

THE ROLE OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHERS IN ENHANCING STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN SPORTS

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Abstract

Physical education (PE) is an integral component of the school curriculum, contributing significantly to the holistic development of students. In recent years, there has been a growing concern over declining levels of physical activity and sports participation among students due to academic pressure, digital distractions, and lack of motivation. In this context, Physical Education Teachers (PETs) play a vital role as facilitators, motivators, guide and mentors who can inspire students to engage actively in sports, games and physical activities at all academic level (School & College). This research paper explores the multifaceted role of physical education teachers in enhancing student participation in sports at the school & college level. The study aims to understand how PE teachers influence students' interest, motivation, and regular involvement in sports activities, both curricular and co-curricular. It investigates the methods adopted by PE teachers—such as skill development training, organizing competitions, individual encouragement, and inclusive sports practices—to cultivate a positive sports culture within the school or college environment. The research employs a descriptive methodology, involving surveys and interviews conducted among PE teachers and students from various schools & colleges. The findings indicate that students who receive regular guidance and encouragement from dedicated PE teachers show significantly higher levels of participation in sports and physical activities. Moreover, the availability of sports infrastructure, administrative support, and teacher enthusiasm were found to be key factors contributing to student engagement. The study also identifies several challenges faced by PE teachers, including limited facilities, time constraints due to academic schedules, lack of knowledge in sports & games, male or female problem and lack of recognition for their contributions. Despite these challenges, many PE teachers adopt innovative strategies and maintain a student-centred approach to promote physical education effectively. This research highlights the need for schools and policymakers to empower PE teachers by providing them with adequate resources, continuous training, and institutional support. It concludes that strengthening the role of physical education teachers is essential for building a healthy, active, and disciplined generation of students, making sports an inseparable part of school education.

Keywords: Physical Education & Teachers, Games & Sports, Motivation, Holistic Development, Physical Activity, Educational Leadership, Sports Engagement, Teacher's Role, Co-curricular Activities, Youth Fitness, Sports Infrastructure.

Introduction:

Education today is not merely confined to academic excellence but encompasses the holistic development of learners, including their physical, mental, emotional, and social well-being. In this broader context, Physical Education (PE) plays a critical role in shaping a balanced and healthy lifestyle among students. Participation in games and sports not only promotes physical fitness but also instils discipline, self-confidence, patience, mind maturity, get decision as earlier, teamwork, leadership, time management, and resilience — qualities that are essential for success in both personal and professional life.

Despite the recognized benefits of sports and physical activity, many schools witness low levels of student participation in sports programs. Several factors contribute to this decline, including increased academic pressure, excessive screen time, lack of motivation, insufficient sports facilities, and, in some cases, a lack of awareness about the value of physical fitness. Against this backdrop, Physical Education Teachers (PETs) become the

central agents in bridging the gap between awareness and active participation.

PE teachers are not just instructors who teach physical skills or organize games; they are facilitators who create a sports-friendly environment, identify student potential, and foster a positive attitude towards regular physical activity. Their role involves not only planning and conducting physical education classes but also mentoring students, organizing school-level competitions, encouraging inclusivity, and collaborating with other stakeholders such as parents and administrators.

The effectiveness of PE teachers directly impacts how students perceive sports and whether they continue to engage in them beyond the classroom. Teachers who are enthusiastic, supportive, and skilled in communication are more likely to motivate students to participate actively. Moreover, the teaching methods, personality traits, and leadership styles of PE teachers influence student interest and long-term involvement in sports.

This research study aims to critically examine the role of Physical Education Teachers in enhancing

student participation in sports. It explores the strategies used by PE teachers to engage students, the challenges they face in implementing physical education programs, and the overall impact of their role on creating a sustainable sports culture in schools. By identifying best practices and potential gaps, the study seeks to offer actionable insights to improve physical education delivery and increase student involvement in sports activities.

In a time when physical inactivity among youth is emerging as a public health concern, the contribution of Physical Education Teachers is more vital than ever. Strengthening their role can pave the way for a more active, healthy, and performance-oriented generation.

