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Beyond Sports Participation: Faculty Capacity, Assessment and Institutional Quality Mechanisms in Physical Education of North Indian Colleges.

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Abstract

Quality physical education (PE) in higher education requires more than opportunities for sports participation. It depends on appropriately qualified personnel, meaningful teaching processes, suitable assessment practices, and institutional mechanisms for monitoring and quality assurance. The present study examined selected indicators of faculty provision, assessment practices, and institutional quality mechanisms in colleges of North India. A descriptive survey design was employed. Data were collected using a self-constructed questionnaire developed with guidance from the research supervisor, advisory committee, experts, and professional colleagues and refined following pilot testing.

The study covered selected colleges affiliated with universities in Delhi, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand, and Uttar Pradesh. Institutional respondents included Directors/Heads of Physical Education, Assistant/Associate Professors of Physical Education, and Principals. Of 760 colleges contacted, 122 questionnaires were returned, and 93 reliable/complete responses were retained for analysis. Descriptive percentage analysis was employed. Only 32.30% of respondents reported the availability of PE teachers for classroom teaching, while 27.95% reported that both theory and practical examinations were conducted in PE. In contrast, 57.00% strongly agreed that methods of physical fitness should be taught through both theory and practical classes. Similarly, 57.00% strongly supported an administrative/academic mechanism for implementation of relevant national and international policies, while 52.69% strongly supported a measurement/education wing for examining the validity of internal assessment. The findings indicate a difference between recognition of desirable quality mechanisms and their reported implementation. Strengthening faculty provision, theory-practical integration, assessment systems, and institutional monitoring may contribute to more systematic PE provision in higher education.

Keywords: physical education, faculty capacity, assessment, quality assurance, higher education, teacher capacity, institutional quality.

Introduction

Physical education in higher education should not be viewed exclusively as participation in games and sports. As an educational discipline, it can contribute to students' physical literacy, health-related knowledge, fitness, movement competence, social development, and understanding of lifelong physical activity.

The quality of physical education depends on several interconnected components. These include qualified personnel, appropriate curriculum and teaching processes, adequate learning resources,

assessment, professional development, and mechanisms for monitoring educational quality. UNESCO's Quality Physical Education: Guidelines for Policy-Makers identifies teacher education, teacher supply and development, curriculum, facilities, and monitoring and quality assurance as important components of quality physical education (UNESCO, 2015a).

The International Charter of Physical Education, Physical Activity and Sport further establishes principles concerning the right to physical education and the importance of quality physical education provided by appropriately qualified personnel (UNESCO, 2015b).

The broader physical-activity agenda also emphasises coordinated institutional action. The World Health Organization's Global Action Plan on Physical Activity 2018–2030 calls for multisectoral approaches, institutional capacity, monitoring, and evaluation to promote physical activity and healthier populations (World Health Organization [WHO], 2018a).

Within colleges and universities, these principles have particular relevance. A college may provide sports facilities and opportunities for participation while still having limited provision for classroom-based physical education, systematic assessment, or institutional quality monitoring. Consequently, examining faculty capacity and academic mechanisms alongside sports participation provides a broader understanding of PE provision.

The present paper draws on selected findings on colleges in North India. It specifically examines faculty availability for classroom teaching, theory-practical examination practices, perceptions concerning theory-practical teaching of fitness methods, and support for institutional mechanisms related to policy implementation and internal assessment.

Objectives

The study aimed to:

Examine the availability of physical education teachers for classroom teaching in colleges.

Determine the prevalence of theory and practical examinations in physical education.

Assess perceptions regarding the teaching of physical-fitness methods through theoretical and practical classes.

Examine support for an administrative/academic mechanism for implementation of relevant national and international policies.

Assess support for a measurement/education mechanism for examining the validity of internal assessment.

Method

A descriptive survey design was employed. The design was appropriate because the study sought to describe selected institutional conditions and perceptions concerning physical education teaching, assessment, and quality mechanisms.

Geographical Scope

The survey covered selected colleges affiliated with universities in eight North Indian states/regions:

Delhi

Haryana

Himachal Pradesh

Jammu and Kashmir

Punjab

Rajasthan

Uttarakhand
Uttar Pradesh

Population and Sample

A total of 760 colleges were contacted during the survey. Of these, 122 questionnaires were returned. Following scrutiny of the returned instruments, 93 reliable/complete responses were retained for analysis.

