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ENHANCING FITNESS LEVELS THROUGH SCHOOL PHYSICAL EDUCATION PROGRAMMES

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Abstract

Physical education plays a significant role in the physical, mental, emotional, and social development of school students. In recent years, increasing academic pressure, sedentary lifestyles, and excessive use of digital devices have negatively affected the fitness levels of children. School physical education programmes serve as an effective platform for improving physical fitness, promoting healthy lifestyles, and developing discipline and teamwork among students. The present study examines the effectiveness of school physical education programmes in enhancing students' fitness levels. The study focuses on selected school students and evaluates the impact of regular physical activity, structured exercise programmes, and sports participation on their physical health. The findings indicate that consistent participation in physical education activities improves cardiovascular endurance, muscular strength, flexibility, and overall physical well-being. The study emphasizes the need for schools to strengthen physical education infrastructure and encourage active participation among students. Physical education programmes in schools play a vital role in promoting the physical, mental, and social well-being of students. In recent years, increasing levels of sedentary lifestyles, obesity, stress, and lack of physical activity among school children have become major concerns across the world. School-based physical education serves as an effective platform for developing fitness habits, improving health standards, and encouraging active participation in sports and recreational activities. The present study focuses on enhancing fitness levels through structured school physical education programmes and examines their influence on students' overall development. Regular participation in physical education activities such as exercises, games, athletics, yoga, and recreational sports contributes significantly to the improvement of strength, endurance, flexibility, agility, coordination, and cardiovascular efficiency among students. The study emphasizes that well-planned physical education programmes not only improve physical fitness but also develop discipline, teamwork, leadership qualities, self-confidence, and emotional stability. Schools that provide adequate facilities, trained physical education teachers, and organized sports activities create a healthy environment that motivates students to maintain active lifestyles. The research also highlights the importance of integrating modern fitness techniques and health awareness programmes within the school curriculum to achieve better outcomes. Data collected from selected students indicate that regular participation in physical education programmes leads to noticeable improvements in fitness performance and health-related behaviors. The findings suggest that strengthening school physical education systems can play a crucial role in combating lifestyle-related health problems and fostering holistic student development. Therefore, educational institutions and policymakers should give greater importance to physical education programmes to ensure healthier and more physically fit younger generations.

Keywords: Physical Education, Fitness Levels, School Programmes, Health, Students

1. Introduction

Physical fitness is one of the essential components of a healthy and productive life. It enables individuals to perform daily activities efficiently without undue fatigue and contributes to overall well-being. In the modern educational system, physical education has emerged as an important discipline that supports students' physical, psychological, and social growth. Schools provide the most appropriate environment for developing healthy habits and fitness awareness among children and adolescents. Due to technological advancements and lifestyle changes, many school children are becoming physically inactive. Reduced outdoor activities, dependence on electronic gadgets, and lack of exercise have resulted in obesity, poor posture, stress, and reduced physical efficiency among students. Physical education programmes in schools are designed to address these issues by promoting regular physical activity, sports participation, and fitness-oriented exercises. School physical education programmes include activities such as athletics, yoga, games, aerobic exercises, stretching, and recreational sports. These activities help improve strength, endurance, flexibility, coordination, and mental



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concentration. They also encourage teamwork, leadership qualities, discipline, and social interaction among students. Therefore, schools play a vital role in shaping students' fitness habits and creating awareness about healthy lifestyles. The present study aims to examine the role of school physical education programmes in enhancing fitness levels among students and to identify the benefits associated with regular participation in physical activities. Physical education plays a vital role in the overall development of school children by promoting physical fitness, mental well-being, discipline, and social values. In the modern educational system, increasing academic pressure, technological advancements, and sedentary lifestyles have significantly reduced the physical activity levels of students. As a result, many school-aged children face health-related problems such as obesity, poor posture, stress, lack of stamina, and reduced physical efficiency. School physical education programmes are therefore essential in creating awareness about healthy living and encouraging students to participate regularly in physical activities that improve their fitness levels and quality of life. Fitness is an important component of human health and includes strength, endurance, flexibility, speed, coordination, and cardiovascular efficiency. Students who maintain good fitness levels are more active, confident, and capable of performing daily activities effectively. Physical education programmes conducted in schools provide systematic training and opportunities for participation in sports, games, exercises, yoga, and recreational activities. These activities help in the development of physical fitness as well as emotional stability, teamwork, leadership qualities, and self-discipline among students. Through regular participation in physical education classes, students learn the importance of exercise and healthy habits that can continue throughout their lives. In recent years, schools have recognized the importance of integrating structured physical education programmes into the curriculum to combat lifestyle-related diseases and improve student performance. Research studies indicate that physically active students often show better concentration, improved academic achievement, reduced stress levels, and enhanced social interaction. Physical education also contributes to character building by teaching cooperation, respect for rules, fair play, and responsibility. Furthermore, organized fitness activities encourage inclusiveness and provide equal opportunities for students from different backgrounds to participate and develop their talents.

