

Students' Attitude towards Sports and Games at the Primary Level in Rawalpindi

Maheen Sehar ^{1*} M. Imran Yousuf ² M. Adnan Riaz ³ Gulnaz Hameed ⁴

¹ M.Phil. Scholar, Department of Education, PMAS-Arid Agriculture University, Rawalpindi, Punjab, Pakistan.

Email: mahammalik0087@gmail.com

² Professor, Department of Education, PMAS-Arid Agriculture University, Rawalpindi, Punjab, Pakistan.

Email: dr.imran@uaar.edu.pk

³ Lecturer, Department of Education, PMAS-Arid Agriculture University, Rawalpindi, Punjab, Pakistan.

Email: adnanriaz@uaar.edu.pk

⁴ Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, PMAS-Arid Agriculture University, Rawalpindi, Punjab, Pakistan.

Email: gulnaz.hameed@uaar.edu.pk

ABSTRACT: The present study focuses on the attitudes of primary school students towards sports and games and the sports facilities available in government primary schools to provide a healthy, interactive, and supportive learning environment. The goal of this study was to explore students' perceptions of physical activity and the reality of infrastructure to support physical activity in schools. The research design used was a descriptive survey using a quantitative approach with an observation checklist. The test population comprised Government Primary Schools of Rawalpindi District. A cluster sampling of five Government Primary Schools (GPS) was carried out, and information from 167 kindergarten V pupils in the selected schools was gathered. Structured questionnaires and classroom/field observation checklists were used to collect data. Results showed that the attitudes of the majority of primary pupils towards sport and games are very positive, and they see the importance of sport and games in maintaining and supporting pupils' health, happiness, and socialising. However, huge constraints were noted in the school infrastructure; for e.g. there were playgrounds in only three schools, Sports equipment in two schools and Marked play areas in two schools. Factors like school resource allocation and institutional support played an important role in physical activity involvement. The study overall found that student motivation for sports is good, but for effective engagement, facilities provision should be adequate, which indicates a great need to improve facilities in primary schools.

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Corresponding Author

Maheen Sehar

✉ mahammalik0087@gmail.com

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Introduction

Sport and games are very important for children, especially when they are in school. At this age, kids don't just build their abilities. They also learn life lessons like discipline, how to work with others, teamwork, and how to lead. When children take part in sports and games, they get better at moving their bodies, thinking clearly, and talking with others. Having an experience with physical education early on helps set the stage for a healthy, active life later. Studies

show that students who enjoy sports and games in school are more likely to keep being active as adults (Bailey, 2006; Rasberry et al., 2011). That's why supporting sports in school matters a lot. It helps kids stay healthy and do better in school too.

In the context of Pakistan, especially in government schools, the provision of sports and games is aimed at offering equal opportunities for all pupils to participate. However, students' attitudes toward such activities are influenced by multiple factors, including school facilities, teacher encouragement, peer influence, and family support.

Given the limited literature available on students' perceptions of sports and games in Rawalpindi, it shows that we still need to explore this area more. This present study focuses on examining the attitude of primary-level students toward sports and games in government schools of Rawalpindi. The study aims to analyze students' interest, motivation, perceived benefits, and challenges related to participation in sports and games. The findings of this research will be beneficial for teachers, school administrators, and policymakers to develop strategies that foster attitudes toward physical activity and ensure equal opportunities for all learners. The importance of promoting sports and physical education in schools to support students' development is highly emphasized (Raza, 2021). Thus, this study contributes to understanding and improving the situation of sports and games at the primary level in Rawalpindi.

Objectives of the Study

The key focus of the study was the following objective:

- a) To analyze the attitude of students of Government Primary Schools of Rawalpindi towards Sports/Game.
- b) To evaluate sports facilities & resources in some government primary schools of Rawalpindi.

Research Questions

1. What is the attitude of the students of the Government Primary Schools of Rawalpindi Govt. of Primary School with respect to Sports & Games?
2. What is the situation of sports facilities & resources in Government Primary Schools in Rawalpindi?