The respondents included institutional stakeholders associated with physical education and college administration, specifically Directors/Heads of Physical Education, Assistant/Associate Professors of Physical Education, and Principals.

Instruments

A self-constructed questionnaire was used for data collection. The instrument was developed with guidance from the research supervisor, advisory committee, experts, and professional colleagues. The questionnaire was reviewed and refined before administration and was subjected to pilot testing. The relevant items addressed faculty provision, classroom teaching, examination practices, theory-practical teaching, institutional mechanisms, policy implementation, and internal assessment.

Data Collection

The questionnaire was administered to selected colleges falling within the geographical scope of the study. Returned questionnaires were examined for completeness and suitability before inclusion in the final analysis.

Data Analysis:

The selected responses were analysed using frequency and percentage analysis. The present paper is descriptive and therefore does not report inferential statistical tests that were not part of the supplied findings.

Results

Faculty Provision and Assessment

Table 1

Selected Indicators of Faculty Provision, Assessment, and Institutional Quality Mechanisms

Indicator

Percentage

Physical education teachers available for classroom teaching

32.30%

Theory and practical examinations conducted in physical education

27.95%

Strongly agree that fitness methods should be taught through theory and practical classes

57.00%

Strongly agree regarding an administrative/academic implementation mechanism

57.00%

Strongly agree regarding a measurement/education wing for assessment

52.69%

Note. Percentages represent the reported responses available for the selected questionnaire items. Additional response categories are not reproduced where their original frequencies/percentages were not supplied.

Availability of Physical Education Teachers for Classroom Teaching

Only 32.30% of respondents reported that physical education teachers were available for classroom teaching. The finding indicates that classroom-based PE provision was reported by less than one-third of the respondents included in this analysis.

This finding is relevant because physical education as an academic discipline involves knowledge and learning in addition to practical participation. UNESCO (2015a) identifies teacher supply, teacher education, and professional development as important elements within a quality physical education system.

Theory and Practical Examinations

Only 27.95% of respondents reported that both theory and practical examinations were conducted in physical education.

The finding indicates relatively limited reported implementation of an examination structure incorporating both dimensions. Because PE involves theoretical knowledge as well as practical and movement-related learning, assessment approaches should correspond appropriately with the intended learning outcomes.

Teaching of Physical-Fitness Methods Through Theory and Practice

Fifty-seven percent of respondents strongly agreed that methods of physical fitness should be taught through both theory and practical classes.

This response indicates substantial recognition of the value of integrating conceptual learning with practical application. Fitness concepts such as training principles, exercise selection, progression, intensity, recovery, and safety can be connected to practical experiences to support meaningful learning.

Administrative/Academic Mechanism for Policy Implementation

Fifty-seven percent of respondents strongly supported an administrative/academic mechanism for implementing relevant national and international policies.

An institutional mechanism of this nature could potentially provide a structured process for reviewing policy requirements, coordinating academic implementation, and monitoring institutional practices. Such an approach is consistent with the broader emphasis on coordinated action and monitoring found in international physical-activity and physical-education frameworks (UNESCO, 2015a; WHO, 2018a).

Measurement/Education Wing for Internal Assessment

A total of 52.69% of respondents strongly supported a measurement/education wing concerned with examining the validity of internal assessment.

The finding highlights the perceived importance of systematic assessment and measurement. In physical education, assessment may involve theoretical knowledge, practical performance, fitness-related components, and other learning outcomes. Appropriate measurement procedures are therefore relevant to the credibility and consistency of internal assessment.

Discussion

The findings provide an institutional perspective on selected dimensions of quality physical education in colleges of North India.

The first major issue is faculty capacity. Only 32.30% of respondents reported PE teachers for classroom teaching. This finding draws attention to the distinction between providing opportunities for sports participation and providing physical education as a structured academic teaching-learning process.

UNESCO (2015a) places teacher education, teacher supply, and professional development within the broader framework of quality physical education. Adequate personnel are consequently important not only for conducting sports activities but also for curriculum delivery, student learning, assessment, and professional development.