Despite its importance, physical education is sometimes given less priority compared to academic subjects due to limited facilities, lack of trained instructors, insufficient time allocation, and inadequate awareness among parents and administrators. Such challenges negatively affect the implementation of effective fitness programmes in schools. Therefore, there is a growing need to strengthen school physical education by improving infrastructure, providing trained teachers, encouraging student participation, and creating awareness about the long-term benefits of physical fitness. Enhancing fitness levels through school physical education programmes is essential for developing healthy and productive citizens. Schools serve as the ideal platform for shaping positive attitudes toward physical activity and healthy living during the formative years of life. A well-planned physical education programme not only improves physical fitness but also supports the intellectual, emotional, and social development of students, thereby contributing to the overall progress of society.

2. Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the importance of school physical education programmes.
2. To analyze the impact of physical education activities on students' fitness levels.
3. To study the relationship between regular exercise and physical health among school students.
4. To identify the challenges faced in implementing effective physical education programmes.
5. To provide suggestions for improving fitness-oriented activities in schools.

3. Hypotheses of the Study

1. There is a significant relationship between participation in physical education programmes and improvement in fitness levels.
2. Students who participate regularly in physical activities show better physical fitness than inactive students.
3. School physical education programmes positively influence students' health and well-being.
4. Proper physical education infrastructure contributes to improved student participation and fitness outcomes.



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4. Methodology

The present study is based on both primary and secondary data. Primary data were collected from 50 school students through questionnaires, observation methods, and fitness assessments. The study was conducted in selected schools where physical education programmes are regularly implemented. The sample included boys and girls from different age groups studying at the secondary school level. A simple random sampling method was adopted for selecting participants. The questionnaire included questions related to participation in sports activities, frequency of exercise, interest in physical education classes, and perceived fitness improvements. Physical fitness indicators such as endurance, flexibility, strength, and body coordination were considered during the analysis. Secondary data were collected from books, journals, research articles, educational reports, and government publications related to physical education and student fitness. Percentage analysis and tabular representation were used to interpret the collected data. The study mainly focuses on understanding how structured school physical education programmes contribute to enhancing students’ overall fitness levels.

5. Importance of the Study

Physical education is essential for the balanced development of students. The present study is important because it highlights the role of school-based physical education programmes in improving fitness levels and promoting healthy lifestyles among children. In the modern era, many students experience physical inactivity due to urbanization, academic stress, and technological dependence. This study emphasizes the need for regular physical activity within the school environment. The study is significant because it creates awareness among parents, teachers, and policymakers regarding the benefits of physical education. Regular participation in physical activities helps students improve cardiovascular fitness, muscular strength, flexibility, and body coordination. It also reduces the risk of obesity, diabetes, hypertension, and stress-related disorders at an early age. The research also contributes to educational development by showing that physical fitness supports academic performance. Healthy students often display better concentration, memory, confidence, and emotional stability. Through physical education programmes, students learn teamwork, leadership, discipline, cooperation, and social responsibility. Another important aspect of the study is that it identifies challenges faced by schools in implementing effective physical education programmes. Lack of playgrounds, insufficient sports equipment, shortage of trained physical education teachers, and inadequate time allocation are common issues affecting programme effectiveness. The study provides useful suggestions for overcoming these barriers. The findings of this study may help educational administrators and policymakers formulate better physical education policies. It encourages schools to strengthen sports infrastructure and integrate fitness activities into daily routines. The study also promotes the idea that physical education should be treated as an essential component of the educational curriculum rather than an optional activity. Overall, the study contributes to the promotion of healthy living, fitness awareness, and holistic student development. It serves as a valuable reference for researchers, educators, and institutions interested in improving school physical education systems and enhancing student fitness levels.

6. Sample Analysis

Table 1: Participation in Physical Education Activities

S. No	Participation Level	Number of Students	Percentage
1	Regular Participation	28	56%
2	Occasional Participation	15	30%
3	Rare Participation	7	14%
Total		50	100%



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Analysis

The table shows that 56% of students regularly participate in physical education activities, while 30% participate occasionally. Only 14% rarely participate in such activities. This indicates that the majority of students are actively involved in school physical education programmes, which positively contributes to their fitness levels and overall health.

