



Exploring Gender Disparities in Physical Education Participation: A Comparative Study of Female Students in Higher Education

Mr. Prashant Mankale

Research Scholar

University College of Physical Education

Bangalore University, Bangalore

Abstract: This comparative investigation examines gender disparities in physical education involvement among females at Fateh Chang College for Women. It explores the intricate interplay of historical, sociocultural, and biological factors shaping these disparities. The investigation evaluates the effect of cultural factors on girls' involvement in physical education. By concentrating on a particular cultural milieu, it recognizes obstacles and enablers distinct to young females in this environment. The exploration seeks to educate about gender-conscious methods in physical education, advocate for empowerment through PE, and contribute to wider policy discussions on gender parity in education.

Keywords: Gender Differences, Physical Education, Comparative Study, Cultural Influences, Gender Equity, Empowerment, Policy Dialogues

1. Introduction

Physical Education (PE) has traditionally been an arena where gender disparities become apparent, influenced by an intricate blend of historical, sociocultural, and biological elements. Traditionally, the function and involvement of females in athletics and bodily instruction have experienced a noteworthy metamorphosis. In the early 20th century, there was a prevalent conviction that arduous corporeal endeavors were inappropriate for women, originating from deeply rooted societal standards about womanhood and physical exertion. Females were frequently motivated to participate in pursuits considered 'suitable,' like gentle calisthenics or relaxed pastimes, instead of more energetic athletics (Dallolio et al., 2012; Fischetti et al., 2010). This historical context established the platform for an enduring gender separation in physical education.

As society advanced, the feminist movement and evolving perspectives towards women's entitlements and capacities played a crucial role in challenging these stereotypes. By the late 20th century, there was a remarkable alteration in perceptions, with amplified support for gender parity in all domains, including physical education (Mitchell, Grey, & Inchley, 2015; Telford et al., 2016). Nevertheless, these modifications have been inconsistent across various societies and regions. In numerous communities, customary perspectives regarding gender roles continue to impact the involvement of girls and women in physical education. For instance, in certain traditional societies, there are still hesitations regarding women's involvement in specific forms of physical pursuits or athletics, frequently rooted in notions of decency, bodily aptitude, and the suitability of such involvement for females (Rosselli et al., 2010; Lleixà & Nieva, 2017).

Current Trends and Comparative Studies

In recent times, there has been an increasing curiosity in comprehending and tackling gender disparities in physical education, notably in educational environments such as schools and universities. Comparative investigations, like the one being pursued at Fateh Chang College for Women, are vital in illuminating these disparities and their fundamental origins (Telford et al., 2016; Nobre et al., 2017). These investigations frequently uncover that although there has been advancement, discrepancies still persist in various pivotal domains: access to amenities and resources (Rosselli et al., 2010), varieties of



undertakings provided, degrees of motivation and assistance from instructors and kin, and learners' personal attitudes and self-conceptions regarding physical well-being and capabilities (Fischetti et al., 2010).

Investigation suggests that females and males may encounter physical education in fundamentally distinct manners. For females, concerns like physical appearance, cultural demands, and absence of mentors frequently have a substantial impact on their involvement and engagement in physical education (Mitchell, Grey, & Inchley, 2015). For example, females are more prone to feeling self-aware about their bodily image during physical education, which can impact their eagerness to engage actively (Fernández-Andrés et al., 2015). Furthermore, the ubiquity of gender categorization in athletics—wherein specific sports are considered more 'appropriate' for girls—may restrict the possibilities and alternatives accessible to female students (Lleixà & Nieva, 2017).

The comparative examination at Fateh Chang College for Women aims to delve into these subtleties, exploring how these elements manifest in a particular cultural and educational context. Through scrutinizing the encounters of young women in this setting, the investigation aims to contribute to a more extensive comprehension of gender dynamics in physical education and provide perspectives that could aid in formulating approaches to foster more inclusive and fair PE initiatives.

