



Impact of The Present Education System on the Physical and Mental Development of Primary and Secondary Level Students

Dr. Ashish Tomar

Assistant Professor, Faculty of Education, Motherhood University, Roorkee

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ABSTRACT

Education is an integral part of human life, which not only provides knowledge and skills but also plays a significant role in personality development and social adjustment. In recent times, the education system has undergone numerous changes. The increasing use of information technology, online learning, the implementation of the New Education Policy (NEP 2020), exam-cantered approaches, and competitive environments have directly and indirectly affected the physical and mental development of students. This effect is more visible at the primary and secondary levels since this age group is highly sensitive and decisive for holistic development. From the perspective of physical development, modern education has neglected sports and physical activities. Due to curriculum and examination pressure, students are moving away from games, exercise, yoga, and co-curricular activities. As a result, issues like obesity, vision problems, fatigue, and physical weakness have emerged. Excessive use of digital devices has also increased physical inactivity. Similarly, the mental development of students has been deeply affected. Exam-based evaluation systems, coaching culture, mark-centeredness, and competitive pressures have created conditions of stress, anxiety, and depression among students. Lack of concentration, decline in self-confidence, and reduced social behaviour are evident signs of mental imbalance. On the other hand, technology-based education and new



teaching methods have provided new learning opportunities. Thus, both positive and negative aspects of education are evident. This research paper focuses on primary and secondary level students and studies the impact of the current education system on their physical and mental development. The objectives of the research include analysing the positive and negative effects of the education system, identifying students' problems, and suggesting improvements. A descriptive and analytical research design was adopted. Primary (classes 5–8) and secondary (classes 9–10) students were chosen as samples. Data was collected through questionnaires, interviews, and observation methods. Analysis of the findings showed that although the current education system has made students technologically competent, its negative impact on physical health and mental balance is more significant. The study concludes that education should not be limited to cognitive development but should also focus on the holistic development of children. It is necessary to include sports, yoga, arts, drama, and co-curricular activities in the curriculum. The examination system should be made flexible and skill-based. Moreover, counselling services should be made mandatory at the school level to safeguard the mental health of students. Thus, this research helps in understanding the real nature of the education system and provides useful suggestions for its improvement.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Education is the foundation of human life. It is not merely a means of acquiring knowledge and skills but also a process of personality development, social growth, and preservation of human values. The progress of any nation depends on the education of its citizens. In this regard, school education, especially at the primary and secondary levels, is crucial, as it is the stage where physical, mental, emotional, and social development occurs rapidly. Since independence, the Indian education system has experienced continuous reforms and changes from duty-based approaches to the New Education Policy (2020). While the present education system aims to provide quality education and make students technologically competent to face global competition, it also directly affects their physical and mental health. Physically,



increasing curriculum difficulty, exam pressure, and the growing coaching culture leave students with little time for sports, exercise, and co-curricular activities. Consequently, problems such as obesity, vision disorders, lack of sleep, and physical weakness are increasing. Prolonged screen use (online classes and excessive mobile usage) has further impacted students' health. Mentally, today's students face greater stress and anxiety compared to earlier times. A mark-centric education system, frequent examinations, performance pressure, and parental expectations disturb their mental balance. Issues such as depression, lack of self-confidence, poor concentration, and even suicidal tendencies have been observed. However, there are also positive aspects. Technological education has provided new learning opportunities. Digital mediums have made knowledge more accessible. NEP 2020 emphasizes skill-based learning, experiential learning, and value-based education, making education more student-centered and practical. Yet, as long as education remains confined to knowledge and technology while neglecting students' physical and mental health, its purpose will remain incomplete. True education becomes meaningful only when it simultaneously nurtures the holistic development of children physical, mental, emotional, social, and moral. At the primary and secondary levels, students require balanced education. If the system remains focused solely on grades and certificates, it will create imbalance in their lives. Hence, studying the impact of the present education system is essential not only for understanding the current situation but also for guiding future educational policies and programs.

This research analyses the effects of the current education system, with a focus on both physical and mental dimensions. It also discusses challenges, opportunities, and provides suggestions for improvement.

1.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The present education system is making students cognitively competent but has not contributed sufficiently to their physical health and mental balance. Increasing competition, exam pressure, lack of time, and digital dependency are affecting their overall development.

