



Attitude Towards Physical Activities Among Senior Secondary Students: A District-Level Study of Haryana

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Abstract

Physical activity is a vital component of holistic education, contributing significantly to adolescents' physical fitness, psychological well-being, social adjustment, and overall personality development. Despite its widely acknowledged benefits, participation in physical activities among senior secondary students has shown a declining trend due to academic pressure, sedentary lifestyles, technological engagement, and socio-cultural constraints. The present study investigates the attitude towards physical activities among senior secondary students in Fatehabad district of Haryana. Employing a descriptive survey design, data were collected from a sample of 1000 students studying in Classes XI and XII across government and private schools using stratified random sampling. A standardized Children's Attitude Towards Physical Activity Inventory was administered to assess cognitive, affective, and behavioral components of attitude. Statistical analysis using mean, standard deviation, t-test, and ANOVA revealed that students generally possessed a moderately positive attitude towards physical activities. However, significant differences were observed based on gender, rural–urban background, school facilities, and level of sports participation. Male and urban students demonstrated significantly higher attitude scores than female and rural students. Moreover, students studying in schools with adequate physical education facilities and those regularly participating in sports exhibited the most favorable attitudes. The findings highlight the need for gender-sensitive, infrastructure-supported, and student-centered physical education programmes to promote sustained participation and lifelong engagement in physical activity among adolescents.

Keywords: Physical Activities, Attitude, Senior Secondary Students, Physical Education, Haryana

1. Introduction

Education in the twenty-first century is no longer confined to the transmission of academic knowledge alone; rather, it emphasizes the holistic development of learners encompassing physical, mental, emotional, social, and moral dimensions. Within this comprehensive educational framework, physical education occupies a central position, as it directly contributes to physical fitness, emotional balance, stress management, social interaction, discipline, and character formation. Adolescence, particularly the senior secondary stage (16–18 years), is a critical developmental phase during which attitudes, habits, and lifestyle choices become relatively stable and enduring.

In the Indian context, senior secondary students face intense academic pressure due to board examinations, competitive entrance tests, and career-oriented expectations. As a consequence, academic subjects often receive disproportionate emphasis, while physical education is perceived as secondary or non-essential. The rapid expansion of digital technology has further compounded this issue by promoting sedentary lifestyles characterized by excessive screen time, reduced outdoor play, and limited physical movement. These factors have contributed to declining participation in physical activities and increasing health concerns among adolescents.

Attitude plays a crucial role in shaping behavior, particularly in the domain of physical activity. A positive attitude toward physical activities enhances motivation, enjoyment, and willingness to participate, whereas a negative attitude often results in avoidance, low participation, and sedentary habits. Understanding students' attitudes is therefore essential for explaining participation patterns and designing effective interventions.

Haryana presents a distinctive socio-cultural context for the study of physical education. While the state has produced numerous sportspersons and possesses a strong sporting heritage, disparities exist across districts in terms of infrastructure, gender norms, and institutional support. Fatehabad district, with its mixed rural–urban composition, varying socio-economic conditions, and diverse school environments, provides a meaningful setting for examining how contextual factors influence students' attitudes toward physical activities.

2. Review of Related Literature

A substantial body of research underscores the importance of attitude as a determinant of participation in physical activities. Studies conducted at national and international levels consistently report that students with positive attitudes toward physical education are more likely to engage in regular physical activity, demonstrate higher fitness levels, and maintain healthier lifestyles.

Indian studies have highlighted the adverse impact of academic pressure on adolescents' participation in physical activities, particularly at the senior secondary level. Examination-oriented education systems often marginalize physical education, leading to reduced time allocation and diminished student interest. Gender differences are frequently reported, with boys exhibiting more favorable attitudes toward sports and physical activities than girls. Socio-cultural expectations, safety concerns, and limited encouragement often restrict girls' participation, thereby shaping less positive attitudes.

Research also indicates significant rural–urban disparities in attitudes toward physical activities. Urban students generally benefit from better sports infrastructure, trained teachers, and exposure to organized competitions, resulting in more positive experiences and attitudes. In contrast, rural schools often face infrastructural limitations, lack of equipment, and insufficient institutional support, which negatively influence students' engagement.