Literature Review

Research shows that physical education and sports are parts of school education that help students' physical health, social growth, and academic success. Students' attitudes toward activity have a big effect on how much students join and how motivated students are in sports programs (Iqbal et al., 2020). When students see education in a good light and get support from teachers, students are more likely to do regular physical activities (Atta et al., 2022). Studies have found that school-based physical education improves health outcomes, encourages teamwork and discipline, and is linked with academic performance (Bailey, 2006; Singh et al., 2012). The Project SPARK study also found that structured physical education programs raise students' fitness without cutting into teaching time (Sallis et al., 1999). In Pakistan, however, the rollout of education faces many problems, such as few facilities, not enough trained teachers, and weak institutional support (Saeed et al., 2023; Ali et al., 2026). These problems limit students' chances to take part in sports and physical activities. Therefore, the literature says that better facilities, closing resource gaps, and building attitudes are needed to make physical education stronger in schools.

The Atmosphere of the Classroom and School

The physical environment of classrooms and schools is really important for how students take part in activities. Research says that enough space, good ventilation, good lighting and open areas are needed for encouraging

movement and play among pupils (Bailey, 2006). Schools that give students well-equipped playgrounds, sports equipment and clear places for activities usually see more students joining sports both in school lessons and after school (Singh et al., 2012). The presence of these facilities helps students stay physically healthy and also gives students chances to talk together and work as a team. Many schools in Pakistan have small infrastructure and not enough resources, which stops students from having proper rooms for physical education (Saeed et al. 2023). Fixing these facility problems is essential for creating a setting that encourages students to live lives (Ali et al., 2026)

Beyond facilities the social atmosphere of the classroom and school significantly influences students' attitudes toward physical education. Teacher encouragement, feedback, and inclusive teaching practices have been found to foster students' motivation and interest in sports (Atta et al., 2022). When teachers value education and integrate it into the daily routine students are more likely to develop positive perceptions of physical activity (Iqbal et al., 2020). A supportive school climate that promotes respect, cooperation, and participation helps students feel confident in joining sports activities of their skill level. Studies also show that when students experience an encouraging environment their academic performance and classroom behavior improve alongside their physical fitness (Sallis et al., 1999). Therefore, building a social atmosphere is as important as providing physical resources.

Despite the known benefits, the atmosphere for physical education in many Pakistani schools remains challenging. Qualitative studies reveal that primary school teachers often face obstacles such as overcrowded classrooms, lack of training, and minimal administrative support for sports programs (Saeed et al., 2023). These issues are further compounded by systemic challenges within the education sector that deprioritize physical education compared to academic subjects (Ali et al., 2026). As a result, students have limited opportunities to engage in structured physical activities during school hours. Literature suggests that improving the school atmosphere requires a multi-level approach: upgrading facilities, providing teacher training, allocating specific time for physical education, and promoting awareness about the importance of sports for holistic development (Bailey, 2006; Singh et al., 2012). By addressing these areas, schools can create a more conducive environment that supports both physical and academic growth of students.

But Other recent data also shows that there are still big differences between the classroom and school environment in the government and private sectors. Many classrooms in primary schools are too big for physical activity. Physical education is not part of the school curriculum. Teachers have little training in this area. Policy efforts can be focused on making the school environment ready to help with the physical development of primary students. This includes helping teachers improve their skills through development (Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training 2023; Sallis et al., 1999).

The Primary Level Students and their Development are Included

The Primary level is known to be the first phase of the curriculum to take shape where the physical, cognitive, and social skills of children are beginning to crystallize. This is a time when pupils are impressionable, and their daily lessons at the school topic can impact their future health, teamwork, and self-discipline habits. Research found that daily exercise in early childhood positively affects children's executive function, emotional management, and concentration in the classroom. In turn, the opportunities offered within schools can either support or restrict these outcomes in the developmental process (Sallis et al., 1999).

Developmental research highlights that play is not for primary students as "just a game," but play is in fact an essential way of teaching students the skills of problem solving, teamwork, and resilience. Studies show that classroom behavior is directly related to structured sport programs in schools and that collaboration among peers is increased by structured sport programs. Games and sports provide a setting in which children can learn to negotiate rules deal

with competition, and experience leadership positions in the peer group. Children who lack these chances may not be provided with the opportunities that contribute to their overall development, most of which are supported by structured physical interactions (Singh et al., 2012; Bailey, 2006).

