

**Role of Co-Curricular Activities:
Survey of the Perceptions of Stake Holders
(Case Study of Peshawar District)**

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Introduction

The function of education is to bring change in child behavior and personality in a more desirable form. Development of child's body and mind demand proper nurturing of its physical and intellectual qualities as few of the major determinants of his personality. Therefore, modern approaches of education emphasize on all round development of the child. The process of education is not something static or one time measure rather, continuous and life long endeavor that can be divided in two parts; curricular activities and co-curricular activities. These are also recognized as a source of enrichment and vitalization of the school curriculum, mainly through the cultivation of hobbies, interests, etc. these activities are no longer looked upon as extras but as an integral part of the school program. The distinction between curricular and extra curricular is gradually disappearing in modern educational practice and the coordination and integration of all the experiences of the pupils' intellectual, social, moral, emotional and physical abilities has become the object of the persistent efforts of the school. Co-curricular activities, as the name implies, are those, not directly related with the prescribed curriculum and include; sports, athletics, scouting, cubing, various hobbies, excursions literary societies, dramatics, debates etc. to bring

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social and physical adjustments in the child. The basic idea behind such activities in educational institutions is the building up of the student character and personality as well as training of their mind that may help / facilitate academic achievements of the child. However, over the years it was noticed that most of the private schools in NWFP (Pakistan) were paying over emphasis to academic activities for the sake of achieving better percentage of the passed candidates and winning award and ranks than in organizing suitable activities to improve the personality and the talents of the students. This shift in mindset has led to a new approach giving special attention to the studies, and ignoring co curricular activities altogether. Whereas, it is believed that unless balancing both the curricular and co curricular activities is done the very purpose of education would be left unrealized.

Background of the Research

A pilot survey to gauge the real time state of affair regarding co-curricular activities in schools located at Peshawar and surroundings was conducted and most of the private schools were found lacking out door activities such as sports, excursions and scouting altogether. The whole spectrum of the school was found confined to the teaching of the subjects of the curriculum and the social activities of the pupils were looked upon as encroachment to academic culture and mere side shows. School time tables of both public and private sectors were found missing Physical training & sports period, specified funds allocations and even grounds. The attitude amongst the headmasters and teachers of many schools was found in favour of academic activities only and co-curricular activities were considered as waste of time and efforts hence of no use. Whereas, in some of public schools the response was opposite and co-curricular activities were found being appropriately patronized. The dichotomy and

diversion in approach and attitude towards co-curricular activities prompted for detailed inquiry to ascertain underlying causes that led to the fomenting of such a mind set. The study was also aimed to measure the true perceptions prevailing amongst the stake-holders, including students, teachers and the parents, in favour of co-curricular activities or otherwise.

Research Methodology

The study was exploratory and descriptive in nature that was based upon the data collected through questionnaires served to the teachers and students of ten schools including; five public and five of private sector. The study sample, selected through random sampling, consists of those students of age between 12-16 years who take active part in different co-curriculum activities. Two different sets of questionnaires (one each for students and teachers) were designed and administered to know the “Effects of co curricular activities on the academic achievement of the child”. In each of the sampled school ten students and ten teachers were chosen purposely for the research study. Data was collected arranged and tabulated, interpreted and statistically tested before arriving any finding or conclusion.

Findings

1. Generally; there is a positive attitude found prevailing amongst the sample units and both category of respondents are found taking interest in co-curricular activities to their students. However, 60% of private schools and 40% of public schools are found lacking physical infrastructure essential for sports and physical activities.

2. It is discovered that 73% students are taking part in co-curricular activities in one way or the other. Students, studying in Schools lacking physical infrastructure, were found taking active participation in debates, quiz competitions, and in door hobbies.
3. 95% of teachers are in favour of in participating of students in co-curricular activities. And 75% teachers acknowledge positive effects of co-curricular upon academic performance of their students whereas, 15% perceived negative effects on academics. However, 100% teachers were of the opinion that these activities have some positive effect on students' physical and mental growth.
4. It is found that in teachers' opinion 57% of students who participate in co-curricular activities do their home work regularly and properly.
5. 75% of teachers say that the students who are taking part in co-curricular activities refrain from unhealthy activities and spend their time in sports and other co-curricular activities. They were also of the opinion that students evading co-curricular activities are found on one pretext or the other in negative and unhealthy habits.
6. The study also discovered that 90% of the teachers motivate, encourage and give opportunity to those students who are capable of taking part in inter district and provincial tournament and capacity to bring good name to the institution.
7. 93% of the teachers agree that the students who are taking active part in co-curricular activities also have more stamina to bear hardships, accommodate others difference of opinion and potential adjustments to social changes.

8. 82% of the students believe that co-curricular activities facilitate their academic performance and they should be provided with the teachers having specialization in various set of curricular activities.
9. The study found that 30% schools have one period reserved for such activities and 10 % have two periods in a week.
10. It was also found that only 60 % schools provide some portion of funds required for the arrangement of co-curricular activities whereas, in 40 % schools administration does not lend any financial support in arranging such activities.
11. In 60 % schools teacher arrange/ control competitions and other such activities to ensure zero error and don't allow students any initiative to develop their administrative skills. In 10% schools students are given liberty to plan and organize the events and teachers only oversee and guide them when needed.
12. According to the responses of students 88 % of the students give proper time to their studies and participation in co-curricular activities does not affect their study schedule.
13. Research found that 80% of students having active participation in co-curricular activities have also demonstrated good academic performance in their annual examination as well.

Conclusions

The research study, after going through a detailed analysis, has deduced following conclusions:

- Most of the schools have the facilities of co-curricular activities of one kind or the other and the schools also provide their students opportunities to participate in them.

- Substantial part of public and private schools does not hold appropriate infrastructure especially sports grounds. However, gravity of the deficiency in private sector is more than the public.
- Co-curricular activities do not obstruct in academic out put rather it facilitates in increasing their knowledge and develops competitive spirit that foster students resolve in examinations.
- Students taking part in co-curricular activities mostly carry healthy habits and appreciable potential of social adjustment.
- Most of the schools don't have specialized teacher specific to different set of activities. However, most of the public schools do have physical instructor, irrespective of whether these are in possession of physical infrastructure/ sports grounds or otherwise.
- Very less time is specifically reserved for sports or other co-curricular activities in school.
- It is found that co-curricular activities do not affect badly on their academic performance and while engaged in such activities they also pay full time and attention to their studies.

The study concluded that in wholesome the overall effect of co-curricular activities on the student's academic performance and personality development is positive. And it compliments the academic activities in attainment of education's main goal of bringing change in student's behavior.

Recommendations

The study recommends the following:

- All the schools irrespective of their public and private status should arrange to provide co-curricular activities to their students.
- Government and regulatory authorities must ensure that the schools do have the appropriate infrastructure for sports and other co-curricular activities before they are issued with the permission to run their classes.
- School should provide proper periods for such activities in their time tables and at least three periods per weeks for such activities should be reserved.
- These activities should be carried out by trained teachers. There should be more trained teachers for these activities and teachers tasked to supervise these activities should have complete knowledge about such activities.
- Efforts should be made to provide all activities suiting to the choice or attitude of the student. All the students should be given equal opportunities to participate in such activities.
- The students should be encouraged and motivated to participate in such activities because as the conclusion shows that the students taking part in co-curricular activities become social and yield better academic performance.