A study of Co-Curricular Activity Engagement Among Grade VIII Students in Delhi Government Schools

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Abstract

This study investigates the engagement of co-curricular activities in light of NEP 2020 among grade VIII students in the schools of the Directorate of Education (DoE), Delhi Government. The primary objective is to assess the extent and impact of student participation in co-curricular activities, exploring correlations with overall well-being. The data for this study has been taken from the dissertation report titled "The Study of academic achievement in relation to engagement of Co- curricular activities in middle level students of Delhi Govt. schools". The research sample comprised 200 students, 100 boys and 100 girls, selected from grade VIII. Data collection was conducted using a questionnaire through Google Forms, covering various aspects related to students' participation in co-curricular activities in light of NEP 2020, including their level of participation, formal training received, and time spent on these activities. Co-curricular activities were grouped into eight categories as per the recommendations of the NEP 2020.

The findings highlighted the importance and engagement of co-curricular activities for grade VIII students. The results indicate a significant positive relationship between active participation in co-curricular activities as per NEP 2020. By providing a holistic educational experience that incorporates both academic and extracurricular components, schools can better prepare students for success in academics, career, and life. This study offers valuable insights for educational policymakers, school administrators, and educators in designing effective strategies to promote engagement in co-curricular activities and support students' growth and success in schools. Specifically, the findings will contribute to a deeper understanding of the role of co-curricular engagement in student development and offer actionable recommendations for enhancing these programs within the educational framework of Delhi Government schools.

***Keywords**: Co-curricular activities, holistic development, National Education Policy 2020, policymakers*

Introduction:

Co-curricular activities, also known as extracurricular activities, are pursuits that complement the academic curriculum and contribute to the holistic development of students. These activities play a pivotal role in fostering a range of skills necessary for personal and social growth, complementing the academic curriculum. The concept of co-curricular activities gained prominence in the early 20th century, initially limited to sports and physical education. However, in the mid-20th century, there was a broader recognition of the importance of a well-rounded education, leading to the incorporation of various activities beyond sports, such as music, drama, and clubs, catering to different talents and interests among students. As educational philosophies evolved, co-curricular activities became an integral part of the school experience in the late 20th

century. Educational researchers and psychologists began studying the impact of extracurricular involvement on students' academic performance, social skills, and overall well-being. With the advent of the 21st century, co-curricular activities have diversified further, with technology playing a significant role in expanding the scope of extra curriculars, such as coding clubs, robotics, and online learning platforms.

According to modern educational thoughts, the curriculum encompasses not only the academic subjects traditionally taught in school but also the sum total of experiences that a student receives through various activities within or outside the school, it can be in classroom, library, laboratory, playground and numerous informal conversation between teachers and students. The aim of curricular activities is to prepare students for the future, develop a competitive spirit, cooperation, leadership, diligence, punctuality, team spirit, and provide a backdrop for the development of their creative talents. These activities enhance social interaction, leadership, healthy recreation, self-discipline, and self-confidence. Competitions may also be organized to create a competitive environment and groups with an objective to work towards a better society and the world.

In India, policy planners at the National level are focusing their attention on human resource development efforts, with education being a means to that end. Indian policy planners are concerned with developing the educational system to meet the challenges of social, economic, and cultural development. Efforts are being made to derive maximum possible benefits from assets and resources generated through technological advances and to ensure that these benefits are distributed equitably to all sections of society.

This study aims to investigate the engagement of Grade VIII students in co-curricular activities across various Delhi Government schools, employing a qualitative approach to quantify participation rates. In the vibrant educational landscape of Delhi, the holistic development of middle-level students in government schools stands as a paramount objective. Recognizing the multifaceted nature of education, this study embarks on an exploration of the intricate interplay between academic achievement and the engagement of co-curricular activities among middle-level students in Delhi Government schools. Co-curricular activities, spanning sports, arts, cultural pursuits, and community involvement, represent integral components of the educational experience. In the context of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which underscores the importance of a holistic approach to learning, this research endeavors to unravel the dynamics of co-curricular engagement and its potential impact on academic success. As the educational landscape undergoes transformative shifts, understanding how students' involvement in these activities correlates with their academic achievements becomes pivotal. This study aims to contribute empirical insights that not only shed light on the nuanced relationship between co-curricular engagement and academic outcomes but also inform educational practices and policies for the comprehensive development of middle-level students in Delhi Government schools. Recognizing the pivotal role of middle-level education in shaping students' academic and personal development, this research seeks to delve into the relationship between academic success and active participation in co-curricular activities.

Objectives of The Study :

- To identify the co- curricular activities in light of NEP 2020 in VIII grade students.
- To study the engagement of co-curricular activities in VIII grade students in DoE.
- To analyze the National Policy Education (2020) perspective of co-curricular activities.