The literature further emphasizes the role of school facilities and teacher behavior in attitude formation. Adequate infrastructure, supportive teaching methods, and inclusive practices foster enjoyment and motivation, while neglect, overcrowding, and excessive emphasis on competition discourage participation. These findings provide a strong conceptual foundation for examining attitude toward physical activities among senior secondary students in Fatehabad district.

3. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the present study were:

1. To assess the overall attitude towards physical activities among senior secondary students.
2. To examine gender differences in attitudes toward physical activities.
3. To compare the attitudes of rural and urban senior secondary students.
4. To analyze the influence of school physical education facilities on students' attitudes.

5. To study the relationship between level of sports participation and attitude toward physical activities.

4. Methodology

4.1 Research Design

The study adopted a **descriptive survey method**, which is appropriate for assessing attitudes and perceptions of a large population.

4.2 Population and Sample

The population comprised senior secondary students (Classes XI and XII) studying in government and private schools of Fatehabad district, Haryana. A sample of **1000 students** was selected using **stratified random sampling**, ensuring proportional representation of gender and rural–urban locality.

Category	Number of Students
Boys	500
Girls	500
Rural	500
Urban	500
Total	1000

Table 1: Distribution of Sample

4.3 Tool Used

A standardized **Children’s Attitude Towards Physical Activity Inventory** was used to measure students’ attitudes across cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions. Higher scores indicated a more positive attitude toward physical activities.

4.4 Statistical Techniques

Mean, standard deviation, **t-test**, and **analysis of variance (ANOVA)** were employed for data analysis.

5. Results and Discussion

5.1 Overall Attitude Towards Physical Activities

N	Mean	SD
1000	72.45	8.62

Table 2: Overall Attitude Scores of Senior Secondary Students

The mean attitude score indicates that senior secondary students possessed a **moderately positive attitude** toward physical activities. This suggests that while students recognize the importance of physical activity, their engagement may be constrained by external factors such as academic pressure and limited opportunities.

5.2 Gender-wise Comparison

Gender	N	Mean	SD	t-value
Boys	500	75.20	8.10	
Girls	500	69.70	8.55	9.12*

*Significant at 0.05 level

Table 3: Gender-wise Comparison of Attitude Scores

The results reveal a significant difference between boys and girls, with boys demonstrating more positive attitudes. Greater social encouragement, cultural acceptance, and opportunities for boys to participate in sports may explain this difference.

5.3 Rural–Urban Comparison

Locality	N	Mean	SD	t-value
Rural	500	70.10	8.40	

Urban	500	74.80	8.20	8.35*
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*Significant at 0.05 level

Table 4: Rural–Urban Comparison of Attitude Scores

Urban students exhibited significantly higher attitude scores, likely due to better infrastructure, exposure to organized sports, and institutional support.

5.4 Influence of School Facilities

Level of Facilities	N	Mean	SD
Adequate	350	77.30	7.60
Moderate	350	72.10	8.20
Inadequate	300	67.80	8.90

Table 5: Attitude Scores Based on School Facilities

ANOVA results revealed significant differences among groups, indicating that availability and quality of facilities strongly influence students' attitudes.

5.5 Sports Participation and Attitude

Participation Level	N	Mean	SD
Regular	300	78.50	7.40
Occasional	400	72.90	8.10
Non-participants	300	66.40	9.00

Table 6: Attitude Scores by Level of Sports Participation

Students who regularly participated in sports showed the most positive attitudes, reinforcing the reciprocal relationship between participation and attitude formation.

6. Conclusion

The present study concludes that senior secondary students in Fatehabad district generally possess a moderately positive attitude toward physical activities. However, attitude is significantly influenced by gender, rural–urban background, school facilities, and level of sports participation. Male and urban students demonstrate more favorable attitudes than female and rural students. Adequate physical education infrastructure and regular sports participation emerge as strong determinants of positive attitude.

To promote sustained engagement in physical activities, schools must prioritize physical education by improving infrastructure, allocating adequate time, and adopting inclusive, student-centered teaching approaches. Addressing gender disparities and rural–urban inequalities is essential for fostering a physically active, healthy, and well-balanced adolescent population. The findings hold important implications for teachers, school administrators, and policymakers aiming to strengthen physical education at the senior secondary level.

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