

A STATE OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORTS IN PAKISTAN: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS ON LACK OF INFRASTRUCTURE AND FRAMEWORK IN PAKISTANI INSTITUTIONS

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ABSTRACT

No nation can make progress without the provision of healthy people in its community. One way of maintaining healthy individuals in our communities is to integrate physical education and sports in our education system. The paper is intended to provide a critical analysis on infrastructure and framework for physical education and sports in Pakistani institutions. The issue of physical education is explored by collecting data through a questionnaire having a sample of 380 people from those institutions that offer programs in physical education. Additionally, interviews of faculty and administrative authorities of physical education program were conducted to gain in-depth idea of existing situation of physical education and sports in Pakistan. The findings indicate that physical education is necessary not only for physical growth, but also have deep impact on mental growth, social development, leadership skills and life style of an individual. The results of existing condition of physical education in Pakistan reflects that a least attention is paid by the government and the education system. As the result, the system is lacking the infrastructure and framework for physical education in educational institutions of Pakistan. The paper concludes with the recommendations to improve the overall situation of physical education in Pakistan.

Keywords: *Physical Education, Sport, Mental Development, Physical Education programs*

INTRODUCTION

Physical education is generally defined as the use of physical activity to help individuals attain physical fitness, sporting and motor skills, enhanced information, and positive attitude that would add value to their instructive growth and social

wellbeing. In educational settings, physical education is conceived as a set of selected physical activities blended with theoretical understanding that contribute in the creation of human attitude, mental strength and suitable physical growth. Shephard and Trudeau (2000)

pointed out that the physical education programs at the school level is appreciated as a source of modifying behavior in a positive way during the years of adolescence. Moreover, Morgan, Beighle, and Pangrazi (2007) identified the importance of physical education through their empirical research that mentioned about the programs related to physical education that are offered to large number of adolescents, and contribute to regular participation in physical activities. Research has identified that physical education programs that enhances profiles of students have experienced positive effect on their daily life habits during recreational time (Haerens, Kirk, Cardon, De Bourdeaudhuij, & Vansteenkiste, 2010). Based on these researches and operational definition of physical education, it can be concluded that the physical education programs are a great source of holistic improvement and physical growth. With the physical education, people attain variety of skills and human expressions which are connected to the personal impression knowledge and understanding. In short, it

relates to complete physical, mental and spiritual progression.

Medical science reveals that only healthy bodies hold healthy minds. Just like physical exercise is critical for a fitness, physical education is imperative for vigorous body. Our body would grow weak if we don't practice regular and organize physical exercise. A balanced growth of our mind and body are essential for a prosperous life. In order to face the challenges of life, a good health along with a physically fit body are the most important items. Therefore, physical education that includes games and sports, and their integration in our education system should be the essential component of general education (Ishita, 2009). Sports and games are defined as forms of physical activity which are competitive in nature, administered by a pre-set terms and regulations, aim to maintain ability and skills in an organized manner (Shahni, 2009). Physical education and engagement in sport activities provide a complete road map which leads to active life featuring wellness and to do work efficiently.

In advanced countries such as United States of America, Great Britain, and Australia, the physical education programs are considered as integral part of their education system. As the result, the government and the education department prioritize physical education by providing best infrastructure and a viable framework for physical education programs. In developing countries such as Pakistan, physical education is one of the most neglected area because there is huge disconnect between sport and education. In Pakistan, it is generally assumed that sport and physical activity are non-contributing factors in the professional career of people. As the result, the system is lacking in appropriate infrastructure and framework for physical education. One evidence of non-serious government approach is unavailability of physical education academic programs at most of the universities in Pakistan resulting in lack of trained physical education teachers in Pakistan. There are more than 150 universities in Pakistan, and only 18 universities offer master level (2 years program, equiva-