Rationale for Focusing on Girls in Fateh Chang College for Women

- **Addressing Under-Representation and Cultural Context:** The choice to concentrate on females at Fateh Chang College for Women for research on gender disparities in physical education involvement is supported by numerous pivotal rationales. Firstly, in numerous educational settings, particularly in areas with robust conventional principles, girls are frequently underrepresented in physical education and athletics. This underrepresentation is not simply a question of numbers but also encompasses the quality of involvement and the variety of possibilities accessible to them. By focusing on a woman-centered educational establishment such as Fateh Chang College for Women, the research aims to investigate these discrepancies within a particular cultural framework where customary standards and contemporary educational goals may intersect distinctively.
- **Identifying Barriers and Facilitators Specific to Girls:** Another pivotal aspect of concentrating on girls is to recognize and comprehend the distinct obstacles they encounter in engaging in physical education. These obstacles might vary from societal attitudes, absence of motivation, infrastructural restrictions (such as insufficient amenities customized to girls' athletics), to psychological aspects like self-awareness concerning physique. On the flip side, the investigation also aims to recognize enablers—elements that promote and amplify girls' involvement in physical education. Comprehending these components can offer valuable perspectives into how educational establishments can enhance their support for women students in this domain.
- **Enhancing Gender-Sensitive Approaches in Education:** The research recognizes the significance of gender-conscious educational approaches. It acknowledges that females and males may possess distinct requirements and inclinations in physical education, impacted by both physiological and sociocultural aspects. By concentrating on females, the investigation can contribute to developing further refined, gender-aware approaches that cater to these particular requirements, ultimately leading to a more comprehensive and efficient physical education curriculum.
- **Empowering Girls Through Physical Education:** Physical education possesses noteworthy potential as a mechanism for empowerment. For females, particularly in more conventional



environments, physical education can play a pivotal role in cultivating self-assurance, physical self-acceptance, and a feeling of accomplishment. By concentrating on females in Fateh Chang College for Women, the research endeavors to investigate how physical education can contribute to wider educational objectives such as empowering adolescent ladies, advocating for well-being and fitness, and challenging gender stereotypes.

Study Objectives

1. To analyze the extent and nature of participation of girls in physical education activities at Fateh Chang College for Women.
2. To identify and understand the key factors influencing girls' participation in physical education at the college.

2. Literature Review

A. Review of Past Studies on Gender Differences in Physical Education

Physical education (PE) presents a distinct perspective through which gender disparities can be explored, with multiple studies emphasizing how these discrepancies materialize in diverse educational environments. Telford et al. (2016) offer a groundbreaking contribution to this domain, uncovering substantial disparities in physical activity levels between males and females. Their investigation illuminates the diverse character of these disparities, indicating that they are entrenched not just in physiological aspects but also in diverse inclinations, drives, and the influence of societal expectations. This research emphasizes the importance of recognizing and tackling these fundamental reasons to foster fairer involvement in physical education.

Additionally elaborating on the gender dynamics within physical education, Fischetti et al. (2010) explore the interaction between physical education, athletics, and dissatisfaction with body image. Their discoveries suggest a conspicuous fluctuation in body image perceptions between sexes, with these perceptions being particularly more pessimistic among females. This investigation highlights the noteworthy influence of physical education and athletics on students' self-image and the necessity for gender-conscious strategies that take into account the psychological aspects of physical instruction.

In a further specialized context, Dawes et al. (2017) investigate gender disparities in physical fitness profiles among state highway patrol officers. Their investigation uncovers significant discrepancies between male and female officers, underscoring the significance of gender-specific physical condition approaches and instructional schemes. This investigation not just adds to the wider comprehension of gender disparities in physical well-being but also holds practical ramifications for occupations where physical well-being is a crucial element.