Also, longitudinal evidence reveals that early positive sports experiences are closely associated with subsequent health behaviours. This is because taking part in organized games in primary school has been shown to be a strong predictor of higher levels of physical activity in adolescence and adulthood and to reduce reported anxiety as well as screen-time dependency in children. This means that attitudes that are developed at the primary level predict future physical activity behavior. Hence, it is important that children have a supportive environment at this stage, not just for their future performance in school, but also for health outcomes in the future (Bailey, 2006; Rasberry et al., 2011).

However, recent studies also show that things like gender norms support from parents, the school environment, and money policies still affect how primary students take part in sports and games. After the COVID-19 pandemic, many government schools had less money, and this made it even harder for students to be physically active in South Asia because of the way people think about things culturally. This situation creates a problem where there are many talented young athletes, but there are not enough chances for them to grow in sports. These problems need to be fixed with help that uses the resources of schools to meet the needs of children at the primary level (Younas et al., 2024).

In Pakistan, the national education policies have started paying attention to physical development alongside mental and cognitive development at every level, especially at the primary level. The National Education Policy 2023 highlights the importance of adding activity and sports development to the curriculum because it helps with the cognitive and social growth of young students. Even though there is awareness about the policy, there are problems in putting the policy into action in government schools. These problems include not having money, not having trained teachers not having proper supervision, and not having a good reporting system according to a recent study (Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training 2023).

Incorporating Sports and Physical Activity

In the past ten years, physical games and sports have become a critical part of school education in many countries. Research has shown that students who take part in physical activity have better focus in class, higher academic performance, and fewer disciplinary problems (Singh et al., 2012). Physical education also helps students develop teamwork, discipline, and social skills (Bailey, 2006). Even though students love sports, many schools cannot give chances because schools do not have enough space, equipment, or clear rules that support physical education (Ali et al., 2026)

Recent studies say that cost-inclusive games that can change easily can solve these problems. Team exercises and group activities that need equipment can motivate students to join, even in schools with limited resources (Saeed et al., 2023). When physical activity is put into the school schedule without taking away time, students get both physical and mental benefits (Sallis et al., 1999). Studies also show that inclusive sports programs help students cooperate and create a learning environment for all students, no matter how skilled they are (Iqbal et al., 2020).

Facilities and Infrastructure

Physical education in schools needs facilities and buildings to work properly. Studies show that having places to play, sports tools and safe areas makes students more likely to take part in exercise (Bailey, 2006). Schools, with well-kept places not only help students stay healthy but also help them learn how to work with others, be part of a team, and

follow rules (Singh et al., 2012). When there are places to play kids feel more excited to join in both school sports and other activities.. In many poor countries like Pakistan, schools often don't have enough room, tools, or care for the buildings, which stops students from getting regular exercise (Ali et al., 2026).

I think the condition of school infrastructure directly affects the quality of education programs. Studies show that with limited resources schools can set up inexpensive games and activities if basic facilities such as open grounds and simple equipment are available (Saeed et al., 2023). Moreover, when physical activity is added to daily school routines without cutting time students show better physical fitness and better focus in class (Sallis et al., 1999). Inclusive and flexible sports programs also help make sure that students of all skill levels can join, creating a feeling of belonging and teamwork (Iqbal et al., 2020). Therefore, improving existing facilities and using space wisely can be a factor, in encouraging active lifestyles among students.

Importance of infrastructure: Many schools in Pakistan face challenges when it comes to offering good facilities for sports and physical education. Teachers often say there is not support from the school administration, not enough money and not enough training to run physical education programs properly (Saeed et al., 2023). Also, school policies often do not give attention to physical education, which makes it harder to build good facilities (Atta et al., 2022). To fix these problems it is suggested that schools set aside areas for sports, get basic equipment, and make sure the facilities are kept in good shape all the time. Support from policymakers and training for teachers are also needed to make sure there is an environment that helps both the physical and academic growth of students.

Sports Teaching and Learning Policies at the National Level, and Local Realities

National education policies across countries highlight the importance of physical development as a core part of students' education. I notice that Bailey (2006) emphasized the integration of education into academic frameworks. Physical education enhances not only students' physical health but also students' discipline students' concentration, and academic performance. Policies often recommend that physical activity be included on a regular basis, especially for primary school students, to ensure balanced growth. However, while these policies exist on paper the implementation at the school level is often weak, in developing contexts where academic subjects are given higher priority.