lent to 16 years education) programs, three universities offer MS level (2 years program equivalent to 18 years education) programs in Physical education. As far as undergraduate level is concerned, only 14 institutions offer bachelor degree in physical education with enrollment of about six thousand students. Unfortunately, there is only one university in Pakistan offering PhD program in Physical Education. It is significantly important to identify the factors that are responsible for the present condition. The current study has been conducted to achieve three major objectives: a) establish the need of physical education programs and its importance for a healthy individuals and communities, b) identify the causes of poor infrastructure and lack of framework for physical education in Pakistan, and c) recommendations to improve the existing situation of physical education. Both quantitative and qualitative means are used to explore an important issue of physical education in Pakistan. For quantitative data, a 10 item questionnaire was used to collect data from 380 relevant people

who are associated with physical education programs in universities of Pakistan. For qualitative data, interviews of 08 people were conducted who are involved in administrative and teaching of physical education programs at university level. After collecting data, quantitative data was analyzed by using statistical tests whereas the qualitative data was analyzed by using thematic analysis of interviews.

It is important to mention that Physical education at primary and secondary schools in Pakistan is seen as an optional activity by our education system. In primary and secondary school system of Pakistan, the students are engaged in sports and other physical activities for few hours every week. The physical activity in school system is seen as an activity rather than a formal mandatory subject. There is no evidence of physical education as a subject like science and arts etc. at primary and secondary school level. As the result, students are unable to comprehend the importance of formal physical education in their early lives. After the high

school, students get the opportunity to enroll in formal physical education programs in colleges and universities. It is very important to connect this gap to help policy makers to realize the importance of formal awareness and offering of physical education subject at primary and secondary school level.

Brief Literature Review:

Although physical education has been given a great importance in developed countries such as USA and Europe, the developing countries like India and Iran also focus physical education as an important aspect of national development. In addition to acknowledging the value of sports and physical education, conducting research is also common in the area of physical education. The Physical Education and Sport Survey by Quick, Simon, and Thornton (2010) found that 55% of students participated in at least three hours of Physical Education. The survey also found that 21% of students revealed that they perform some physical activity daily during academic classes, whereas 74% said that

perform some physical activity in some or most days during academic classes, and only 5% said that they were never active during teaching time (Chamberlain, George, Golden, Walker, and Benton, 2010). Wallhead, Garn, and Vidoni (2014) provided evidence through their empirical research that the physical education programs at high school level have positive outcomes that include increased perceived effort and better sense of enjoyment. As far as scope of physical education is concerned, Ali, K., Sadaf, A., Kousar, S., and Habib, Z. (2014) argued that physical education including sport programs emphasized on extending facilities to not only students in the school, but also expanded to people of diverse age groups.

Kilbourne (2009) in the research on kinesiology & physical education found that physical education is an important motivational factor that provides a road map to an individual for a healthy life. Bailey (2009) identified the benefits of participating in physical education program. According to the Bailey (2009) physical activities during

the physical education program transform individuals in terms of physical, emotional, mental and social growth. According to Lynn (2007) mental development and physical education are co-related with each other. Similarly, Hall (2007) made a strong co-relation of recreation and physical education.

Haider (2008) conducted a comparative study on physical education programs in terms of organizations, teachers, labs and equipment, external funding, and awareness. Very little work has been done so far in context of physical education programs in Pakistan, and there is a need to fill that gap through a rigorous research. The current study is designed to explore the state of physical education in Pakistani institutions, and suggest measures to improve the condition of physical education in terms of infrastructure and framework for physical education programs.

Method:

A mixed method approach was followed to explore the critical issues related to physical education in Pakistan. Quanti-

tative and qualitative data were collected to gather insights of specialists and relevant people in the field of physical education in Pakistan. The two forms of data helped to strengthen the credibility of the study. The quantitative data helped researchers to get the basic level facts and figures for establishing strong foundation of the study whereas the qualitative data provided the in-depth analysis of the core issues related to physical education in Pakistan. Finally, the triangulation of data provided the strong arguments to derive fruitful conclusion and recommendations. Mixing qualitative and quantitative designs in educational research provides causal explanations without neglecting the importance of meaning and the role of context (Maxwell, 2004). Various research designs were considered when planning this study however, after considering the questions and population to be studied, a mixed methods design was the best approach to use in order to explore the issue of physical education in Pakistan.