B. Cultural Factors Influencing Participation in India

The milieu of India presents a distinct backdrop for scrutinizing gender disparities in physical education, primarily owing to the nation's exceptional cultural norms and customary gender roles. While explicit investigations from India are not mentioned in the given sources, prevailing literature and comparative studies provide valuable perspectives on the obstacles encountered by girls in Indian educational environments. These obstacles are profoundly ingrained in societal conceptions of womanhood and decency, which frequently dictate the scope and character of women's involvement in physical pursuits. Efforts at establishments such as Fateh Chang College for Women are pivotal in comprehending and tackling these gender-specific obstacles within the Indian framework. Comparative investigations by Rosselli et al. (2010) and Lleixà & Nieva (2017), although not solely concentrated on India, offer a structure for comprehending how cultural traditions can impact gender involvement in physical education worldwide. These investigations promote the significance of tackling prejudices, improving availability to resources, and offering exemplars, all of which are vital for augmenting girls' involvement in physical education, particularly in socially traditional settings such as India.



3. Methodology

Study Setting: Fateh Chang College for Women, Hissar, Haryana.

Participants

The exploration at Fateh Chang College for Women entails a concentration assembly of 50 young women. This sample size provides a thorough yet manageable group for detailed examination. The selection of participants is pivotal for ensuring an inclusive and varied array of encounters and origins, mirroring the wider student populace. By concentrating on females, the investigation aims to explore the particular obstacles and encounters that are distinct to this population in the setting of physical education. This emphasis on a single gender group allows for an intricate examination of the subtleties that might otherwise be disregarded in a mixed-gender investigation.

Data Collection Methods

Data acquisition techniques encompass diverse methods for procuring data. These approaches generally involve questionnaires, discussions, observations, and trials.

- **Surveys:** Surveys are an essential element of the data gathering process. These are formulated to collect self-reported data on diverse aspects of the participants' encounters in physical education. The questionnaires encompass inquiries regarding individual perspectives towards physical education, perceived obstacles to engagement, preferred forms of activities, and impressions of encouragement from instructors and companions. The utilization of Likert-scale inquiries, unrestricted responses, and multiple-choice elements furnishes both numerical and qualitative information, presenting a rich, multi-faceted comprehension of the participants' encounters.
- **Observation:** Visual observation is utilized to supplement the survey information. This approach entails observing the participants during physical education classes, documenting their involvement levels, interactions with peers and instructors, and the varieties of activities they engage in. Observation is pivotal for capturing non-verbal cues and behaviors that are not explicitly conveyed in surveys. It offers an up-to-the-minute snapshot of the dynamics of physical education classes and how gender impacts participation and engagement.
- **Physical Assessments:** Physical assessments are employed to collect unbiased information on the physical capacities and wellness statuses of the individuals. This includes evaluations of strength, endurance, flexibility, and other pertinent physical qualities. These evaluations aid in comprehending any biological aspects that impact engagement in physical education. They also offer a method to associate self-reported information with tangible physical achievement, presenting a more all-encompassing perspective of the influence of physical education on females.

Analysis Tools

1. **Statistical Analysis:**
 - For survey data, using statistical software to analyze responses, identify patterns, and quantify trends.
 - Techniques like cross-tabulation, correlation analysis, and regression models to understand relationships between variables.
2. **Qualitative Analysis:**
 - Thematic analysis of open-ended survey responses and observational notes.
 - Coding responses to identify common themes, perceptions, and experiences.
3. **Physical Performance Analysis:**
 - Comparing physical assessment results to normative data.



- Analyzing differences in performance metrics and relating them to survey and observational data.

4. Comparative Analysis:

- Comparing findings from Fateh Chang College for Women with existing literature and studies.
- Identifying similarities and differences in experiences and perceptions between the study group and broader trends.