Material and Methods:

This study adopts a qualitative method approach to systematically examine the engagement of co-curricular activities in students of class VIII. By utilizing a structured questionnaire, the research aims to gather data that can be analyzed by descriptive statistical analysis to identify patterns, correlations and associations between variables.

The researcher created a questionnaire to gather information about students' involvement in extracurricular activities. The purpose of the questionnaire was to gather data on the kinds and frequency of extracurricular activities that students participate in. The survey was designed using a Google Form style to facilitate data collection and administration.

Population & Sample of The Study:

Population for the study comprises of Grade Eighth students attending Delhi Government Schools under the Department of Education (DoE). Recognizing the importance of diversity and inclusivity, the sample was carefully designed to encompass various demographic characteristics, including gender and school types. Through simple random sampling, a total of 200 students of DoE were chosen to participate, with the aim of obtaining a balanced representation across different groups. To achieve this, 20 students of grade VIII were selected from each school, ensuring an equal distribution of 10 boys and 10 girls within each school. From single-gender school, 10 boys were sampled from boys' schools, and 10 girls were sampled from girls' schools.

Tools and Techniques used for Data Collection:

A questionnaire was developed by the researcher to collect data on students' participation in co-curricular activities, specifically as per mentioned in NEP 2020. The questionnaire was designed to capture information related to the frequency and types of co-curricular activities in which students are engaged. The questionnaire was structured in a Google Form format for ease of administration and data collection. For the ease of students, the questionnaire prepared was bilingual (English & Hindi).

Procedure of Data Analysis:

The procedure of data analysis for this study was carefully crafted to ensure a comprehensive exploration of the collected data and to derive meaningful insights regarding the relationship between academic achievement and engagement in co-curricular activities among middle-level students in Delhi Government Schools.Initially, the raw data collected through the Google Form questionnaire was meticulously organized and analyzed through Excel. This

involved arranging the data in a structured format conducive to statistical measurement and interpretation.

Descriptive statistics were then computed to provide a summary overview of the demographic characteristics of the sample and key variables of interest. This included calculating frequencies and percentages for categorical variables, such as gender and grade, and computing means for continuous variables, such as academic performance scores and frequency of participation in co-curricular activities.

RESULTS:

Participation Rates

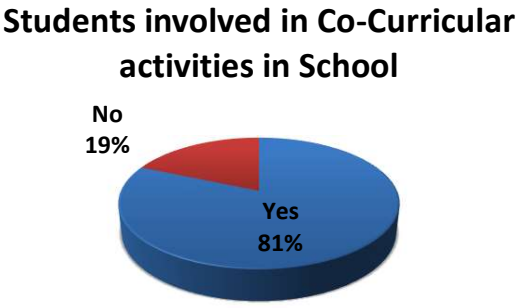


Figure 1

Figure 1 shows that 81% of 200 sampled students participate in co-curricular activities, with most showing interest, particularly at the school level. Data shows an adequate no. of students' participation in co-curricular activities in the school. All 200 students conveyed their interest & engagement in co-curricular activities. It reflects that most of the students of middle class are engaged in any co-curricular activity, but the only difference comes due to participation in the school.

Co-curricular activities:

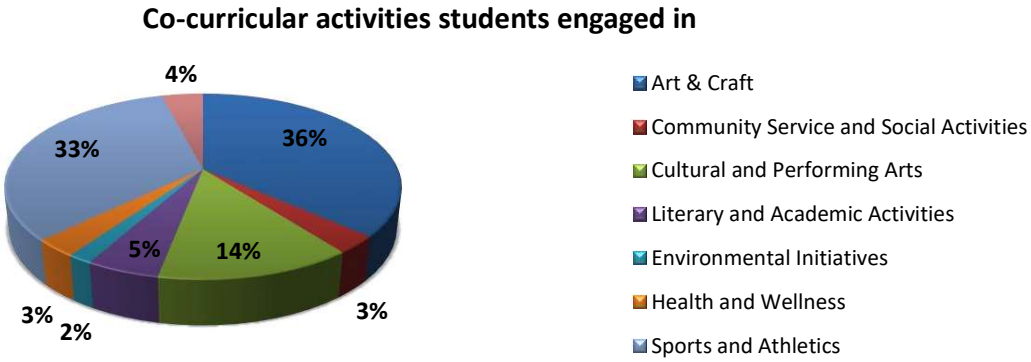


Figure 2

Figure 2 shows that from 08 themes, maximum no. of students engaged in Art & Craft activities i.e. 36% students and Sports & Athletics i.e. 33%. On the other hand students showed least interest in activities related to Community Service and Social activities (3%), Environmental initiatives (2%) and activities related to Health & Wellness (3%).