Quantitative data were collected from 380 participants

(students) from 09 universities of Pakistan. For qualitative data collection, interviews of 8 officials from universities, faculty and staff involved in teaching and administrative affairs were conducted. Table 1 explains description of data collection.

Table 1
Brief description of data collection

Measure	N	Type	Number	Duration
State of Physical Education in Pakistan Survey	380	University faculty and Staff	1 each	20 minutes
Interview	03 03 02	Admin Officials Faculty Staff	1 each	60 minutes each

Results and Findings:

For this study, two different types of data were collected; one is quantitative data collected through a five point Likert scale online questionnaire, contained 10 questions, and second is qualitative data in form of interviews from relevant university official, teachers and allied staff. Initially more than 500 people were asked to complete the online survey, 380 persons completed the survey which is 76% response rate. The findings of the survey are reflected in table 2.

Table 2
Participant's responses in form of percentage (N = 380)
(Key: SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree D= Disagree;
SD = Strongly Disagree; DN = Do Not Know)

Questions	SA	A	DN	D	SD
People in Pakistan have least awareness about physical education	66	16	05	11	02
Facilities regarding physical education in Pakistan are limited	61	13	03	13	10
Quality of physical education facilities in Pakistan is low	86	08	01	03	02
There is no framework for physical education in Pakistan	62	13	13	10	02
There is a lack of physical education specialists in in Pakistan	73	11	05	06	05
Curriculum of physical education in Pakistan is weak and outdated	74	10	11	04	01
Funds for physical education in Pakistan are limited	63	07	16	10	04
Career opportunities in physical education in Pakistan are limited	81	09	05	04	01
Physical education program offering is limited in Pakistani universities	83	07	02	05	03
The decline in sports is due to poor quality of physical education in educational institutions	81	07	01	08	03

Graph 1
Responses of participants in percentage on factors (N = 380)

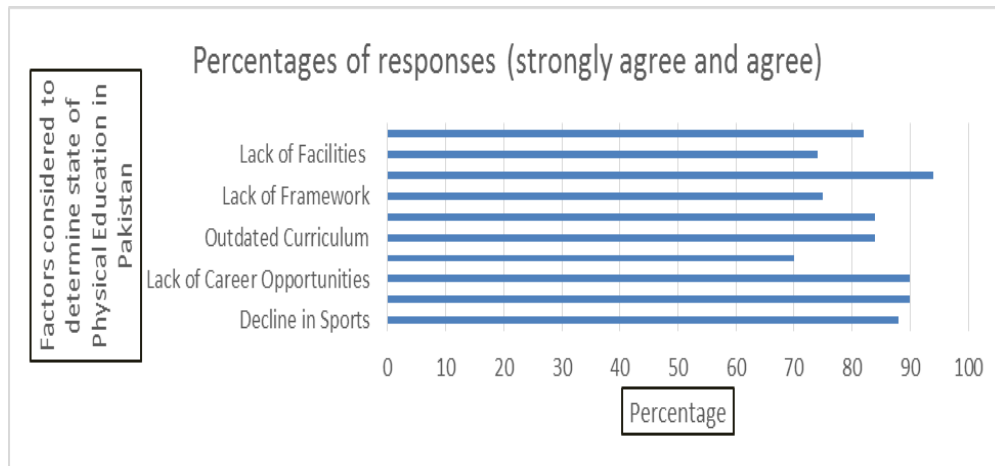


Table-3
Summary of categories emerged from interviews

Categories	Sub-categories
Lack of Awareness about physical education	Basic knowledge of physical education
	Understanding value of physical education
	Distinction of physical education and sport
	Cultural understanding of physical education
Lack of facilities and infrastructure	Poor infrastructure for physical education
	Poor facilities in universities
	Lack of funding for physical education
Lack of career growth	Less job opportunities for graduates
	Low salary structure for graduates
	Lack of promotion policy
	Lack of Specialists in the field
Lack of program offering in universities	Lack of seriousness in universities
	Outdated curriculum
	Disconnect of university and community