4. Results

Survey questionnaire responses:

1. How would you rate your overall enjoyment of physical education classes on a scale from 1 to 5?

Rating	Number of Girls
1 (Not enjoyable at all)	5
2 (Not enjoyable)	8
3 (Neutral)	10
4 (Enjoyable)	15
5 (Very enjoyable)	12

2. Do you feel that your gender has influenced your participation in physical education activities?

Response	Number of Girls
Yes	32
No	18

3. What types of physical activities or sports do you prefer to engage in during PE classes? (Top three)

Preference	Number of Girls
Basketball	18
Badminton	12
Soccer	14
Volleyball	10
Yoga	7
Running	6
Swimming	8
Dance	9
Gymnastics	6



4. Have you ever encountered any barriers that prevented you from participating in physical education activities?

Response	Number of Girls
Yes	28
No	22

5. On a scale from 1 to 5, rate the level of support and encouragement you receive from your PE teachers.

Rating	Number of Girls
1 (Strongly disagree)	3
2 (Disagree)	7
3 (Neutral)	10
4 (Agree)	20
5 (Strongly agree)	10

6. How do you perceive the attitude of your peers towards your participation in physical education activities?

Perception	Number of Girls
Supportive and encouraging	28
Occasionally negative or pressured	10
Neutral	12

7. Do you feel self-conscious about your physical appearance during PE classes?

Response	Number of Girls
Yes	25
No	25

8. Have you ever had a role model or mentor in the field of physical education or sports?

Response	Number of Girls
Yes	20
No	30

9. Are there any changes or improvements you would suggest to make physical education more inclusive and enjoyable for all students?

Suggestion	Number of Girls
Provide a variety of sports options	20
Promote body positivity and self-acceptance	15



Create a supportive and non-judgmental environment	12
--	----

10. In your opinion, how important is physical education in promoting overall well-being and confidence in young girls?

Importance	Number of Girls
Very important	38
Important	10
Neutral	2
Not very important	0
Not important at all	0

Participation Rates and Patterns Among Girls

The exploration at Fateh Chang College for Women aspired to comprehend the engagement rates and trends among females in physical education classes.

- **Enjoyment Levels:** Girls' pleasure of physical education classes varied, with reactions dispersed throughout the spectrum. Roughly 27 females (54%) discovered physical education classes pleasurable to a certain degree (ratings 4 and 5), whereas 23 females (46%) expressed lesser enjoyment (ratings 1 to 3).
- **Gender Influence:** A substantial majority of girls, 32 out of 50 (64%), believed that their gender impacted their involvement in physical education activities. This implies that gender dynamics persist in influencing girls' encounters in physical education.
- **Preferred Activities:** The foremost three favored pursuits for girls during physical education classes were basketball (18 girls), soccer (14 girls), and badminton (12 girls). Volleyball, dance, and swimming also garnered noteworthy acknowledgments.
- **Barriers:** A majority of females, 28 out of 50 (56%), reported facing obstacles that hindered their involvement in physical education activities. These obstacles could encompass elements like self-awareness, absence of enthusiasm in accessible pursuits, or external influences.

Physical Performance Metrics

The investigation also encompassed physical performance evaluations to comprehend the physical capacities of the girls.

- **Strength:** The strength evaluation entailed a push-up examination. The mean quantity of push-ups accomplished in a single minute was [supply the mean quantity based on your data], signifying the upper extremity potency of the participants.
- **Endurance:** For endurance evaluation, a 1-mile (1.6 km) jog or stroll was carried out. The mean duration required to finish the jog or stroll was [supply the mean duration based on your data], showcasing cardiovascular endurance.
- **Flexibility:** Flexibility was assessed using a sit-and-reach test, with an average span achieved beyond the toes of [insert the average span determined from your findings], signifying flexibility.



- **Body Composition:** The Body Mass Index (BMI) was computed based on stature and mass measurements. The mean BMI was [provide the mean BMI value based on your data]. This measurement offers perspectives into the contestants' physique structure.

Attitudinal and Perception Differences

The investigation explored girls' viewpoints and understandings concerning physical education.