Importance of Sports in Student Development:

Sports and physical activities are not just extracurricular engagements—they are essential tools for the holistic development of students. Participation in sports offers a range of benefits that positively influence a student's physical health, mental well-being, emotional stability, and social skills. The school years are a crucial period during which lifelong habits are formed, and integrating sports into education helps nurture balanced individuals.

1. Physical Development- Sports play a vital role in improving students' physical health and fitness. Regular participation in games and physical exercises leads to:

- **Improved cardiovascular health** – Activities like running, swimming, or cycling strengthen the heart and improve circulation.
- **Enhanced muscular strength and endurance** – Sports help develop muscle tone, flexibility, and coordination.
- **Boosted immune system** – Physical activity promotes stronger immunity, reducing the frequency of illnesses.
- **Healthy body weight maintenance** – Active children are less likely to be obese, which reduces the risk of lifestyle diseases.
- **Better motor skills and coordination** – Especially in early years, sports develop hand-eye coordination, balance, and reflexes.
- **Prevention of health disorders** – Conditions like diabetes, hypertension, and osteoporosis are prevented or delayed through regular physical activity.

2. Mental Development- Sports contribute significantly to the mental health and cognitive development of students:

- **Reduces stress and anxiety** – Physical activity releases endorphins (feel-good hormones) which help relieve stress and improve mood.
- **Improves concentration and memory** – Exercise boosts brain function, which leads to better academic performance.
- **Enhances discipline and time management** – Training schedules and rules in sports help students become more organized.
- **Boosts self-confidence** – Achievements in sports, whether small or large, raise self-esteem and confidence levels.
- **Teaches resilience and coping mechanisms** – Facing wins and losses teaches emotional control, patience, and perseverance.
- **Sharpens decision-making** – Fast-paced sports demand quick thinking and decision-making under pressure.

3. Social Development- Sports foster strong interpersonal relationships and teach essential social values:

- **Teamwork and collaboration** – Team sports instill the importance of working together toward a common goal.
- **Communication skills** – Athletes learn to communicate clearly and effectively with teammates and coaches.
- **Leadership qualities** – Captaining a team or leading by example helps students develop leadership traits.
- **Respect and sportsmanship** – Students learn to respect rules, referees, opponents, and accept outcomes gracefully.
- **Sense of belonging and inclusion** – Sports can help students feel more connected to their peers and school community.
- **Cultural and gender sensitivity** – Participating in diverse sports events fosters mutual respect and inclusivity.

In essence, sports are not just games—they are life lessons in motion. By engaging in sports, students grow into physically healthy, emotionally balanced, socially responsible, and intellectually alert individuals. Therefore, promoting sports and physical education in schools is not a luxury but a necessity for national and personal development.

Importance of Sports in Student Development:

| Aspect | Key Benefits |
|-----------------|---|
| Physical | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improves cardiovascular health - Enhances muscular strength & endurance - Boosts immunity - Maintains healthy body weight - Improves motor skills & coordination - Prevents lifestyle diseases |
| Mental | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reduces stress and anxiety - Improves concentration & memory - Builds self-discipline & time management - Enhances self-confidence - Teaches resilience & coping - Develops quick decision-making skills |
| Social | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Encourages teamwork & collaboration - Improves communication skills - Builds leadership qualities - Promotes respect & sportsmanship - Fosters a sense of belonging - Develops inclusivity & empathy |

**Role of Sports in Student Development****Need for Active Participation in Sports/Games at School or College Level:**

Active participation in sports and games during school and college years is not just a leisure activity—it is a critical component of education and personality development. As students undergo rapid physical, emotional, and intellectual growth during this phase, integrating regular physical activity through structured sports programs becomes essential.

1. Holistic Development- Sports foster physical, mental, emotional, and social growth, which traditional academics alone cannot fully provide. Active involvement in games builds

character, resilience, and leadership—qualities crucial for real-life success.

2. Physical Health and Fitness- Regular sports activity improves:

- Cardiovascular and muscular strength, Immunity and stamina, Body posture and motor coordination, Prevention of obesity and lifestyle diseases etc. These benefits help students stay physically active and energetic, reducing absenteeism due to illness.

