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Assessment of Physical Activity Pattern of College Going Girls

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ABSTRACT

Physical activity plays a vital role in maintaining overall health and preventing non-communicable diseases. However, physical inactivity is increasingly prevalent among young adults, particularly females. This study aimed to assess the physical activity patterns of college-going girls aged 18–25 years and examine their involvement in exercise, sports, household tasks, and leisure activities. A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted among 100 female students from selected colleges of Agra using a structured questionnaire. Data on socio-demographic characteristics, Body Mass Index (BMI), frequency of physical activity, and participation in daily tasks were collected and analyzed using descriptive statistics. The results revealed that 40% of the respondents were obese, 20% were underweight, and only 20% had a normal BMI. A majority (54%) reported exercising only sometimes, while just 7% engaged in daily physical activity. Participation in sports was also low (26%), and although many were involved in household chores, the intensity and duration were generally insufficient to meet physical activity recommendations. The study highlights the urgent need to promote regular and structured physical activity among

college-going girls. Interventions such as physical education programs, awareness campaigns, and supportive college environments can help improve activity levels and contribute to better health outcomes for young women.

1. INTRODUCTION

Physical activity is a key determinant of health and well-being and is essential for the prevention of various non-communicable diseases such as obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular conditions, and mental health disorders (World Health Organization 2020). Despite its known benefits, there has been a significant decline in physical activity levels among young adults, particularly college-going girls, due to academic pressure, sedentary behavior, increased screen time, and changing lifestyle patterns (Kumar & Rajagopalan, 2018). *According to the WHO (2020), more than 80% of adolescents worldwide do not meet the recommended levels of physical activity, with girls being less active than boys. In India, the NFHS-5 (2019–21) reports a rising trend of obesity and lifestyle-related disorders among young women.* Young women, especially in urban and semi-urban areas, often face socio-cultural constraints, limited access to safe recreational spaces, and gender-based expectations that discourage active participation in sports or physical exercise (Sharma & Mehta, 2020). This is concerning, as physical inactivity during this critical transition phase from adolescence to adulthood can have long-term implications on health and quality of life. Previous studies have shown that female students tend to engage less in structured physical activity compared to their male counterparts, and household chores alone do not meet the recommended levels of physical activity (Bansal, Verma, & Kaur, 2021). Moreover, body image concerns, peer pressure, and lack of institutional support further contribute to low participation rates in physical activities among college girls (Singh & Kapoor, 2019).

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. **To assess the** socio-economic status of college-going girls aged 18–25 years.
2. **To assess the physical activity patterns** of college-going girls aged 18–25 years.
3. **To evaluate the Body Mass Index (BMI)** of college-going girls aged 18–25 years.
4. **To examine the involvement of** college-going girls aged 18–25 years **in household tasks** and their contribution to overall physical activity.

3. METHODOLOGY

A **descriptive cross-sectional study** was conducted among **100 college-going girls aged 18–25 years** from selected colleges of Agra. Respondents were selected through **purposive sampling** based on their age, enrollment status, and willingness to participate. Data were collected using a **structured and pre-tested questionnaire,** covering demographic details, physical activity patterns, BMI, sports participation, and household tasks. **Height and weight** were recorded or self-reported to calculate **Body Mass Index (BMI)** using the WHO standard formula. Written **informed consent** was secured from all respondents. **Descriptive statistics** (frequency and percentage) were used for data analysis.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 4.1. Distribution of socio-economic status of the college-going girls

Variables	Categories	Number (N=100)	Percentage (%)
Age (Years)	18-20	27	27.00
	21-23	65	65.00
	24- 25	8	8.00
Religion	Hindu	74	74.00
	Muslim	26	26.00
Caste	General	56	56.00
	OBC	14	14.00
	SC	30	30.00
Education (mother)	Graduate	52	52.00
	Intermediate	23	23.00
	High school	25	25.00
Education (father)	Professional degree	07	7.00
	Graduate	58	58.00
	Intermediate	35	35.00
Occupation (father)	Professional	07	7.00
	Skilled worker	69	69.00
	Unskilled work	24	24.00
Monthly income in rupees	10,002-29,972	46	46.00
	29,973-49,961	38	38.00

	≥49,961	16	16.00
Type of family	Nuclear	72	72.00
	Joint	25	25.00
	Extended	03	3.00

Note: n= Frequency and %= Percentage

The above table presents distribution of the socio-economic status of the 100 college-going girls aged 18–25 years. The majority of participants (65%) were in the 21–23 year age group, with most identifying as Hindu (74%) and belonging to the General caste category (56%). A substantial proportion of mothers (52%) and fathers (58%) were graduates, reflecting a relatively educated parental background. In terms of occupation, most fathers were skilled workers (69%), with fewer in unskilled jobs (24%) or professional roles (7%). Monthly family income was mostly between ₹10,002–29,972 (46%) and ₹29,973–49,961 (38%), suggesting a lower-middle to middle-income demographic. The majority of respondents lived in nuclear families (72%), while 25% were from joint families and only 3% from extended households.