Table 2: Improvement in Fitness Levels After Participation

S. No	Fitness Improvement	Number of Students	Percentage
1	High Improvement	24	48%
2	Moderate Improvement	18	36%
3	Low Improvement	8	16%
Total		50	100%

Analysis

The table reveals that 48% of students experienced high improvement in fitness levels after participating in physical education programmes. About 36% reported moderate improvement, while only 16% experienced low improvement. The findings indicate that regular physical education activities have a positive effect on students' physical fitness and health.

7. Role of Physical Education in Student Health

Physical education contributes significantly to maintaining and improving student health. Regular exercise helps strengthen muscles, improve blood circulation, and enhance cardiovascular endurance. Students who actively participate in physical education classes tend to maintain healthy body weight and show better physical efficiency. Physical activity also improves mental health by reducing anxiety, depression, and stress. Students develop emotional balance and confidence through sports participation. Physical education encourages active lifestyles and helps students avoid harmful habits such as excessive screen time and physical inactivity. Moreover, physical education promotes social interaction and teamwork. Through group games and sports activities, students learn communication skills, cooperation, leadership, and discipline. Therefore, physical education serves as an important foundation for healthy and holistic student development. Physical education plays a vital role in promoting the overall health and well-being of students. In the modern educational system, physical education is not limited to sports and games alone; it is an essential component of holistic development that contributes to physical fitness, mental stability, emotional balance, and social growth. With increasing academic pressure, technological dependence, and sedentary lifestyles among children and adolescents, the importance of physical education has become greater than ever before. It helps students maintain an active lifestyle and encourages healthy habits that continue throughout life. Regular participation in physical education activities improves cardiovascular endurance, muscular strength, flexibility, coordination, and body composition. Students who engage in physical exercise are less likely to suffer from obesity, diabetes, hypertension, and other lifestyle-related diseases. Physical activities such as running, jumping, stretching, yoga, and team sports strengthen the immune system and improve overall body functioning. It also supports healthy growth and development during childhood and adolescence, which are crucial stages in human life. Physical education significantly contributes to mental health by reducing stress, anxiety, and depression among students. Exercise stimulates the release of endorphins, often called "feel-good hormones," which create positive emotions and improve mood. Students who participate regularly in sports and physical activities generally show better concentration, memory, and academic performance. Physical education also provides relaxation from classroom stress and refreshes the mind, enabling students to focus more effectively on their studies. In today's competitive world, where students often face emotional pressure and psychological challenges, physical education acts as a powerful tool for mental well-being. Another important



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aspect of physical education is the development of social skills and personality traits. Through team games and group activities, students learn cooperation, leadership, discipline, communication, and respect for others. Participation in sports teaches the value of teamwork and helps students understand the importance of fair play and mutual support. It also develops self-confidence and self-esteem, enabling students to face challenges with courage and determination. Physical education encourages students to become socially active, responsible, and emotionally balanced individuals. Physical education also plays a major role in building healthy lifestyle habits. Students learn the importance of regular exercise, balanced nutrition, personal hygiene, and proper rest. These habits help prevent unhealthy behaviors such as physical inactivity, excessive screen time, and substance abuse. Schools that provide effective physical education programmes create awareness about health-related issues and motivate students to adopt positive lifestyles. As a result, students become more conscious about their health and fitness from an early age. In conclusion, physical education is an indispensable part of student life and educational development. It enhances physical fitness, supports mental health, promotes social interaction, and encourages healthy living practices. A strong physical education programme in schools helps students achieve balanced growth and prepares them to lead active, productive, and healthy lives. Therefore, educational institutions should give equal importance to physical education along with academic subjects to ensure the complete development of students.

