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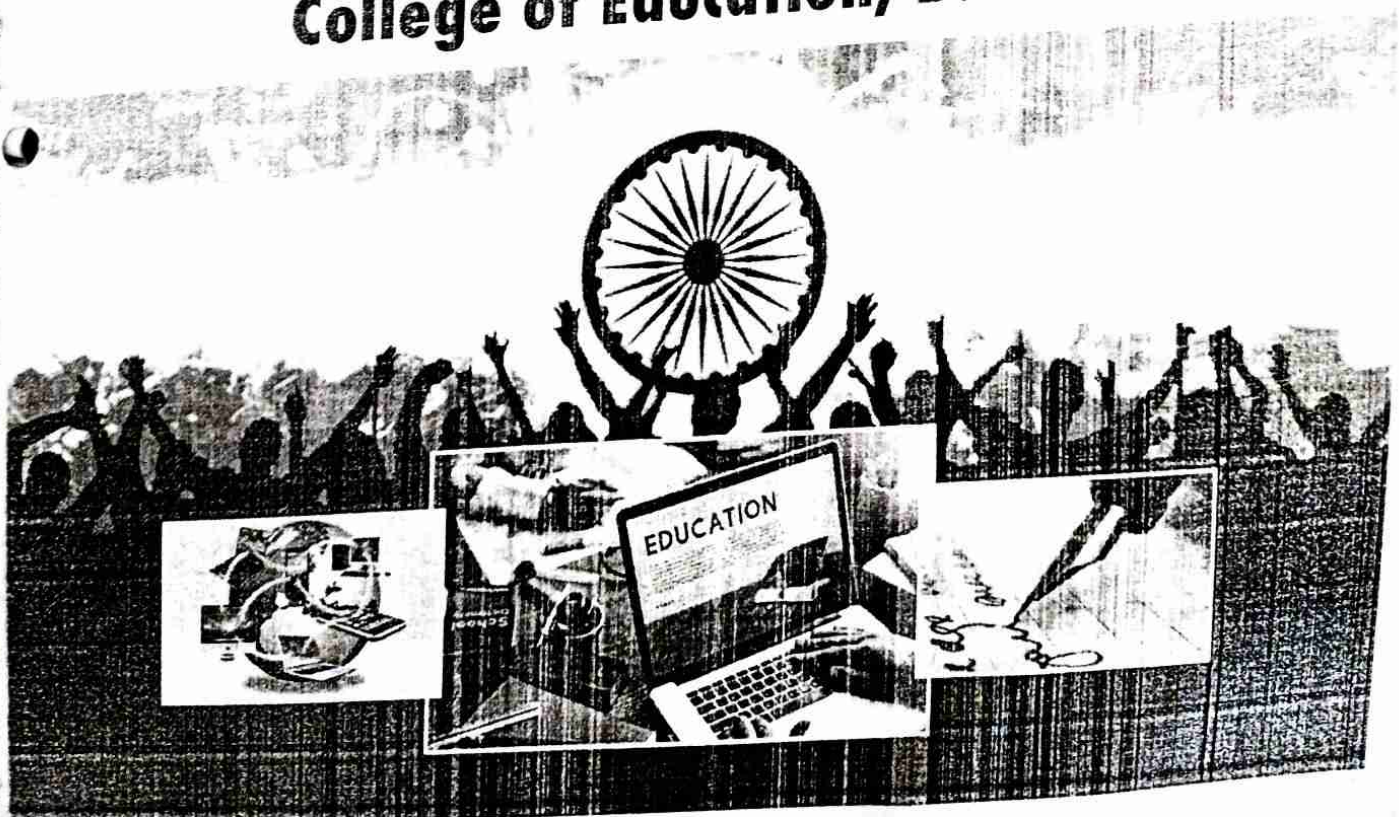
on

"Challenges and Opportunities in Higher Education"

Organised by

Shri Shivai Shikshan Prasarak Mandal, Barshi's

College of Education, Barshi



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CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION PROFESSION

Dr. Appasaheb B Humbe, Shankarrao Patil Mahavidyalaya, Bhoom

Dr. Markad Subhash Sukhadeo, College of Education, Barshi

Abstract: Physical Education could become much more inclusive if it could shift from its current focus on preparing young people for the certificated curriculum. Make it the goal that every child that comes through your door achieves and feels positively about themselves and their relationship with physical activity and sport and you will have much to share with the rest of the educational world. I set out what I thought to be some of the main challenges and opportunities facing the profession. As I explained at the conference there is a huge challenge to be faced by all of us in education relating to the fallout from the recession and associated reductions in public service budgets. I will not focus upon these here as I regard that to be an essentially non-productive line of enquiry – as opposed to focusing upon those things that we can change and over which we can actually have some control. Here they are in no particular order of priority: (please note that these challenges and opportunities are not intended to be an exhaustive list)

Challenges in Physical Education Profession: Protectionism

There is a danger that the profession sees the target of 2 hours of high quality physical education as a **charter for the profession** – as opposed to an **entitlement for children and young people**. If we narrow the definition of high quality to be only something which can only be delivered by qualified PE teachers then it unnecessarily limits the huge potential support we can gain from others who have much to offer, e.g. primary class teachers.

Traditionalism:

I was once described as a “radical traditionalist” and was flattered by such an imaginative and oxymoron-is sobriquet. I believe there is much to be gained from reference to the values and standards which can be characterized as “traditional”. However, if “traditionalism” is simply used as an excuse to limit children’s experiences to what the teacher feels comfortable with then it becomes a significant barrier to progress.

Complacency:

The concept of 2 hours of high quality physical education is based upon

premise/assumption that children’s lives will be enhanced by exposure to such an experience. If the profession take such a time allocation for granted and does not engage in enhancing the quality, then it may be that at some later date – when research evidence possibly suggests that there has been no positive impact upon children’s lives – that some other alternative mechanism for improving the health and wellbeing of children is devised, which may not depend to the same extent upon the profession.

Guidance reliance:

Arguably the physical education profession has seen Guidance teaching to be a route for progression. Whether one agrees with this or not there is a strong likelihood that the future of Guidance provision in Scotland will change radically over the next ten years. If this does happen then many in the profession, who would have previously seen this to be their preferred route, may have to look elsewhere.

Shallowness:

I’ve written before about the “mile-wide, inch deep” phenomenon. Such an arrangement runs counter to the principle of “deep

to the current way in which the curriculum is structured and offered in schools.

Inclusive:

Physical Education could become much more inclusive if it could shift from its current focus on preparing young people for the certificated curriculum. Make it the goal that every child that comes through your door achieves and feels positively about themselves and their relationship with physical activity and sport and you will have much to share with the rest of the educational world.

Innovative:

Take risks with your practice; imagine and implement; read, research and reflect; write and engage in dialogue; stand up and speak out; but above all make good use of the incredible flexibility which is afforded through a Curriculum for Excellence.

Conclusion

I concluded that the physical education profession is necessary in all schools, colleges, and universities, and it is compulsory to make fit and healthful. The key to capitalizing upon this opportunity will be to look beyond what have traditionally been the limits of responsibility for secondary school Physical Education teachers.

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[Signature]
PRINCIPAL
S.P. Mahavidyalaya, Bhoom
Dist. Osmanabad