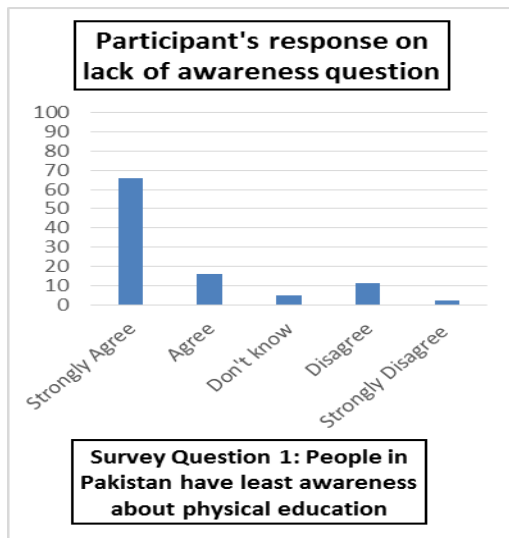
Discussion:

Thematic format was used to present the discussion section of this study. As reflected in table 3, four major themes emerged after systematic analysis of qualitative data.

Lack of awareness about physical education:

The data reveals that the lack of awareness about physical education among people is one of the major themes emerged from the data. According to the findings, 84% of the participants either strongly agreed or agreed with unawareness of people.

Graph-2
Responses of participants in percentage on lack of awareness question (N = 380)



The interview data which was collected from university officials, faculty and staff also validated the survey results. Interviewees revealed that people don't possess a basic knowledge of physical education. In Pakistan, at the school level (primary and secondary), the physical education is seen as an activity for physical exercise. In school settings, the physical education is not offered as a subject, and as the result, there is no formal evaluation by the school administration. From a student's perspective, this time is an opportunity for them to take a break from academic classes and spend some time in open air to relax and do some physical excursion. Similar trends are followed at college level with further reduction in the time allocation for physical education.

Another aspect of awareness is the inability of people to make a distinction between physical education and a sport activity. The existing structure of physical education is heavily focused on execution of sports events in the name of physical education. As the result, the

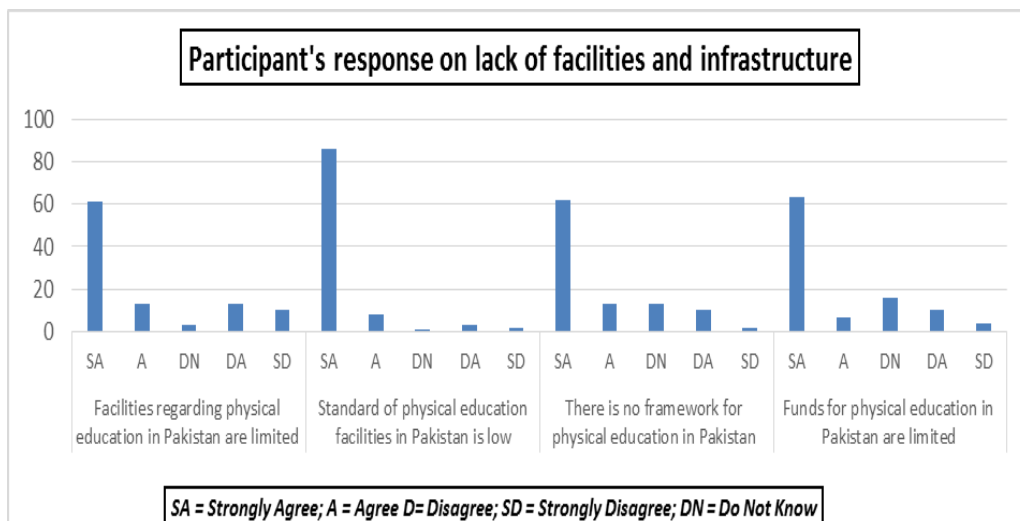
other forms of sports which includes athletics and physical indoor games get a least attention. Instead of a year-long regular schedule of physical education activities due to least awareness, there is a low level infrastructure for physical education programs at all academic levels. Cultural understanding of physical education is also one of the key factors that contributes towards the awareness of people. The women make more than 50% of Pakistani population, it is significantly important for them to participate in physical education activities in form of different games.