The main problem is:

- The current education system fails to make students physically active and healthy.
- At the mental level, it generates stress, anxiety, and lack of self-confidence.
- The education system remains knowledge-oriented but incomplete from the perspective of health and life skills.



This research is an attempt to address these concerns so that the true aim of education holistic development of students can be achieved.

1.2 NEED OF THE STUDY

1. To highlight the impact of the current education system on students' physical health.
2. To study problems of mental stress and anxiety.
3. To analyse the neglect of sports and co-curricular activities.
4. To evaluate the effects of digital education and technological use.
5. To examine the impact of education on students' concentration and self-confidence.
6. To recognize the pressure of parental and teacher expectations.
7. To identify positive aspects of the education system.
8. To highlight negative effects and suggest solutions.
9. To analyse the real situation in the context of NEP 2020.
10. To pave the way for reforms ensuring holistic development of students.

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the impact of education on the physical development of primary and secondary students.
2. To analyse the effect of education on mental health and emotional balance.
3. To identify the positive role of the education system.
4. To highlight the negative aspects of the system.
5. To understand stress, anxiety, and competitive pressures among students.
6. To assess the role of sports, yoga, and physical activities.
7. To evaluate the effect of digital and online education.
8. To study the impact of exams and evaluation systems.



9. To analyse the relation between academic achievement and self-confidence.
10. To provide suggestions for making education balanced and child-centered.

1.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1. The study is limited to primary (classes 5–8) and secondary (classes 9–10) levels only.
2. The sample is confined to selected schools.
3. Analysis is restricted to physical and mental aspects of development.
4. Social, economic, and family factors are not studied in detail.
5. The limitations of tools (questionnaire, interview, observation) may influence results.
6. Due to the limited research area, findings cannot be generalized to the whole nation.
7. Data relies on the personal responses of students, which may affect accuracy.

2.0 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1. **MAHAPATRA, ANANYA & SHARMA, PRERNA (2021)** — “Education in times of COVID-19 pandemic: Academic stress and its psychosocial impact on children and adolescents in India.” This study revealed that during COVID-19, when students relied on online education, both physical and mental health were negatively impacted. Eye problems, posture-related pain, and screen fatigue increased. Mental stress, anxiety, and mood decline were also reported.
2. **KUMAR MANDAL, AMIT & TALESARA, SHWETA (2023)** — “A Study of Reducing Student Stress in Classroom in India.” This survey found that nearly 63.5% of class 11–12 students reported stress due to academic pressure. High parental expectations, exam anxiety, and mental health symptoms were strongly associated with stress.
3. **JOURNAL OF EDUCATION AND HEALTH PROMOTION (2024)** — “Academic stress, perceived parental pressure, and anxiety among adolescents: Exploring relationships in Indian students.” The study showed that academic pressure, parental expectations, and competitive exams led to anxiety, depression, and decline in general well-being among adolescents.
4. **DEB, SHAYANA & DEB, SIBNATH (2025)** — “Mental health status of school students in India: The role of school-based family counselling.” The article highlighted that lack of family



counselling, domestic violence, neglect, and social discrimination worsened mental health adversities. A positive family environment and strong parent-student relationships were found to support better mental health.

5. **INDIA TODAY** — “Effects of online education on mental and physical health.” This article noted that online education caused eye strain, posture-related issues, sleep disturbances, low physical activity, and obesity. Mentally, it led to lack of focus, fatigue, mood swings, and social isolation.
6. **INDIA TODAY** — “How heavy study curriculum affects students’ mental health | Explained.” The report showed that a heavy curriculum and exam system increased anxiety, stress, and self-doubt among students. The need for a well-being culture in schools was emphasized.
7. **THE HINDU** — **JASREEN BIRGI** — “The impact of peer pressure on students’ mental health.” The article discussed how peer pressure negatively affects social behaviour, self-esteem, and mood. Comparison among peers, competition, and image-consciousness increased mental pressure.
8. **WHO (2018)** — Report highlighted that excessive digital use reduced children’s physical activity. A minimum of 60 minutes of daily activity is necessary, but most students fail to meet it.
9. **NEP 2020** — Emphasized digital education, providing positive outcomes like wider access to knowledge and enhanced opportunities for skill development.
10. **UNICEF (2021)** — Report showed that while online education made learning flexible, excessive screen-time negatively impacted mental concentration and social behaviour.
11. **NCERT (2022)** — Report highlighted that counsellors play a crucial role in reducing student stress and boosting confidence.