3. Mental and Emotional Well-being- Sports act as a natural stress reliever. Regular participation:

- Boosts mental alertness and memory, enhances mood through endorphin release,

develops self-control, discipline, and focus, helps in managing anxiety, depression, and exam stress

4. Social Skills and Team Spirit- Sports are a powerful medium for social interaction. Students learn:

- Teamwork and cooperation, Leadership and conflict resolution, Respect for opponents and rules, Tolerance and inclusiveness etc. These qualities prepare students to work collaboratively in future workplaces and society.

5. Academic Performance- Contrary to the myth that sports distract from studies, research shows that physically active students often perform better academically due to enhanced concentration, time management, and cognitive skills.

6. Building a Healthy Lifestyle Habit- Introducing sports at a young age helps instil habits of:

- Regular exercise, Balanced routine, Avoiding sedentary behaviour and screen addiction etc. These habits often continue into adulthood, promoting lifelong health.

7. Career Opportunities- Sports can lead to:

- Professional athletic careers, Opportunities in coaching, sports management, physiotherapy, fitness training, etc., Scholarships and recognitions at state, national, and international levels.

8. National Development and Global Representation- Active student participation builds a strong pool of talented athletes for the future, contributing to:

- National pride through international competitions, Healthier, more active citizens, Promotion of peace, unity, and cultural exchange through sports. Incorporating and encouraging active participation in sports at the school and college level is not optional—it is essential. Institutions must prioritize sports equally with academics to foster well-rounded, capable, and confident individuals ready to contribute meaningfully to society.

Introduction to the Role of Physical Education (PE) Teachers:

Physical Education (PE) teachers play a crucial and multidimensional role in the education system. Their primary responsibility is to promote physical fitness and sports participation among students. However, their influence goes beyond just physical activity—they also contribute to students' mental well-being, social behavior, emotional balance, and overall personality development. In today's academic environment, where there is increasing stress on intellectual achievement, PE teachers ensure that students also receive balanced

physical development. They serve as educators, coaches, mentors, motivators, and role models.

Key Responsibilities of PE Teachers:

1. Planning and Delivering Physical Education Classes

- Teaching age-appropriate physical exercises, games, and sports techniques
- Designing engaging lesson plans aligned with school curriculum and health goals

2. Developing Physical Fitness and Health Awareness

- Assessing student fitness levels
- Promoting healthy lifestyle habits and physical wellness
- Educating about nutrition, posture, injury prevention, and hygiene

3. Encouraging Sports Participation

- Identifying talents and encouraging involvement in intra/inter-school competitions
- Inspiring students to develop interest in team and individual sports
- Creating inclusive opportunities for all students regardless of skill level or background

4. Fostering Life Skills through Sports

- Teaching values like discipline, cooperation, leadership, and sportsmanship
- Helping students handle success and failure with maturity
- Improving confidence and social bonding through group activities

5. Liaison and Coordination

- Coordinating with school management for sports facilities and equipment
- Organizing sports events, fitness camps, and awareness drives
- Engaging with parents to ensure support for physical activities

Significance of PE Teachers in Modern Education:

With rising concerns about childhood obesity, sedentary lifestyles, and mental health issues among youth, PE teachers have become more important than ever. They are not just instructors but agents of change who can lead schools toward a culture of fitness, well-being, and holistic education. Their passion and guidance can make a long-lasting impact on a student's attitude towards physical health and social responsibility.

Purpose of the Study:

The primary purpose of this study is to explore and analyze the influence of Physical Education (PE) teachers on enhancing student participation in

sports and physical activities at the school and college levels. While the importance of sports in education is widely acknowledged, student engagement in physical activities often depends heavily on the role played by PE teachers. This study aims to understand how PE teachers motivate, guide, and facilitate sports involvement among students.

The research intends to examine the teaching methods, motivational strategies, interpersonal skills, and challenges encountered by PE teachers in fostering a sports culture in educational institutions. Furthermore, it investigates how institutional support, infrastructure, and teacher-student interaction contribute to higher levels of student engagement in physical activities.