The second issue concerns assessment. Only 27.95% of respondents reported conducting both theory and practical examinations. Physical education has multiple learning dimensions, and assessment practices should therefore be appropriately aligned with the curriculum and intended learning outcomes.

Interestingly, 57.00% of respondents strongly agreed that physical-fitness methods should be taught through both theory and practical classes. The difference between this level of support and the lower reported prevalence of theory-practical examinations may indicate a gap between the perceived desirability of integrated PE and its reported institutional implementation. However, because the present analysis is descriptive, this interpretation should not be treated as a causal explanation.

The third dimension relates to institutional quality mechanisms. Fifty-seven percent strongly supported an administrative/academic mechanism for implementation of relevant national and international policies, while 52.69% strongly supported a measurement/education wing for assessment.

These findings indicate that institutional stakeholders recognised the potential value of systematic mechanisms for policy implementation and assessment. UNESCO's quality physical education framework similarly emphasises monitoring and quality assurance as components of a broader quality system (UNESCO, 2015a).

The findings can therefore be viewed through an interconnected institutional framework:

Faculty Capacity → Teaching and Learning → Assessment → Monitoring → Quality Improvement

This does not imply that establishment of a single mechanism would automatically improve educational quality. Rather, it highlights the need to consider faculty, curriculum delivery, assessment, monitoring, and institutional support as connected components of PE provision.

Educational and Institutional Implications

Faculty Development and Provision

Institutions should periodically review the adequacy of qualified PE personnel for both classroom teaching and practical instruction. Continuing professional development can further support teachers in curriculum delivery, assessment, technology use, research, and contemporary approaches to physical education.

Integration of Theory and Practice

The findings support greater attention to the integration of theoretical and practical learning. Fitness and health-related concepts can be taught through classroom explanation followed by supervised practical application.

Assessment Quality

Assessment systems should correspond to clearly defined learning outcomes. Where both theoretical and practical learning are included in a programme, assessment should appropriately represent those dimensions.

Institutional Monitoring

Colleges may establish appropriate academic and administrative processes for reviewing PE provision, monitoring implementation, and identifying areas requiring improvement.

Measurement and Evaluation

Greater attention should be given to appropriate measurement principles, including validity and reliability, when developing internal assessment procedures in physical education.

Limitations

The study employed a descriptive survey design; therefore, causal relationships cannot be established from the reported findings.

The present paper is based on the 93 reliable/complete responses retained from the doctoral survey.

The study relied on questionnaire responses and therefore reflects reported institutional conditions.

The geographical scope was limited to selected colleges within the eight North Indian states/regions.

The findings should not automatically be generalised to all higher education institutions in India.

Only the statistical information available has been reported; additional frequencies or inferential statistics have not been generated.

Conclusion

The study examined selected dimensions of physical education quality beyond sports participation, with particular attention to faculty capacity, assessment, and institutional mechanisms.

Only 32.30% of respondents reported PE teachers for classroom teaching, while 27.95% reported the conduct of both theory and practical examinations. In contrast, 57.00% strongly agreed that fitness methods should be taught through theory and practical classes. Similarly, 57.00% strongly supported an administrative/academic mechanism for policy implementation, and 52.69% strongly supported a measurement/education wing for examining internal assessment validity.

Taken together, these findings suggest a difference between recognition of desirable educational mechanisms and their reported implementation. The results reinforce the importance of considering physical education as an academic discipline requiring qualified faculty, meaningful theory-practical integration, appropriate assessment, and institutional monitoring.

The study therefore provides a basis for further investigation into faculty-student ratios, curriculum implementation, assessment practices, infrastructure, teacher development, and student learning outcomes in higher education physical education.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

Colleges should periodically assess the adequacy of qualified physical education teaching personnel.

Physical education should be supported as an academic discipline in addition to sports and recreational activities.

Theory and practical components should be appropriately integrated in teaching and assessment.

Institutions should strengthen systematic assessment and measurement procedures.

Academic and administrative mechanisms may be developed for monitoring PE implementation and quality.

Physical education faculty should be provided opportunities for continuing professional development.

Institutions should review their PE policies and practices in relation to applicable national requirements and relevant international frameworks.

Future studies should use larger samples and, where appropriate, inferential statistical techniques to examine relationships between institutional resources, teaching practices, assessment, and educational outcomes.

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