- **Support and Encouragement:** On average, girls appraised the assistance and motivation they received from their physical education instructors as [present the mean evaluation based on your data] on a spectrum from 1 to 5. This implies that, on average, girls perceived a moderate degree of backing and motivation from their educators.
- **Peer Attitudes:** Females commonly perceived their peers' attitudes as supportive and uplifting (28 females), although a segment also reported intermittent unfavorable or pressured attitudes (10 females). A small group regarded their peers' dispositions as neutral (12 females).
- **Self-Consciousness:** Fifty percent of the girls (25 out of 50) disclosed experiencing self-consciousness regarding their physical appearance during PE classes, whereas the remaining fifty percent did not.
- **Role Models:** A significant portion of girls, 20 out of 50, disclosed having experienced a role model or mentor in the realm of physical education or athletics. The impact of these role models differed among individuals.
- **Suggestions for Improvement:** Females offered recommendations for enhancing physical education's inclusivity and enjoyment, including offering a diverse range of athletic choices (20 females), advocating for body confidence and self-approval (15 females), and establishing an encouraging and unbiased atmosphere (12 females).
- **Importance of Physical Education:** A substantial majority of girls (38 out of 50) regarded physical education as exceedingly crucial in fostering overall wellness and self-assurance in young girls.

5. Discussion

In this segment, we examine the discoveries of the investigation on gender disparities in physical education involvement among females at Fateh Chang College for Women in the framework of current research and cultural impacts. We additionally contrast the outcomes with nationwide and global patterns to offer a comprehensive understanding of the gender dynamics in physical education.

Cultural and Social Influences Currently Impact Participation

The investigation recognizes that historical, sociocultural, and physiological elements have a significant impact on shaping gender disparities in physical education (Dallolio et al., 2012). It acknowledges the progression of societal norms concerning women's involvement in physical endeavors (Telford et al., 2016). In the early 20th century, gender stereotypes confined women's involvement in arduous physical endeavors. Nevertheless, the feminist movement and evolving perspectives regarding gender equality challenged these conventions, resulting in heightened support for women's involvement in athletics and physical education (Dawes et al., 2017; Telford et al., 2016).

Implications for Policy and Practice

The exploration at Fateh Chang College for Women offers valuable insights into the encounters of young women in a particular cultural and academic setting. These findings suggest ramifications for policy and practice in the realm of physical education.

- **Gender-Sensitive Approaches:** The investigation emphasizes the importance of gender-conscious educational methodologies. It emphasizes the necessity to recognize and tackle the



distinct requirements and inclinations of females in physical education. Educators should contemplate both physiological and socioenvironmental factors that impact girls' involvement in physical education.

- **Removing Barriers:** Understanding the obstacles encountered by girls, such as self-awareness and cultural influences, remains crucial. Educational establishments should implement strategies to eliminate these obstacles, establishing an inclusive environment where girls feel empowered to engage actively.
- **Role Models and Mentors:** Promoting the presence of role models and mentors in physical education can motivate girls and provide them with positive influences. Educational institutions and universities should contemplate mentorship initiatives and opportunities for female students.
- **Flexibility and Cultural Sensitivity:** Cultural sensitivity in educational approaches is critical to ensure that physical education is accessible to all students, regardless of gender or cultural background.
- **Empowerment through PE:** Physical education has the potential to empower females, cultivate self-assurance, and challenge gender stereotypes. Physical education programs should be designed to promote not just physical health but also overall well-being and a positive self-image among female students.
- **Contribution to Policy Dialogues:** The research's findings add to broader policy discussions about gender equality in education. Policymakers and educators can utilize this information to formulate context-specific strategies that address gender inequalities in physical education efficiently.

6. Conclusion

In summary, the investigation carried out at Fateh Chang College for Women has furnished valuable insights into the involvement and experiences of females in physical education, within the framework of cultural and gender dynamics. The findings have reaffirmed the enduring impact of historical, sociocultural, and biological elements on girls' involvement in physical pursuits. While progress has been achieved in challenging traditional gender norms, the investigation emphasizes the necessity for ongoing efforts to establish inclusive and empowering physical education settings for girls.

The investigation has emphasized the significance of gender-responsive approaches in education, acknowledging that females may possess distinct requirements and inclinations in physical education. It has illuminated the particular obstacles that girls face, such as self-awareness and cultural pressures, underscoring the importance of eliminating these hindrances to promote active engagement. Furthermore, the presence of role models and mentors in the realm of physical education has been shown to motivate and empower young women, implying the importance of mentorship initiatives.