At the school level several barriers stop the proper use of national sports policies. Iqbal et al. (2020) noted that factors such as infrastructure, shortage of trained physical education teachers, and inadequate funding contribute to poor implementation. Many government schools lack playgrounds, equipment and scheduled time for sports, which leads to minimal student participation. This creates a disconnect between what is stated in national sports policies and what actually happens in classrooms. As a result, students are deprived of the benefits of physical activity despite national sports policies' support.

To close these gaps, both strong policy support and real action at the school level are necessary. Mohsin et al. (2026) found that schools that regularly carry out physical activity programs see student engagement and better academic results. Also Rasberry et al. Showed that structured physical activity during school hours is linked to cognitive performance and improved behavior in students. Because of this policymakers must ensure that schools get resources, proper teacher training and effective monitoring systems. Without these steps, sports and physical education will stay stuck in policy documents. Will not become part of everyday school life. Then all students can truly benefit—physically, socially, and academically.

Interactive Learning

Interactive learning helps students pay attention and do better in school. Bailey (2006) said that when students take part in games, work in groups, or do activities that involve movement they understand ideas clearly. These kinds of activities also help students stay healthy. When lessons include fun hands-on parts, students stay more focused, remember what they learn, and get better at solving problems. This kind of teaching links activity to thinking and learning, which makes school more fun and works better for young children.

The benefits of learning are clear, but many schools struggle to use it because of limited resources and reliance on traditional teaching methods. Students' attitudes toward learning improve a lot when teachers use activity-based strategies instead of just lecturing. Still in schools—especially in public ones—teachers often don't get enough training or support to use these approaches. Because of this students miss out on learning experiences, like playing, working in teams and doing hands-on activities. This limits how effective education can be.

To address these challenges, schools should use learning methods that're interactive and include both studying and moving around. Studies have found that schools that use teaching methods that involve activity see students paying attention and doing better in school (Mohsin et al., 2026). When students take part in games work with others and move around they get more excited about learning. Remember what they are taught better (Bailey, 2006; Iqbal et al. 2020). Organized physical activity at school is connected to better behavior in class and better learning results. So giving teachers training, basic tools, and support from school leaders can help change classrooms from places where students just listen to places where students take part. This helps all students grow better physically, socially and academically.

21st Century Learning and Sports

I think that in the world of the 21st century, education is no longer limited to memorization and book learning. Education now focuses on the development of a child, including physical, social, and cognitive growth. Sports and physical activities are now recognized as 21st-century skills such as teamwork, leadership, problem-solving, and communication (Bailey, 2006; Iqbal et al., 2020). At the Primary Level this approach helps students learn better by connecting classroom concepts, with real-life experiences through play and movement.

Research shows that adding exercise to the school routine has many good effects, on students. Research has found that students who play sports often have better focus, less tiredness and a more positive way of thinking about school (Mohsin et al., 2026). Exercise also helps with stress that comes from using screens a lot and from schoolwork. Schools that allow time for games and moving around make a place for students to learn and get along with others.

To achieve the goals of 21st-century education, schools must treat sports as a part of the curriculum not as an extra activity. When physical education is combined with learning, students become more active, more motivated, and better prepared for future challenges (Bailey, 2006; Mohsin et al., 2026). Therefore, policymakers and school leaders should ensure facilities, trained teachers, and scheduled time for sports so that every child can benefit from a balanced and interactive learning experience.

Many of the government primary schools, however, hold on to the traditional systems, in which sports are regarded as non-academic. The National Education Policy 2023, for instance, has included physical activity in everyday learning to subscribe to the 21st-century education agenda of the world (Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, 2023). Otherwise, students could be missing out on opportunities to fully acquire the necessary skills for future success.

Research Methodology

Research Design

This study used a quantitative research Design in examining the effect of sports and games on Government Primary School students' academic performance. A quantitative approach was opted for as this method would enable the researcher to gather quantitative data and objectively measure the relationship between variables. A descriptive and survey research design was adopted and suited to explore the existing practices, perceptions and outcomes in the school. To gain insight into the impact of the routine use of sport and games on learning, attention and general engagement among pupil as a whole, data were gathered from both teachers and learners. This also aided in the transferability of the results to like school situations.