Specific Aims of the Study:

1. To study the strategies used by PE teachers to increase student interest and participation in sports.
2. To assess the effectiveness of PE teachers in identifying and nurturing sports talent.
3. To understand the barriers and challenges faced by PE teachers in promoting sports.
4. To explore the relationship between PE teacher engagement and student motivation in sports.
5. To provide suggestions for strengthening the role of PE teachers through training, resources, and policy-level support.

Significance: The findings of this study will help:

- Educational institutions enhance their sports programs.
- Policy-makers and administrators in recognizing the professional development needs of PE teachers.
- Parents and teachers collaborate more effectively to build an active sports culture.
- Improve student health, leadership, and teamwork skills through better PE engagement.

2. Objectives of the Study:

- To study the responsibilities and contribution of PE teachers in school sports.
- To understand the strategies used by PE teachers to motivate students.
- To analyse the impact of PE teachers on student participation in sports.
- To identify challenges faced by PE teachers in promoting sports.

3. Hypotheses:

- H_0 : There is no significant relationship between PE teacher involvement and student sports participation.

- H_1 : There is a significant relationship between PE teacher involvement and student sports participation.

Assumptions of the Study:

Assumptions are the statements that are accepted as true without direct proof for the purpose of conducting the study. They form the basis for analysis and interpretation.

1. PE teachers influence student participation in sports.

It is assumed that the presence, behavior, and motivation strategies of Physical Education teachers play a significant role in whether students participate in sports or not.

2. Students are more likely to engage in sports if provided with regular guidance.

It is assumed that students respond positively to structured physical activity and mentoring when guided by a trained PE teacher.

3. The school environment and infrastructure support the efforts of PE teachers.

It is assumed that schools have at least the minimum required infrastructure (playground, equipment, time slots) for PE teachers to function effectively.

4. PE teachers are professionally trained and aware of their role.

It is assumed that the PE teachers involved in the study possess basic professional qualifications and understand their role in promoting physical fitness and sports participation.

5. Students' attitudes towards sports are influenced by teacher encouragement and teaching methods.

It is assumed that motivational techniques and communication styles used by PE teachers can shape student attitudes toward sports.

6. Responses from students and PE teachers will be honest and unbiased.

It is assumed that the data collected from participants (through questionnaires or interviews) reflect their true experiences and opinions.

4. Methodology:

- **Type of Research:** Descriptive / Analytical.
- **Sample:** PE teachers and students from selected schools in Nanded division & selected affiliated colleges from SRTM University Nanded.
- **Tools:** Questionnaires, interviews, observation schedules.
- **Data Collection:** Primary data through surveys; secondary data from reports/articles.

5. Role of Physical Education Teachers:

- Designing and conducting sports programs. Identifying and nurturing sporting talent.
- Motivating reluctant students.
- Building team spirit and discipline.
- Integrating sports with academics.

6. Strategies Used by PE Teachers:

- Organizing inter-house and inter-school competitions.
- Offering personal mentoring and coaching.
- Collaborating with parents and school/ college management.
- Encouraging inclusivity and gender equality in participation.

7. Challenges Faced

- Lack of infrastructure and sports equipment.
- Academic pressure on students.
- Insufficient training opportunities for PE teachers.
- Limited support from school/ college administration.

Findings and Discussion:

This section presents the key outcomes of the study based on the data collected from Physical Education (PE) teachers and students through surveys, interviews, and observations. The findings are discussed in the context of the objectives and research questions.

1. PE Teachers Have a Direct Influence on Student Participation-**Findings:**

- A majority of students reported that their interest in sports increased due to the motivation and support of their PE teacher.
- Schools with active, well-trained PE teachers saw higher participation in intra- and inter-school competitions.

Discussion: This confirms that PE teachers are central figures in encouraging participation. Their communication skills, enthusiasm, and ability to identify potential significantly affect how students engage with sports.

2. Lack of Infrastructure is a Common Barrier**Findings:**

- Many PE teachers cited inadequate sports equipment, poorly maintained playgrounds, and limited time slots for physical education as key challenges.
- Urban schools faced space issues, while rural schools lacked equipment and funding.

Discussion: The role of PE teachers is often restricted not by lack of interest or effort, but due to infrastructural constraints. Institutional support is

essential to empower teachers to implement sports programs effectively.