Formal Training

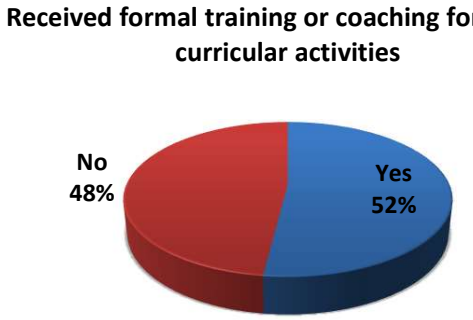


Figure 3

Figure 3 shows that 52% of students receive formal training for their co-curricular activities, aligning with NEP 2020 recommendations. NEP 2020 recommended that students participate in co-curricular activities to the fullest extent possible.

Engagement Levels:

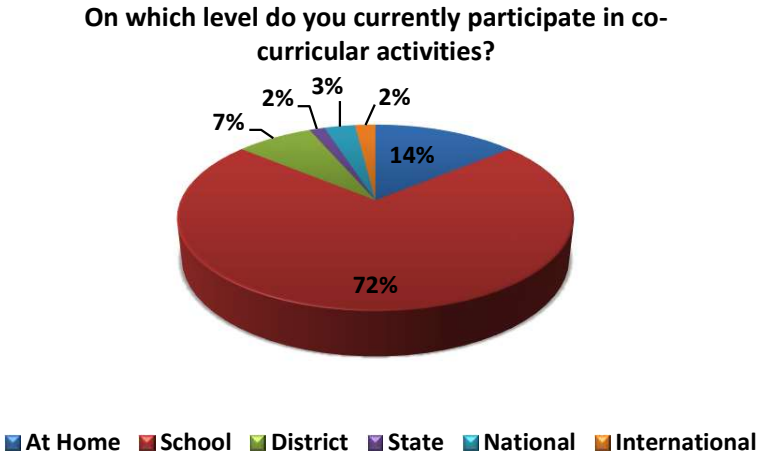


Figure 4

Figure 4 shows that 72% engage at the school level, fewer participate at higher levels. A notable portion of students (14%) only participated in co-curricular activities at home, possibly indicating limitations or preferences in participation.

Competition Engagement:

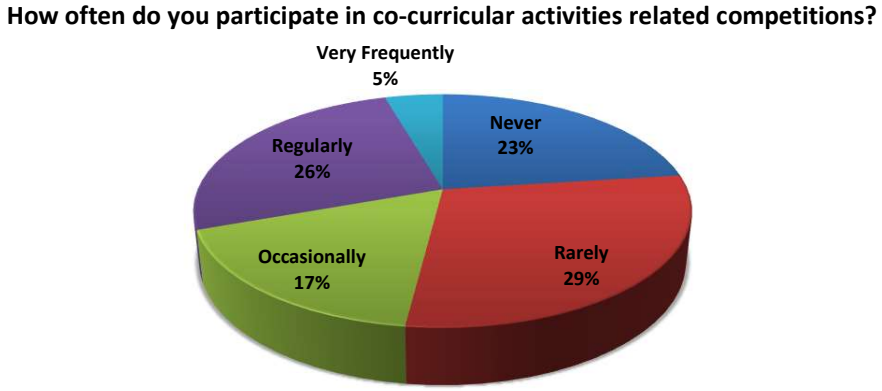


Figure 5

Figure 5 shows that engagement in co-curricular competitions varies, with 31% students participating frequently while 29% rarely or 23% never participated in co-curricular related competitions.

Time Allocation

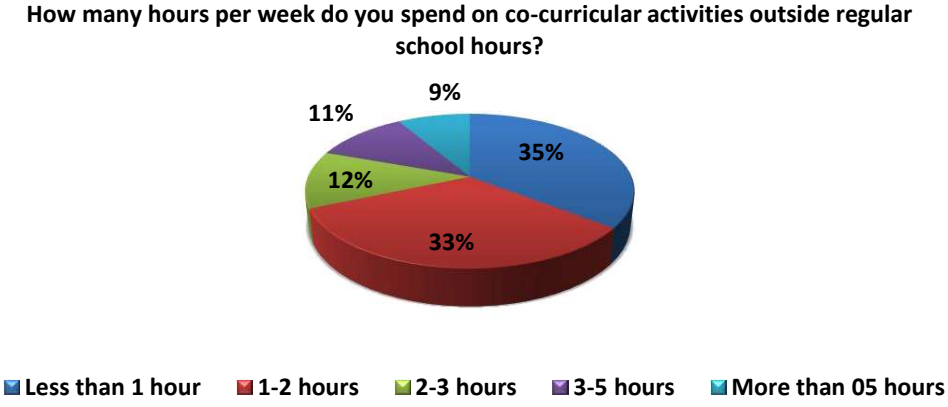


Figure 6

Figure 6 shows that most students i.e. 35% spend less than 1 hour per week on co-curricular activities, with fewer dedicating more time. Only 9% students spend more than 5 hours on co-curricular activities outside regular school hours.