Population

The target group for the study was teachers and the students of all government Primary Schools of Raalpindi district. Only government primary schools were selected because it is the largest primary education sector that is available in public schools, and these schools are frequently challenged by limited availability of resources for sporting and co-curricular activities. Teachers were included, as they are the eyes on the ground regarding students' classroom conduct and academic performance, and students, as they are the primary players in both academic and sports activities. The sample population was selected to ensure that the results obtained are representative of the actual situation of the public primary education system in a city/urban area.

Sample

Purposive sampling technique was used for the selection of the sample in the study. In total, 10 government primary schools were selected from different parts of Rawalpindi so as to have a representation of diversity in terms of location as well as the level of students' diversity. 5 teachers and 20 students from each school were selected; thus, the total sample size was 50 teachers and 200 students. Teachers with 2 years and above years of teaching experience were selected to give them adequate experience in classroom practices. Grade 4 students and Grade 5 students were targeted as they have the ability to comprehend and answer the research questions suitable to their grade level. This size of sample size was deemed sufficient to be able to gather meaningful data and make reliable conclusions regarding the effect of sports and games.

Research Instrument

Two different questionnaires were utilized, one for the teachers and one for students, in order to gather the information needed for this research. The questionnaires were both designed by the researcher depending of the goal of the study and according to the literature found. The teacher questionnaire included teachers' perceptions on role of sports and games in improving the academic performance of students, their level of concentration, and behavior in classrooms. The students' questionnaire aimed at their involvement in physical activities, their interest in physical activities, and how they felt the physical activities impacted their learning. Both questionnaires used a 5-point Likert scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Content validation of instruments was performed by subject experts, and pilot testing in 2 schools to test the clarity and reliability of the instruments was done before the actual data collection.

Data Collection Procedure

Data collection was done after having taken formal permission from the school heads in selected government primary schools. Each school was visited personally by the researcher for the purpose of distributing questionnaires. The

questionnaire was handed to teachers and adequate time was provided during the free period for teachers to fill it. The researcher explained the purpose of the study in simple language to students and guided them in filling the questionnaire which was found to be free of confusion. Students were assured that their responses would be kept confidential and used only for research purposes. Three weeks were used to collect data. To prevent losing any completed questionnaires, and to achieve a high response rate, all completed questionnaires were picked up on the same day.

Data Analysis

Collected data were analyzed by using SPSS software. Frequencies and percentages, means, and standard deviations were calculated in order to summarize the responses. To determine the overall trends in teachers' and students' perceptions, scores were computed for each of the statements. Correlation analysis was employed in examining the link between participation in sports and academic performance. The results were also presented in tabular and graph form using bar chart to render the findings comprehensible and understandable. Using this statistical approach was beneficial when identifying patterns and making conclusions about the research questions.

Ethical Consideration

Throughout the research process, there was careful adherence to the Ethical considerations. Prior to data collection, formal permission was taken from the concerned Education Authority and school principals. The subjects were told the aim of the research on which they were participating and they gave their consent freely. The questionnaires did not collect private details, such as individuals' names, and confidentiality of respondents was guaranteed. There were no pressure on students to participate, and teachers were assured that their responses did not have an impact on their professional standing. The researcher kept in mind that the study was not harmful to the participants and data were to be used solely for academic purposes.

Analyzing and Interpreting Data

Once the data were gathered, the students' responses were analysed thoroughly for the presence of key trends. From the analysis, it was found that the majority of the teachers agree that sport participants focus and have discipline in class and performs better if they engage in sports regularly. Likewise, many students said that they feel more active and understand the lessons better when they play games during the school hours. This data also suggested that regular sports activities in schools are associated with a lower level of attention problems and decreased level of student motivation. The results of the overall data in general indicate that incorporating sports and games into every day classroom has a positive effect on the academic and social aspects of primary school students of Primary Schools. The results seem to support the concept that physical activity needs to be treated as an integral component of primary education instead of an additional activity.