Table No. 4.2. Distribution of respondents (18-25 year) according to their body mass index

Body Mass Index	**Number (N=100)**	**Percentage (%)**
Underweight (<18.5)	20	20.00
Severe Thinness (<16.00)	0	0.00
Moderate Thinness (16.0-16.9)	3	3.00
Mild Thinness (17.0-18.4)	7	7.00
Normal (18.5-24.9)	20	20.00
Overweight (25.0-29.9)	10	10.00
Obesity (30-34.9)	40	40.00
Total	**100**	**100**

Note: n= Frequency and %= Percentage

The above table shows the distribution of respondents aged 18–25 years according to their Body Mass Index (BMI). A considerable proportion (40%) were categorized as obese (BMI 30–34.9), followed by 20% who were underweight (BMI <18.5). Only 20% of the participants had a normal BMI (18.5–24.9), highlighting the presence of both undernutrition and obesity among the study population. Similar findings were reported by Singh and Kapoor (2019), who observed rising trends of obesity and

underweight conditions among young adults in India, attributing them to sedentary lifestyles and irregular dietary habits.

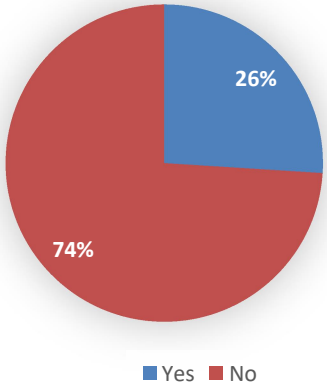
Table No. 4.3. Distribution of respondents (aged 18-25) according to the frequency of exercise

S.No.	Frequency exercise	Number (N=100)	Percentage (%)
1	Daily	07	7.00%
2	Sometimes	54	54.00%
3	Once per week	21	21.00%
4	Two times per week	10	10.00%
5	Three times per week	08	8.00%
Total		**100**	**100%**

Note: n= Frequency and %= Percentage

The above table depicts the distribution of frequency of exercise among respondents aged 18–25 years. A majority (54%) reported exercising only sometimes, while 21% exercised once per week. Regular daily exercise was practiced by only 7% of respondents. Additionally, 10% exercised twice a week and 8% three times a week, indicating that consistent physical activity was low among the participants.

Figure No. 4.1. Distribution of respondents (aged 18-25) according to sports activities



The above figure indicates the distribution of respondents (aged 18-25) according to sports activities that only 26% of respondents aged 18–25 years reported participating in any sports activities, while a majority (74%) did not engage in sports. This highlights a low level of involvement in structured physical activities among college-going girls

Table No. 4.5. Distribution of respondents (aged 18-25) according to the involvement in various household tasks

S. No.	Categories	How Often	Number (N=100)	Percentage (%)
1	Preparing cooked food	less than 1 hour/ week	8	28.00%
		1-2 hours/week	2	
		2-4 hour/ week	10	
		more than 4 hour/week	8	
		Total	**28**	
2	Washing utensils	less than 1 hour/ week	7	15.00%
		1-2 hour /week	3	
		2-4 hour/ week	3	
		more than 4 hour/week	2	
		Total	**15**	
3	Cleaning the home	less than 1 hour/ week	3	20.00%
		1-2 hour /week	2	
		2-4 hour/ week	10	
		more than 4 hour/week	5	
		Total	**20**	
4	Washing clothes	less than 1 hour/ week	5	12.00%
		1-2 hour /week	2	
		2-4 hour/ week	2	
		more than 4 hour/week	3	
		Total	**12**	
5	Ironing the clothes	less than 1 hour/ week	2	10.00%
		1-2 hour /week	4	
		2-4 hour/ week	3	
		more than 4 hour/week	1	
		Total	**10**	
6	Dancing	less than 1 hour/ week	7	10.00%
		1-2 hour /week	1	
		2-4 hour/ week	1	
		more than 4 hour/week	1	

		Total	**10**	
7	Musical instruments	less than 1 hour/ week	2	5.00%
		1-2 hour /week	1	
		2-4 hour/ week	1	
		more than 4 hour/week	1	
		Total	**5**	
		Total	**100**	**100%**

Note: n= Frequency and %= Percentage

The above table illustrates the distribution of respondents (aged 18-25) according to the involvement of respondents (aged 18–25) in various household tasks. The highest participation was observed in cooking (28%) and cleaning (20%), while fewer respondents were involved in washing utensils (15%), washing clothes (12%), and ironing (10%). Engagement in leisure activities such as dancing (10%) and playing musical instruments (5%) was minimal. These findings suggest that although many participants contributed to household work, the overall physical exertion involved was limited and irregular. Similar findings were reported by Bansal et al. (2021), who observed that while young women often participated in household chores, these tasks were not performed consistently or for long enough durations to meet recommended physical activity levels. The study emphasized the importance of integrating structured physical exercise into daily routines to improve health outcomes.

5. CONCLUSION

The findings of the study highlight significant gaps in the physical activity patterns of college-going girls aged 18–25 years. A considerable proportion of respondents were either obese or underweight, indicating imbalanced nutritional and lifestyle habits. While a majority engaged occasionally in physical activity, regular exercise and participation in sports were notably low. Though some involvement in household tasks was observed, it was insufficient to meet the recommended physical activity levels. These results underscore the need for targeted health promotion strategies, awareness campaigns, and institutional support to encourage consistent physical activity among young women. Promoting active lifestyles at the college level is essential for preventing future health risks and fostering long-term well-being.

6. **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

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