With few exceptions, most of the women in Pakistan are not actively engaged in physical activities.

Lack of facilities and infrastructure:

Second major reason of low level standards of physical education in Pakistan is lack of facilities and infrastructure throughout the country. Inadequate facilities such as sports fields, stadiums, equipment, trained faculty and staff. Most of the schools do not have enough track fields for students to help them participate.

Graph-3
Responses of participants in percentage on lack of facilities and infrastructure questions (N = 380)



It is noted that 74% of the participants either strongly agreed or agreed to recognize the limitation of facilities for physical education and promotion of sports. Similarly, the low standard of the available facilities is acknowledged by 94 % of the participants. Moreover 75 % of the participants believed that there is no framework for physical education in Pakistan whereas 70% of the respondents complained about the lack of funds.

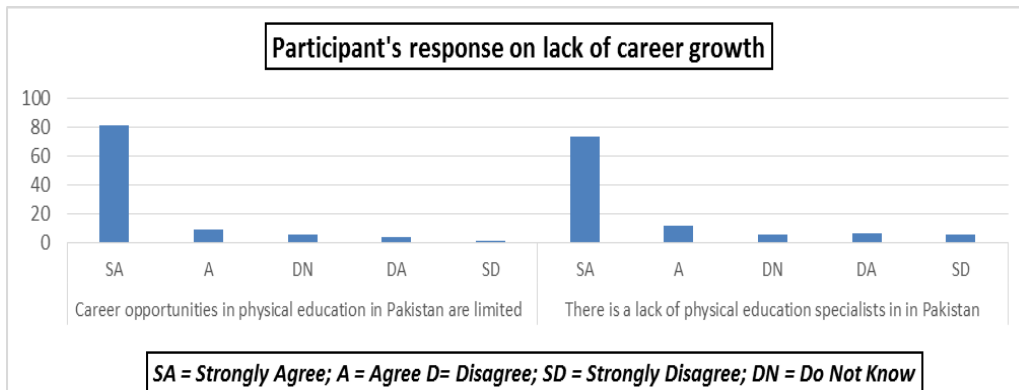
In the population of about 200 million people, there is only one national Olympic standard gymnasium for the conduct of national and international sports events. For cricket, being a most popular sport in Pakistan, there are only five stadiums of International standard for such a huge population. Some of the interviewees also pointed out that one reason of decline in government's interest to provide funding for physical education and sports activity is the lack of international sports activities in Pakistan as the result of insecurity in the country. Pakistan has been a victim of terrorism for last two decades and

has become an insecure place for international sports in Pakistan. Cricket, for instance, is the most popular sports in Pakistan, is suffering for national security situation. No international team has toured Pakistan in last ten years.

Lack of career growth:

Another major theme that emerged to determine the state of physical education in Pakistan is the lack of career growth in the profession. The two factors, lack of career growth and lack of physical education specialists, contributes for the poor state of physical education in Pakistan. According to the results of survey, 90% of the respondents either strongly agreed or agreed to the fact that career opportunities in physical education in Pakistan are limited. Similarly 84% of the participants believed that our education system lacks in specialists.