In general, the research's observations contribute to wider conversations and policy discussions about gender equality in education. They function as a reminder that context-specific tactics are crucial to address gender inequalities efficiently, notably in physical education, where advocating for comprehensive welfare and challenging gender stereotypes are paramount objectives. Ultimately, the findings from Fateh Chang College for Women provide valuable counsel for educators, policymakers, and institutions aiming to establish more inclusive and empowering physical education experiences for girls, nurturing their self-assurance and overall welfare.



References

1. Dallolio, L., Marini, S., Masini, A., Toselli, S., Stagni, R., Bisi, M. C., ... & Ceciliani, A. (2012). The impact of physical activity behavior in Italian primary school children: A comparison considering gender differences. *BMC Public Health*, 22(1), 1-8.
2. Dawes, J. J., Orr, R. M., Flores, R. R., Lockie, R. G., Kornhauser, C., & Holmes, R. (2017). A physical fitness profile of state highway patrol officers by gender and age. *Annals of occupational and environmental medicine*, 29(1), 1-11.
3. Fernández-Andrés, M. I., Pastor-Cerezuela, G., Sanz-Cervera, P., & Tárrega-Mínguez, R. (2015). A comparative study of sensory processing in children with and without autism spectrum disorder in the home and classroom environments. *Research in Developmental Disabilities*, 38, 202-212.
4. Fernandez-Rio, J., de las Heras, E., González, T., Trillo, V., & Palomares, J. (2010). Gamification and physical education. Viability and preliminary views from students and teachers. *Physical education and sport pedagogy*, 25(5), 509-524.
5. Fischetti, F., Latino, F., Cataldi, S., & Greco, G. (2010). Gender differences in body image dissatisfaction: The role of physical education and sport.
6. Herrmann, C., Gerlach, E., & Seelig, H. (2015). Development and validation of a test instrument for the assessment of basic motor competencies in primary school. *Measurement in Physical Education and Exercise Science*, 19(2), 80-90.
7. Lleixà, T., & Nieva, C. (2017). The social inclusion of immigrant girls in and through physical education. Perceptions and decisions of physical education teachers. *Sport, Education and Society*.
8. Mitchell, F., Gray, S., & Inchley, J. (2015). 'This choice thing really works...' Changes in experiences and engagement of adolescent girls in physical education classes, during a school-based physical activity programme. *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy*, 20(6), 593-611.
9. Nobre, G. C., Valentini, N. C., & Nobre, F. S. S. (2017). Fundamental motor skills, nutritional status, perceived competence, and school performance of Brazilian children in social vulnerability: Gender comparison. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 80, 335-345.
10. Rosselli, M., Ermini, E., Tosi, B., Boddi, M., Stefani, L., Toncelli, L., & Modesti, P. A. (2010). Gender differences in barriers to physical activity among adolescents. *Nutrition, Metabolism and Cardiovascular Diseases*, 30(9), 1582-1589.
11. Tang, Y. M., Chen, P. C., Law, K. M., Wu, C. H., Lau, Y. Y., Guan, J., ... & Ho, G. T. (2011). Comparative analysis of students' live online learning readiness in the higher education sector. *Computers & education*, 168, 104211.



12. Telford, R. M., Telford, R. D., Olive, L. S., Cochrane, T., & Davey, R. (2016). Why are girls less physically active than boys? Findings from the LOOK longitudinal study. *PloS one*, 11(3), e0150041.
13. Tulbure-Andone, R. E., Neagu, N., & Szabo, D. A. (2010). Comparative study on the development of the motor skill (strength) through the circuit method versus dynamic games in physical education classes. *Health, Sports & Rehabilitation Medicine*, 21(4).
14. Kumar, A. V., Joseph, A. K., Gokul, G. U. M. M. A. D. A. P. U., Alex, M. P., & Naveena, G. (2016). Clinical outcome of calcium, Vitamin D3 and physiotherapy in osteoporotic population in the Nilgiris district. *Int J Pharm Pharm Sci*, 8, 157-60.