature to be developed to provide children and families close contact to the living nature.
- In different states of our country natural area to be selected as "Children's World of Nature" where various opportunities for natural physical education activities be organised considering the geographical area such as plane safe jungles, sea shore, plateau, hills and mountains.
- Opportunities be provided by the Central and State Government, Universities and Training Institute to the children and students of various discipline to enjoy traditional activities in a natural area.
- Development of sporting environment.

Mitchell (2013) <sup>[2]</sup> found that physical activity in natural environments is associated with a reduction in the risk of poor mental health to a greater extent than physical activity in other environments. Lack of physical activity in a major contributor to the obesity epidemic, creating an activity – friendly environment: buildings, streets, and communities that encourage walking and biking; parks and playgrounds that are plentiful and appealing; and neighbourhoods where people feel – and are safe <sup>[3]</sup>.

### 4. Benefits of Natural Activities in a Natural Set-up

- Knowledge and understanding of the nature – echo understanding.
- Understanding for preservation and development of natural resources.
- Nature study helps to develop general intellectual abilities.
- To perform muscular exercise with undue fatigue and joy.
- Development of self-esteem and challenging attitude.
- Stressfree life that will combat degenerative, hypokinetic, psychosomatic diseases and to prevent poor mental health.
- Developing a profound attachment to free nature is the best way of both preventive and curative aspect of health.
- The disabled persons become more independent in their daily activities through participation in natural activities.
- Wisdom in the open air.

#### 4.1 Natural Activities

There are several natural and outdoor activities some of which are enumerated below:

- Trekking, • Camping • Running • Tree climbing and rock-climbing • Water activities • Hiking • Horse riding • Golf • Archery • Bicycling • Cross-country bi-cycling • Ball games •

Skiing • Adapted physical activities and outdoor recreation activities for the disabled • Rowing • Motor Boating & Ice Skating.

### 5. Facilities and Management

Various physical activities, recreational activities and play in natural surroundings require facilities, infrastructure and management of those to have ecological harmony. Accommodation facilities near the nature sites is always helpful. If not, other accommodation facilities like youth hostel, holiday villages, campsites are required for better management of accommodation of the students.

Parks, playground, gardens, outdoor activity routes, bird watching towers, nature observation site, campsites, bathing beach, golf courses, downhill ski slopes, lakes, seashore etc. are considered as the facilities for natural activities. Various sporting equipments are also required for natural and outdoor activities like bicycle, tricycle, ice sledge, alpine, boat, motor boat, canoe, rowing boat etc <sup>[4]</sup>.

In the present days when we are going to destroy our ecosystem, we are rather destroying ourselves. The preservation of cultural values in a natural setup must be ensured with the idea 'Man as a Product of Nature'. His physical, physiological and cultural aspects has to be restored through naturalistic idea, ecological approach and pragmatic action.

"Every child has the right to play freely in a polluted free environment" –

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