Graph-4
Responses of participants in percentage on lack of career growth (N = 380)



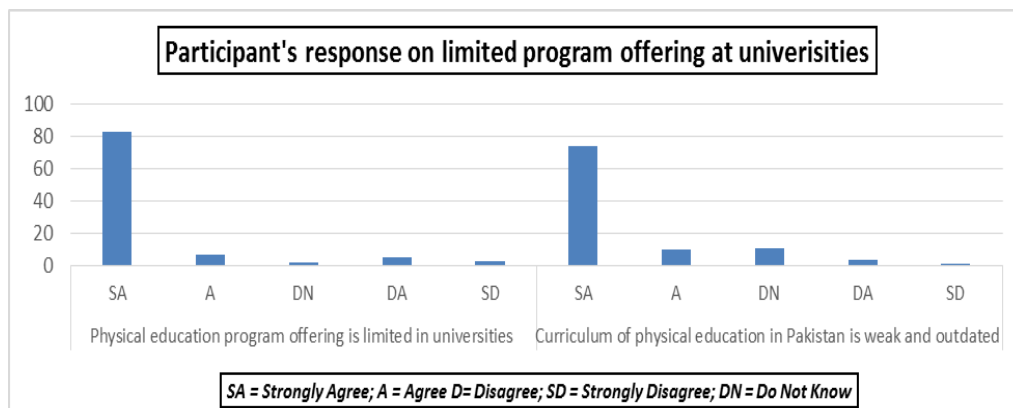
Interviewees considered lack of trainers and teachers is one main reason of low standards in physical education execution. Most of the educational institutions in Pakistan are suffering from absence of qualified trainers and Physical education teachers to deal with physical education as a subject. Similarly, the same pattern has been followed in colleges and universities where students go for physical education degree programs. Scarcity was observed about the facilities for the physical activities for developing professional techniques in physical education. The institutes do not afford enough facilities which promote wholesome grooming of individuals. Most of the participants of this study shared their concerned about

the career growth in physical education as a profession. Since the program offering is less, it reduces the chances of job openings in the field.

Lack of program offering in universities:

The limited numbers of universities in Pakistan are offering programs in physical education. The unavailability of physical education programs at most of the universities in Pakistan becomes a main reason of low standards in this field. According to results of survey, 90% of the respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that limited physical education programs are offered in Pakistani universities. Similarly 84% of the participants believed that the curriculum of physical education programs is outdated.

Graph-5
Responses of participants in percentage on lack of program offering by universities
(N = 380)



The data clearly indicated that the institutions in Pakistan are not serious in offering physical education programs at maximum number of universities. When important programs like that of physical education are not offered at university level, it is very difficult to raise the standard of such programs at national level. The outdated curriculum becomes a reason for lacking behind the physical education program at international level whereas the copied material makes it irrelevant. Last, but not the least, data both quantitative and qualitative, reflected that there is a wide disconnect between educational institutions offering these programs and the community.

Conclusion:

Lack of awareness about physical education as a non-educational and fun activity considered as inferior to academic subjects such English and Science, lack of qualified teachers and facilities, inadequate resources, lack of career growth, and limited offering of physical education programs collectively contribute to the weak and low standard of physical education in Pakistan. Girls are strongly discouraged from getting involved in physical education activities in many areas because of social and cultural restrictions. In Pakistan, social, cultural and religious constraints reduce the scope of physical education for girls, who are generally not allowed to participate in sports

activities except within the protected areas which are women exclusive. Limited program offering in universities and lack of professional trained faculty and staff become a major reason for weak and poor infrastructure at national level.

Recommendations:

The higher authorities such as a government and top administration of educational institutions must intervene to improve the overall standard of physical education by launching new institutes and centers, making the existing institutes more resourceful and provide all facilities such as main building, labs, equipment, and most importantly well qualified and trained teachers and staff. The universities in Pakistan must offer as many programs as possible for students to improve enrolment. Government and educational institutions must increase funding for the physical education programs to improve the infrastructure and overall condition in the country for sport and physical education activity. University must allocate substantial funds to improve salary and service struc-

ture of faculty and staff of physical education programs. Private and multinational organizations must patronize physical education in the same manner as they promote major sports such as cricket.

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