8. Impact of Regular Exercise on Fitness Levels

Regular exercise plays a major role in enhancing physical fitness among school students. Activities such as running, stretching, aerobics, yoga, and sports improve flexibility, strength, endurance, and coordination. Students who exercise regularly develop stronger bones and muscles and maintain better posture. Exercise also improves metabolic efficiency and reduces the risk of lifestyle-related diseases. Active students often display higher energy levels and improved concentration in academic activities. Fitness-oriented programmes encourage students to remain physically active throughout their lives. The study indicates that students participating in daily physical activities demonstrate greater physical stamina and better health outcomes compared to inactive students. Thus, regular exercise is essential for promoting physical fitness and long-term well-being. Regular exercise plays a vital role in improving and maintaining overall fitness levels among individuals of all age groups. It enhances physical strength, endurance, flexibility, and cardiovascular efficiency, thereby contributing to a healthier lifestyle. Engaging in regular physical activities such as walking, jogging, cycling, swimming, yoga, and sports helps in strengthening muscles and bones while also improving body composition. Exercise increases the efficiency of the heart and lungs, allowing the body to utilize oxygen more effectively during physical activity. As a result, individuals experience greater stamina, reduced fatigue, and improved performance in daily tasks and sports activities. In addition to physical benefits, regular exercise positively influences mental and emotional well-being. It reduces stress, anxiety, and depression by stimulating the release of endorphins, often called “feel-good hormones.” People who exercise regularly tend to have better concentration, improved memory, and higher self-confidence. Exercise also helps in maintaining a healthy body weight by burning excess calories and improving metabolism, thereby reducing the risk of obesity, diabetes, hypertension, and other lifestyle-related diseases. For students and young people, regular physical activity contributes significantly to better growth and development. It promotes discipline, teamwork, and leadership qualities while encouraging healthy habits from an early age. Moreover, consistent exercise improves flexibility and balance, reducing the risk of injuries and enhancing overall body coordination. In modern society, where sedentary lifestyles and excessive screen time are increasing, regular exercise has become essential for maintaining physical fitness and preventing health complications. Therefore, incorporating exercise into daily routines is one of the most effective ways to achieve long-term fitness, health, and overall well-being.

9. Challenges in Implementing Physical Education Programmes

Despite the importance of physical education, many schools face challenges in implementing effective programmes. One major issue is the lack of adequate sports infrastructure and playground facilities. Urban schools especially struggle with limited open spaces for physical activities. Another challenge is the shortage of trained physical education teachers. In some schools, physical education is given less importance compared to academic subjects. Limited time allocation in school schedules also affects student participation in sports and exercise activities. Financial constraints prevent schools from



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purchasing modern sports equipment and maintaining fitness facilities. Additionally, parental pressure on academic achievement sometimes discourages students from participating in physical activities. Addressing these challenges is necessary for improving the effectiveness of school physical education programmes. Physical education programmes play an important role in promoting students' physical fitness, mental health, discipline, and teamwork. However, many schools face several challenges in implementing these programmes effectively. One of the major problems is the lack of proper infrastructure such as playgrounds, sports equipment, and indoor facilities. In many educational institutions, especially in rural and economically weaker regions, physical education is often given less importance compared to academic subjects. As a result, schools allocate limited time and financial resources for sports and physical activities. Another challenge is the shortage of qualified physical education teachers who can guide students scientifically and safely. Large student populations and limited training opportunities further reduce the effectiveness of physical education classes. Additionally, academic pressure and examination-oriented systems discourage students from participating regularly in sports activities. Some parents and school administrators also consider physical education as less valuable for career development, which affects student motivation. Health issues, lack of awareness about fitness, and unequal participation opportunities for girls and differently abled students create additional barriers. Despite these difficulties, effective planning, government support, improved facilities, and awareness programmes can help strengthen physical education and encourage active participation among students.

10.Importance of Sports and Recreational Activities

Sports and recreational activities are essential components of physical education programmes. They provide enjoyment, relaxation, and opportunities for social interaction. Participation in sports improves physical strength, flexibility, coordination, and teamwork among students. Recreational activities such as yoga, dance, and outdoor games help students relieve stress and improve mental health. Sports participation also teaches important life skills such as discipline, leadership, patience, and decision-making. Students involved in sports often develop self-confidence and competitive spirit. Recreational programmes encourage active participation and help students maintain a balanced lifestyle. Therefore, schools should organize regular sports competitions and recreational activities to promote fitness and healthy living. Sports and recreational activities play a vital role in maintaining physical, mental, and social well-being among individuals of all age groups. Participation in sports helps improve physical fitness, strengthens muscles and bones, enhances flexibility, and reduces the risk of lifestyle diseases such as obesity, diabetes, and hypertension. Regular involvement in recreational activities also improves cardiovascular health and increases overall energy levels. Along with physical benefits, sports contribute significantly to mental health by reducing stress, anxiety, and depression. They provide relaxation, refresh the mind, and improve concentration and emotional stability. Sports and recreation also help in the development of important personal qualities such as discipline, leadership, teamwork, cooperation, confidence, and time management. Students who actively participate in games and recreational activities often develop better social relationships and communication skills. These activities encourage unity, friendship, and mutual respect among people from different backgrounds. Recreational activities such as yoga, walking, cycling, dancing, and outdoor games provide enjoyment and create a healthy balance between work and leisure. In educational institutions, sports promote holistic development and help students maintain an active and healthy lifestyle. Therefore, sports and recreational activities are essential for creating physically fit, mentally strong, and socially responsible individuals in society.