Discussion:

The findings of this study closely align with the objective of providing comprehensive insights into the range and extent of co-curricular activities undertaken by middle-level school students. The data reveals that a significant majority of students (81%) were involved in co-

curricular activities in school, indicating a strong interest and engagement in extracurricular pursuits among this demographic. Furthermore, the study identified various types of activities in which students participated, including competitions, training, and participation at different levels ranging from school to international levels. These findings demonstrate the diverse landscape of co-curricular opportunities available to middle-level school students, reflecting the emphasis on holistic development outlined in the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 Para 4. 4. The study effectively addressed this objective by examining the levels of engagement and participation among middle-level school students in co-curricular activities. The data revealed that a significant proportion of students participated in activities both within and outside the school, with varying levels of involvement observed across different categories. For instance, while the majority of students engaged in activities at the school level, fewer students participated in higher-level competitions or events. This suggests a need to further encourage and facilitate student participation in advanced co-curricular opportunities to foster a more comprehensive and inclusive approach to holistic development. Moreover, the study provided valuable insights into the alignment between the findings and the objectives outlined in the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. By examining students' participation in co-curricular activities, their academic achievement, and the perceived impact of extracurricular involvement, the study shed light on key aspects emphasized in the NEP 2020. The findings underscore the importance of integrating co-curricular activities into the educational curriculum, in line with the overarching goals of the policy to promote a well-rounded and holistic approach to education.

Implications of the study:

Educators can leverage their deep understanding of student learning and development to design holistic educational experiences that foster academic success while also nurturing students' diverse interests, skills, and talents beyond the confines of the traditional classroom. By prioritizing the integration of comprehensive co-curricular initiatives, schools can empower students to develop a well-rounded set of capabilities that will serve them well not just in their academic pursuits, but in all facets of their personal and professional lives. Recognizing the various factors that motivate students to participate in co-curricular activities can inform strategic efforts to foster intrinsic motivation and active engagement among the student body. By tapping into students' unique interests, passions, and social influences, schools can create opportunities for meaningful involvement in co-curricular programs, thereby enhancing the overall educational experience and facilitating transformative personal growth. The study's examination of the policies and implementation strategies related to co-curricular activities in Delhi government schools provides a valuable foundation for evaluating the effectiveness of existing programs, identifying areas for improvement, and highlighting best practices for seamlessly integrating co-curricular initiatives into the curriculum. Leveraging these insights can empower educational institutions to optimize their approach to co-curricular learning, ensuring that students are equipped with the diverse skills and competencies necessary for long-term success.

Conclusion:

The study conducted sheds light on the implementation of co-curricular activities in alignment with the objectives outlined in the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. By identifying the types of activities offered and examining students' perspectives on school support and opportunities, the study provides valuable insights for educators and policymakers striving to create a conducive environment for holistic student development.

The study underscores the significance of co-curricular activities for eighth-grade students in Delhi Government schools. By recognizing the importance of extracurricular engagement and understanding its implications for academic outcomes, educators and policymakers can work towards fostering a balanced and comprehensive educational experience that nurtures the overall growth and well-being of students in Delhi Government schools.

The study demonstrates the positive engagement of students in co-curricular activities, aligning with the NEP's emphasis on the importance of such activities. Consequently, courses like Vocational Education, Sports, Art & Craft have been introduced in the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2023. The data reveals that the majority of students showed interest in Art & Craft as their preferred activity. However, only 52% of students agreed upon receiving formal training for co-curricular activities, which is a relatively low percentage. According to the NEP 2020, students at the middle stage require proper formal training in activities by coaches or trained teachers. Furthermore, the data indicates that most students participated at the school level and spent less than one hour per week on co-curricular activities, which is insufficient. The study also highlights require concerted efforts from policymakers, educators and community stakeholders to ensure equitable access to co-curricular opportunities for all students.

In conclusion, the engagement of eighth-grade students in co-curricular activities, as envisioned by the NEP 2020, plays a pivotal role in their holistic development. While the policy has made commendable strides in integrating these activities into the educational system, ongoing support and resource allocation are essential to maximize its benefits. Future research should continue to explore innovative strategies to overcome implementation challenges and further enhance student engagement through co-curricular activities. The positive outcomes observed in this study advocate for the sustained and expanded integration of co-curricular activities within the educational framework to nurture well-rounded, competent, and socially responsible individuals.

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