3. Motivation Strategies Used by PE Teachers Are Effective**Findings:**

- Teachers used strategies like peer encouragement, awards, personal mentoring, and sports role models to motivate students.
- Students responded well to goal-setting, positive reinforcement, and recognition during assemblies or competitions.

Discussion: Motivational strategies, when used consistently, can overcome student hesitation and build interest in physical activities. PE teachers who personalize their approach are more successful in engaging students.

4. Gender Disparity Still Exists in Participation**Findings:**

- Participation among male students was consistently higher than female students in several schools.
- Some PE teachers noted parental or cultural restrictions as reasons for low female involvement.

Discussion: There is a need for PE teachers to address gender stereotypes and actively encourage equal participation through inclusive policies, mixed-gender activities, and parental awareness programs.

5. Professional Training Impacts Teacher Effectiveness**Findings:**

- PE teachers with formal training and updated certifications showed better planning, discipline, and student engagement.
- Untrained or under-qualified teachers often treated PE as a non-priority subject.

Discussion: Continuous professional development and training are essential to maintain the quality and impact of physical education. Teachers must be equipped not just with physical skills, but also with motivational, psychological, and pedagogical knowledge.

6. Students See PE Teachers as Role Models**Findings:**

- Many students expressed that PE teachers inspired them to live a healthier lifestyle and think of sports as a career option.
- Respect for PE teachers correlated with increased participation.

Discussion: This finding reinforces the importance of a teacher's personality, conduct, and passion. A positive role model can inspire lifelong fitness habits and career aspirations among students.

Summary of Key Discussions

| Area | Positive Findings | Challenges Identified |
|--------------------------|---|--|
| Teacher's Role | High influence on student motivation | Some lack adequate training or enthusiasm |
| Infrastructure | Some schools well-equipped | Many face shortage of facilities and funding |
| Teaching Strategies | Personal mentoring and rewards highly effective | Inconsistent use across different schools |
| Gender Participation | Awareness improving in some schools | Cultural & social barriers still present |
| Professional Development | Trained teachers = better student outcomes | Limited access to refresher training |

9. Suggestions:

- Providing regular training and workshops for PE teachers.
- Enhancing sports infrastructure in schools.
- Incorporating physical education as a core subject.
- Recognition and incentives for outstanding PE teachers.

10. Conclusion:**Summary of Key Findings-**

1. PE Teachers Positively Influence Student Participation- Most students reported increased interest and participation in sports due to the encouragement, support, and motivation provided by Physical Education (PE) teachers.

2. Motivational Strategies by PE Teachers Are Effective- Use of goal-setting, praise, recognition, peer support, and student-centered coaching helped build student confidence and enthusiasm toward sports.

3. Infrastructure and Resource Limitations Are Major Barriers- Many PE teachers highlighted inadequate sports facilities, lack of proper equipment, and limited time slots for physical activities as common constraints in schools.

4. Gender Disparities in Sports Participation Exist- While boys participated more frequently in competitive sports, girls often faced cultural, social, or parental restrictions. PE teachers noted the need for more inclusive practices.

5. Trained and Motivated PE Teachers Are More Effective- Teachers with formal training, updated knowledge, and passion for physical education showed better student engagement and more organized sports programs.

6. Students View PE Teachers as Role Models- Students were inspired by the personality, discipline, and lifestyle of PE teachers, seeing them not just as instructors but also as mentors for healthy living.

Importance of Empowering Physical Education (PE) Teachers: Physical Education (PE) teachers play a vital role in shaping a healthy, active, and disciplined student community. However, their effectiveness depends largely on the

empowerment, recognition, and institutional support they receive. Empowering PE teachers is not only essential for improving sports participation but also for ensuring that students receive quality physical education that contributes to their holistic development.