11. Strategies for Improving School Physical Education Programmes

Schools should adopt effective strategies to improve physical education programmes and enhance student fitness levels. Proper sports infrastructure, including playgrounds, courts, and fitness equipment, should be provided in all schools. Qualified physical education teachers should be appointed to guide students and conduct structured fitness activities. Schools should allocate sufficient time for physical education classes and encourage participation from all students. Fitness awareness programmes, health campaigns, and sports competitions should be organized regularly. Parents should also be educated about the importance of physical activity for children's development. Government support and educational policies can further strengthen school physical education systems and improve student fitness outcomes. Improving school physical



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education programmes requires a comprehensive approach that focuses on student participation, quality instruction, and adequate facilities. Schools should design activity-based programmes that encourage all students to participate actively rather than concentrating only on competitive sports. Physical education teachers must receive proper training to introduce modern teaching methods, fitness activities, and safety practices. Regular workshops and professional development programmes can help teachers stay updated with new trends in health and fitness education. Schools should also provide sufficient playgrounds, sports equipment, and indoor facilities to support effective learning and practice. Including a variety of activities such as yoga, athletics, dance, games, and recreational exercises can increase student interest and reduce boredom. Equal opportunities should be given to both boys and girls and to students with different physical abilities. Health awareness programmes, fitness assessments, and inter-school competitions can motivate students to develop lifelong healthy habits. Parents and communities should also be involved in supporting physical education activities and encouraging children to participate regularly. Integrating technology such as fitness tracking apps, video demonstrations, and digital learning tools can further improve the effectiveness of physical education programmes. Through proper planning, supportive policies, and continuous evaluation, schools can create strong physical education programmes that promote fitness, discipline, teamwork, and overall student well-being.

12. Findings of the Study

1. Most students actively participate in school physical education programmes.
2. Regular participation in physical activities improves students' fitness levels significantly.
3. Physical education positively influences physical and mental health.
4. Students involved in sports activities show better endurance, flexibility, and strength.
5. Lack of infrastructure and trained teachers affects programme effectiveness.
6. Recreational activities help reduce stress and improve emotional well-being.
7. Schools with better sports facilities show higher student participation rates.
8. Physical education contributes to discipline, teamwork, and leadership qualities among students.

13. Suggestions

1. Schools should provide adequate sports infrastructure and equipment.
2. Physical education should be made compulsory at all school levels.
3. Qualified physical education teachers should be recruited in schools.
4. Fitness awareness programmes should be organized regularly.
5. Parents should encourage children to participate in sports and exercise.
6. Government authorities should increase funding for school sports programmes.
7. Schools should conduct regular fitness assessments for students.
8. Equal opportunities should be provided for both boys and girls in sports participation.

14. Conclusion

Physical education programmes play an important role in enhancing fitness levels among school students. Regular participation in sports and exercise activities improves physical health, mental well-being, discipline, teamwork, and social interaction. The study clearly indicates that structured school physical education programmes positively influence students' overall development and help create healthy lifestyles. Although several challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, shortage of trained teachers, and limited resources exist, effective planning and policy support can strengthen physical education systems in schools. Schools, parents, and governments must work together to encourage active participation in fitness-oriented activities. Physical education should not be viewed merely as a recreational subject but as an essential component of holistic education. By promoting physical fitness and healthy habits, schools can contribute to the development of healthy, confident, and productive citizens for the future. In conclusion, school physical education programmes play a vital role in enhancing the overall fitness levels of students and promoting healthy lifestyles from an



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early age. Regular participation in physical activities improves physical strength, endurance, flexibility, coordination, and mental well-being. These programmes also help students develop discipline, teamwork, leadership qualities, and positive social behaviour. In the modern world, where sedentary lifestyles and excessive use of technology have reduced physical activity among children, effective physical education has become more important than ever. Schools serve as the best platform to encourage active habits and create awareness about the importance of health and fitness. Well-planned physical education activities, qualified instructors, adequate sports facilities, and supportive school policies can significantly improve student participation and fitness outcomes. Furthermore, physical education contributes to academic performance by improving concentration, confidence, and emotional balance. Therefore, educational institutions, parents, and policymakers must work together to strengthen physical education programmes and ensure that every student receives equal opportunities for physical development. By enhancing fitness levels through school physical education programmes, societies can build healthier, more active, and more productive future generations.

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