

Holistic Development through Play and Yoga: A Textbook Analysis of NCERT's *Khel Yoga* for Class III (2023)

Dr. Shri Bhagwan

Assistant Professor of Physical Education, Department of Education, NCERT, RIE Mysore

Abstract- This research paper presents an analytical review of the NCERT textbook *Khel Yoga* (Class III, First Edition 2024; ISBN 978-93-5292-864-4), developed under the National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCFSE) 2023. The analysis focuses on the textbook's physical design, academic structure, curricular alignment, inclusivity, value-based education, and use of emerging pedagogies and technology. The study finds that *Khel Yoga* promotes holistic learning by integrating physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development through experiential, art-integrated, and sports-integrated pedagogies. The textbook effectively incorporates 21st-century skills such as critical thinking, collaboration, empathy, and environmental sensitivity. Additionally, the use of QR codes, virtual collaborations, and digital portfolios introduces innovative learning experiences. Overall, *Khel Yoga* exemplifies NCERT's commitment to fostering well-rounded, inclusive, and competency-based education for young learners in India.

Keywords: NCERT, *Khel Yoga*, NCFSE 2023, textbook analysis, physical education, holistic development, inclusivity, value-based education, experiential learning

1. INTRODUCTION

Physical education in the foundational and preparatory stages of schooling plays a critical role in promoting holistic child development. The *Khel Yoga* textbook for Class III, published by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) in 2023 (First Edition: June 2024, Jyestha 1946), reflects the philosophy of the National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCFSE 2023). The book aims to nurture physical competence, mental well-being, and social responsibility through play and yoga.

This paper analyses *Khel Yoga* in terms of its physical and academic characteristics, curricular alignment,

inclusivity, and pedagogical design. The objective is to evaluate how effectively it fulfils the goals of holistic and competency-based learning outlined in NCFSE 2023.

2. PHYSICAL ASPECTS OF THE TEXTBOOK

The textbook's physical quality reflects high production standards. Printed on 80 GSM paper with an NCERT watermark, it ensures durability and authenticity. Despite being in black and white, the print quality is sharp, and the Times New Roman font provides readability suited for Class III learners. The layout is organized with distinct sections, and illustrations—though monochromatic—are numerous and detailed, effectively depicting yoga postures and games.

The overall design promotes student engagement and teacher convenience. The thoughtful integration of visuals enhances understanding despite the absence of colour, making *Khel Yoga* both durable and pedagogically effective.

3. ACADEMIC ASPECTS AND CURRICULUM ALIGNMENT

3.1 Alignment with NCFSE 2023

Khel Yoga aligns closely with the Curricular Goals (CGs) and Competencies (Cs) outlined in NCFSE 2023 (p. 426). The content integrates physical, social, and cognitive domains through structured units:

- Unit 1: Basic Motor Movements – Develops motor skills such as throwing, catching, kicking, and rhythmic movements (CG-1).

- Unit 2: Our Games – Focuses on teamwork, cooperation, and empathy through local and traditional games (CG-2).
- Unit 3: Yoga – Introduces yoga for daily life and yogic practices that promote flexibility, discipline, and mindfulness (CG-3).

Each competency, from body coordination (C-1.1) to empathy and responsible behaviour (C-2.3), is clearly reflected in the lesson structure and activities.

4. INCLUSIVITY AND DIVERSITY

Khel Yoga actively promotes inclusivity through representation and participation. Activities accommodate children with different physical abilities, including examples such as wheelchair races. Gender representation is balanced across illustrations and narratives, ensuring equal participation opportunities. The inclusion of local and traditional games bridges rural–urban divides and enhances cultural literacy.

The emphasis on social participation, group work, and ethical discussions promotes respect, empathy, and cooperation. Teachers are encouraged to engage students in reflective dialogues about fairness, equality, and teamwork, fostering moral and civic values.

5. VALUE-BASED AND HOLISTIC EDUCATION

The textbook integrates 21st-century competencies such as critical thinking, creativity, teamwork, and communication. Activities encourage problem-solving, planning, and innovation in physical tasks. The health and nutrition components promote awareness of balanced diets, hygiene, and personal well-being.

Moreover, *Khel Yoga* incorporates ethical and moral reasoning through activities emphasizing fair play, empathy, and respect. By including local and traditional games, it reinforces cultural identity and national pride. Environmental responsibility and hygiene practices are also embedded, aligning with *Swachh Bharat* principles and sustainable habits.

6. EMERGING PEDAGOGIES

Khel Yoga demonstrates a strong integration of emerging pedagogical approaches as recommended in NCFSE 2023 (pp. 16–17):

- **Experiential Learning:** Direct engagement in games and yoga helps students learn through doing.
- **Art-Integrated Learning:** Drawing, poster-making, and creative expression complement physical education.
- **Sports-Integrated Learning:** Students learn teamwork, discipline, and strategy through structured sports and games.
- **Inquiry and Discovery-Based Learning:** Activities encourage students to ask questions, strategize, and explore movements critically.
- **Discussion and Project-Based Learning:** Group discussions, cooperative planning, and class projects (e.g., organizing a mini-sports event) enhance collaboration and leadership.
- **Assessment for Learning:** Evaluation focuses on competencies and participation rather than rote memorization.

7. INTEGRATION OF TECHNOLOGY

The inclusion of QR codes provides access to supplementary digital resources such as demonstration videos, interactive games, and additional readings. This promotes a blended learning model connecting physical and digital experiences. Emerging tools like Augmented Reality (AR) and digital portfolios are suggested for deeper engagement, allowing students to visualize yoga poses and record progress. Online communities and virtual sessions further enhance collaboration and sustained motivation among learners.

8. KEY DESIGN AND PEDAGOGICAL ELEMENTS

1. **Consistent Design:** Structured chapters with recurring elements enhance comprehension.
2. **Learning Standards:** Clearly defined outcomes align with NCFSE 2023 competencies.

3. Activity Integration: Continuous inclusion of activities sustains engagement.
4. Inclusivity: Representation of all genders and abilities fosters equality.
5. Ethical and Moral Focus: Activities promote values like fairness, empathy, and respect.

9. CONCLUSION

Khel Yoga (NCERT, 2023) stands as a model for integrating physical education with holistic development principles. The textbook's physical design, curricular alignment, inclusivity, and emphasis on experiential and sports-based learning embody the vision of NCFSE 2023.

By weaving together play, yoga, ethics, culture, and technology, *Khel Yoga* nurtures not only physical fitness but also emotional balance, teamwork, environmental consciousness, and moral integrity. It effectively prepares children for lifelong learning and responsible citizenship, reflecting the transformative intent of India's modern education policy.

REFERENCE

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