Table 1

Students' Attitudes Towards Sports and Games at Primary Level (N = 167)

S. No	Statement	M	SD
1	I like sports and games.	4.50	0.501
2	I enjoy playing games and sports.	2.49	0.502
3	I regularly play games and sports.	3.00	0.898
4	I participate in sports competitions.	3.08	0.919
5	I try new games and sports.	2.99	0.941
6	Sports and games are a waste of time.	2.07	0.985

S. No	Statement	M	SD
7	Sports are only for talented students.	2.02	0.979
8	My school has sufficient sports facilities.	2.77	1.210
9	All students have equal opportunity in sports.	4.20	0.810
10	I want more sports time in school.	3.05	0.831
11	Sports are good for health.	4.50	0.501
12	Sports improve my focus in class.	3.95	0.731
13	Sports make me happy and confident.	4.37	0.641
14	Sports help me make friends.	3.05	0.728
15	Sports are part of my daily routine.	3.22	0.769
16	I prefer indoor games.	3.03	0.874
17	I prefer outdoor games.	3.25	0.841
18	I like playing with other students.	4.10	0.882
19	I prefer video games over physical games.	2.75	1.037

Note: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.

Table 1 displays student responses on their attitudes towards sports. Pupils strongly agreed that sports are good for health ($M=4.50$) and liked sports ($M=4.50$). There was also a high level of agreement with respect to sports which made them feel happy/confident ($M=4.37$) and made it easy for them to interact with others ($M=4.10$). In contrast, students did not endorse statements that considered the joys of athletics as a frivolous activity ($M=2.07$) or, only for talented others ($M=2.02$). ($M=2.02$).

Table 2

Availability of Sports Facilities in Selected Primary Schools ($N = 5$)

Sports Facility	Available (f)	Not Available (f)
Playground	3	2
Sports Equipment	2	3
Marked Play Area	2	3
Indoor Games	1	4
First Aid Facility	2	3

Table 2. The study indicated that there was a significant lack of facilities used for playing the sport in the selected primary schools. 3 of the schools had playgrounds, and only 2 of the schools had sports equipment and marked play areas. This means that the very fundamental infrastructure is not available to promote physical activity amongst students.

First aid facilities were the least common (2 schools), as was provision for playing games indoors (1 school). The total results revealed that the mean availability of regular sports was 2 ($SD = 0.84$) for the selected schools and showed that the schools lacked such facilities, indicating a need for development.

Findings of the Study

- ▶ Prospective: The study produced the following major findings:
- ▶ Students generally demonstrated positive attitudes towards sports and games.
- ▶ Students strongly recognized the health benefits of sports and games.
- ▶ Students reported positive views regarding confidence, equal opportunities, and playing with other students.

- ▶ Students disagreed that sports were a waste of time or only for talented students.
- ▶ Sports facilities in the selected schools were generally inadequate.
- ▶ Playgrounds were available in three of the five selected schools.
- ▶ Sports equipment and marked play areas were available in only two schools.

Discussion of the Study

This study looked at how primary school students in Rawalpindi feel about sports and how well their government schools support activity. The results show a trend: children are very excited about sports and enjoy being active. The schools do not have enough space, equipment or proper facilities to meet that interest. This gap between student enthusiasm and available resources is an issue. These findings match what other research around the world has found—children naturally love play and physical movement because it helps them stay healthy and build friendships (Bailey, 2006).

However, the observational data indicate that institutional support has not kept pace with student interest. The absence of basic equipment and marked grounds in the majority of schools forces physical activities to remain informal or omitted entirely, mirroring concerns regarding resource shortages in public sector education. Furthermore, the lack of infrastructure not only limits physical activity but also impacts students' overall development. Physical education is crucial for cognitive development, social skills, and emotional well-being. Without structured sports programs, students miss opportunities to develop teamwork, discipline, and leadership skills. The study highlights a pressing need for policy interventions to bridge the gap between student enthusiasm and available resources.

Recommendations

Based on the above findings and discussion, the following recommendations are made:

- ▶ The school education departments should prioritize budget allocation for basic sports equipment and designated play areas in primary schools, ensuring regular maintenance and updates.
- ▶ Existing school grounds should be renovated to ensure safe, marked spaces for student sports activities, incorporating age-specific zones for different activities.
- ▶ In schools with limited outdoor space, indoor games and low-space physical exercises should be formally introduced, leveraging community spaces if needed.
- ▶ Basic first aid facilities must be established in all primary schools to ensure student safety during physical activities, with trained staff on-site.
- ▶ Headmasters and teachers should schedule structured weekly sports periods within the school timetable, encouraging student participation and tracking progress.
- ▶ Teacher training programs should include modules on adaptive physical education to maximize student engagement despite resource constraints.
- ▶ Community partnerships can be explored to supplement sports infrastructure and provide expert coaching.

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