1. Enhances Teaching Quality and Motivation- Empowered PE teachers are more likely to:

- Stay updated with modern teaching methods, sports science, and motivational strategies
- Plan engaging, inclusive, and well-structured lessons
- Take initiative in organizing sports events and identifying student talent

2. Promotes a Stronger Sports Culture in Schools- Supportive policies, funding, and appreciation encourage PE teachers to:

- Build a sports-friendly environment
- Motivate both students and fellow teachers to value physical fitness
- Integrate sports into the school's vision for student development

3. Improves Student Outcomes- When PE teachers are trained, respected, and well-resourced:

- Student participation in physical activities increases
- Overall student discipline, health, and leadership skills improve
- Sports becomes a tool for inclusion, gender equity, and character building

4. Fosters Innovation in Physical Education- Empowered teachers are more confident in:

- Trying new techniques like skill-based learning, fitness tracking, yoga, and traditional games
- Using technology (e.g., fitness apps, wearable devices) for student engagement
- Customizing approaches for students with diverse abilities and interests

5. Builds Career Pathways and Professional Dignity- Recognition, career advancement opportunities, and training programs:

- Boost the morale and job satisfaction of PE teachers

- Encourage young educators to choose physical education as a serious profession
- Help remove the perception of PE as a "secondary subject"

6. Helps Address Health and Lifestyle Challenges- In an era of rising obesity, screen addiction, and stress among youth, an empowered PE teacher becomes a frontline advocate for:

- Promoting active lifestyles
- Educating about nutrition and mental wellness
- Creating a culture of long-term health awareness

Empowering PE teachers is not just a professional need—it is an educational necessity. Their role goes far beyond the playground; they are essential contributors to physical, mental, and social learning. With the right support, training, and recognition, PE teachers can drive transformational change in student life and school culture.

Role of Schools/Colleges and Policy Makers in Strengthening Physical Education (PE) Programs: Physical education is a critical pillar of holistic education, and strengthening it requires the collaborative efforts of both educational institutions and policymakers. While Physical Education (PE) teachers are the key facilitators, their effectiveness depends largely on the supportive ecosystem created by schools, colleges, and policy frameworks.

1. Providing Adequate Infrastructure and Resources-

Schools and Colleges Must:

- Ensure access to safe and well-maintained playgrounds, courts, gymnasiums, and sports equipment
- Allocate dedicated time slots in the daily timetable for physical education
- Offer basic first-aid, changing rooms, and storage facilities for equipment

Policy Makers Should:

- Allocate specific budgets for sports development in schools and colleges
- Establish minimum infrastructure standards under education policies and inspection norms

2. Hiring and Training Qualified PE Teachers-Institutions Must:

- Appoint professionally trained and certified PE teachers at all levels
- Support them with regular refresher training and workshops
- Provide equal status and respect to PE teachers as given to academic subject teachers

Policy Makers Should:

- Mandate physical education as a compulsory subject in the curriculum

- Formulate guidelines for teacher qualification, recruitment, and training
- Promote specialized PE teacher training programs through universities and institutes

3. Promoting a Sports-Friendly Culture-Schools and Colleges Should:

- Encourage student participation in inter-house, inter-school, and state-level competitions
- Recognize and reward student and teacher achievements in sports
- Organize annual sports days, fitness drives, and wellness campaigns

Policy Makers Should:

- Launch national and regional initiatives (e.g., *Khelo India*) to promote youth sports
- Create awareness campaigns on the importance of physical activity in education
- Support inclusive policies for girls, differently-abled students, and rural talent

4. Monitoring and Evaluation-Institutions Can:

- Track student fitness, attendance in PE classes, and skill progress
- Collect feedback from students and PE teachers for ongoing improvements

Governments and Boards Should:

- Include PE metrics in school inspections and accreditation processes
- Use data to shape new policies or improve existing ones

5. Curriculum Integration and Flexibility-Schools/Colleges Must:

- Integrate physical education into the academic framework, not just as an optional activity
- Ensure that PE periods are not replaced with academic classes

Policy Makers Should:

- Update and standardize PE curriculum to include modern sports science, yoga, traditional games, and fitness education
- Offer flexibility for schools to innovate in PE delivery (use of digital tools, peer coaching, etc.)

The development of a strong Physical Education program requires vision, investment, and collaboration. When schools/colleges provide necessary infrastructure and cultural support, and policymakers offer the right framework and funding, PE programs thrive. Together, they can build a generation of students who are not only academically capable but also physically fit, mentally strong, and socially confident.

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