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**EMBODIED DISCIPLINE: THE ROLE OF INDIGENOUS PHYSICAL PRACTICES IN SHAPING STUDENT BEHAVIOUR AND PROMOTING LONG-TERM WELL-BEING**

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**ABSTRACT**

*Physical education in contemporary schools often emphasizes physical fitness and motor skill development, while the deeper behavioural and psychological dimensions of movement practices receive comparatively less attention. Indigenous physical traditions such as yoga, Surya Namaskar, breathing practices, and other culturally rooted exercises have historically contributed to not only with bodily training but in addition to the cultivation of discipline, self-awareness, and balanced living. Originating from ancient Indian knowledge traditions, these practices integrate physical movement with mental focus and ethical values, suggesting their potential to influence students' behaviour and long-term well-being. Research indicates that practices like yoga can contribute to improved concentration, emotional balance, and reduced behavioural difficulties among children and adolescents.*

*This study explores the concept of “embodied discipline,” referring to the process through which structured physical practices cultivate behavioural regulation, self-control, and positive habits through the body. The research aims to examine how indigenous physical exercises implemented in school physical education settings shape students' behavioural patterns, attitudes toward discipline, and perceptions of personal well-being. This paper adopts a qualitative perspective to explore the potential role of indigenous physical practices in shaping student behaviour and promoting long-term well-being within the school environment. Drawing upon existing literature and theoretical discussions in the fields of physical education, psychology, and traditional movement practices, the paper reflects on how activities such as yoga, Surya Namaskar, and other indigenous exercises may contribute to the development of discipline, emotional balance, and holistic well-being among students. The discussion also considers the cultural and educational significance of incorporating traditional physical practices into contemporary school routines.*

*A review of existing literature and scholarly discussions suggests several recurring ideas regarding the role of indigenous physical practices in school settings. These discussions frequently highlight aspects such as the development of self-discipline, improved concentration, emotional balance, and the cultivation of positive behavioural habits among students. Traditional activities such as yoga, Surya Namaskar, and other indigenous exercises emphasize structured routines, mindful breathing, and collective participation, which are often associated with greater calmness, self-awareness, and attentiveness within the learning environment.*

**Keywords:** Embodied Discipline, Indigenous Physical Practices, Student Behaviour, Holistic Development, Long-Term Well-Being

**1. INTRODUCTION**

Physical education in modern schooling has traditionally emphasized physical fitness, sports performance, and motor skill development. However, increasing attention is now being directed toward the broader developmental outcomes of physical activity, including behavioural regulation, emotional stability, and psychological well-being. Indigenous physical practices such as yoga, Surya Namaskar, breathing exercises, and traditional movement routines have historically played an important role in Indian knowledge traditions. These practices integrate physical movement with mental awareness, discipline, and ethical values.

Unlike conventional exercise programs that focus primarily on physical outcomes, indigenous practices emphasize the harmonious development of body, mind, and behaviour. Schools that embed such practices into their daily routines often observe improvements in student discipline, concentration, and emotional balance. Despite growing recognition of these benefits, relatively few studies have examined how indigenous physical practices influence behavioural patterns and long-term well-being among school students.

The concept of **embodied discipline** suggests that discipline can be cultivated not only through rules or instruction but also through structured bodily practices that shape habits, attention, and self-control. This study explores how indigenous physical practices implemented in school physical education programs contribute to shaping student behaviour and promoting holistic well-being.

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## **2. INDIGENOUS PHYSICAL PRACTICES AND HOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT**

Traditional physical practices rooted in Indian knowledge traditions are characterized by the integration of physical movement, breathing control, and mental awareness. Yoga and related practices emphasize balance between body and mind, encouraging individuals to develop self-discipline and internal stability. Unlike purely competitive sports, these practices often focus on rhythm, posture, breath, and awareness, which can influence both physical and psychological states.

In educational environments, such practices can create structured routines that encourage students to regulate their actions and emotions. Repetition of coordinated movements combined with controlled breathing may help students develop patience and attentiveness. These qualities are closely linked with behavioural discipline and positive classroom engagement.

Furthermore, indigenous practices often emphasize collective participation and shared routines. When students perform such activities together, they experience a sense of community and cooperation that may strengthen social relationships. This social dimension can support to the development of respectful behaviour and collaborative attitudes among students.

## **3. EMBODIED DISCIPLINE AND BEHAVIOUR FORMATION**

The idea of embodied discipline suggests that behavioural patterns are shaped not only through verbal instruction but also through bodily experiences. Movement practices can gradually influence habits, posture, and mental focus, which in turn affect behavioural responses. Through repeated engagement in structured physical routines, students may internalize values such as patience, consistency, and respect for rules.

Physical education settings provide an ideal context for observing these processes. Activities that require coordination, balance, and controlled breathing encourage students to remain attentive and mindful of their actions. Consistent participation in such practices may foster self-regulation, allowing students to manage emotions and maintain concentration during academic tasks.

Teachers often observe that students who participate regularly in mindful physical practices demonstrate improved classroom behaviour and greater readiness to engage in learning activities. These observations highlight the potential of indigenous physical practices to contribute to behavioural development beyond the physical education environment.

## **4. INDIGENOUS PRACTICES AND LONG-TERM WELL-BEING**

Well-being in education is increasingly understood as a multifaceted concept that includes physical health, emotional balance, and social harmony. Indigenous physical practices address these dimensions by promoting regular movement, mental calmness, and awareness of the body.

Students who engage in such practices may experience reduced stress and improved emotional stability. Controlled breathing and rhythmic movements can help regulate physiological responses associated with anxiety and tension. As students learn to manage these responses, they may adopt a healthier coping mechanism for academic and social challenges.

In addition, these practices can support the formation of lifelong habits related to physical activity and mindfulness. When introduced during school years, such habits may contribute to long-term well-being by encouraging individuals to maintain balanced lifestyles throughout adulthood. The integration of indigenous practices into educational settings therefore has the potential to support sustainable approaches to health and behavioural development.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

Indigenous physical practices shed light on the link between movement, discipline, and well-being. By emphasizing the integration of physical activities with mindfulness and self-regulation, these traditions provide a holistic approach to student development. The concept of embodied discipline highlights how structured physical routines can shape behavioural habits and encourage positive attitudes toward learning and cooperation.

Incorporating such practices within School-based physical education may therefore influence not only physical development but also students' behavioural and psychological growth. As educational institutions continue to explore holistic approaches to learning, indigenous physical practices can play a vital role in bridging the traditional knowledge with contemporary educational goals.

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