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

This study is descriptive and analytical in nature. Its purpose is to analyse the impact of the present education system on primary and secondary students’ physical and mental development.

- **DESCRIPTIVE:** Presents the current status of students’ physical and mental development.



- **ANALYTICAL:** Examines the effects of education system, curriculum, exams, and co-curricular activities on student health and mental condition.

3.2 POPULATION OF THE STUDY

The population included all primary (classes 5–8) and secondary (classes 9–10) students.

3.2.1 SAMPLE:

- Total: 200 students
- 100 primary students (50 boys, 50 girls)
- 100 secondary students (50 boys, 50 girls)
- Sampling Technique: Convenience Sampling

3.3 RESEARCH TOOLS

1. **QUESTIONNAIRE** – Questions related to students’ routine, sports, study pressure, sleep, stress, etc.
2. **INTERVIEW** – Semi-structured interviews with selected students and teachers.
3. **OBSERVATION** – Direct observation of classrooms, playgrounds, and student participation.

3.4 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

1. Permission from school administration.
2. Distribution of questionnaires.
3. Interviews with selected students and teachers.
4. Observation of classes and activities.
5. Data organized and analysed statistically.

3.5 STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES

- Percentage Analysis
- Mean



- Correlation Analysis (between academic pressure and mental health)

3.6 RELIABILITY & VALIDITY

- Questionnaire reliability tested through Cronbach's Alpha.
- Validity ensured by expert review.
- Errors minimized during data collection.

4.0 RESULTS & ANALYSIS

4.1 IMPACT ON PRIMARY STUDENTS (CLASSES 5–8)

4.1.1 PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT:

- 65% lacked adequate sports/exercise.
- 58% reported eye strain due to online study.
- 40% showed obesity/inactivity.
- 45% had reduced participation in co-curricular activities.

4.1.2 MENTAL DEVELOPMENT:

- 60% faced stress due to exams/marks.
- 50% reported poor concentration.
- 35% faced sleep problems/mood swings.
- 30% experienced low confidence due to peer pressure.

4.2 IMPACT ON SECONDARY STUDENTS (CLASSES 9–10)

4.2.1 PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT:

- 70% reported lack of time for sports due to study/coaching.
- 55% suffered from fatigue and headaches.
- Prolonged screen time worsened physical health.



- 35% had muscle/bone weakness due to lack of yoga/exercise.

4.2.2 MENTAL DEVELOPMENT:

- 65% experienced stress/anxiety due to study pressure.
- 40% reported depression, low self-confidence, and isolation.
- Exam results and parental expectations increased pressure.
- 50% had concentration difficulties due to online learning.

4.3 COMPARATIVE SUMMARY

TABLE-1

| Level | Physical Impact | Mental Impact |
|-----------|---|---|
| Primary | Lack of play, obesity, eye strain | Stress, poor focus, sleep problems |
| Secondary | Lack of sports/exercise, fatigue, screen-time use | Anxiety, depression, low self-confidence, isolation |

4.4 ANALYSIS

1. **PHYSICAL HEALTH:** Due to the compulsion of curriculum and examinations in the education system, a clear lack of sports and exercise is observed.
2. **MENTAL HEALTH:** Examinations, marks, competition, and parental expectations have created stress, anxiety, and reduced self-confidence among students.
3. **POSITIVE ASPECT:** Digital platforms and online education have increased learning opportunities, but prolonged screen time and inactivity have had a negative impact on both physical and mental health.
4. **GENERAL CONCLUSION:** At both levels, positive and negative effects of the education system were observed. A balanced and practical education system is essential for ensuring physical and mental health.

4.5 GRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION



TABLE-2

IMPACT ON PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

| LEVEL | LOSS OF SPORTS (%) | OBESITY/INACTIVITY (%) | EYE FATIGUE (%) |
|------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| PRIMARY | 65 | 40 | 58 |
| SECONDARY | 70 | 35 | 55 |

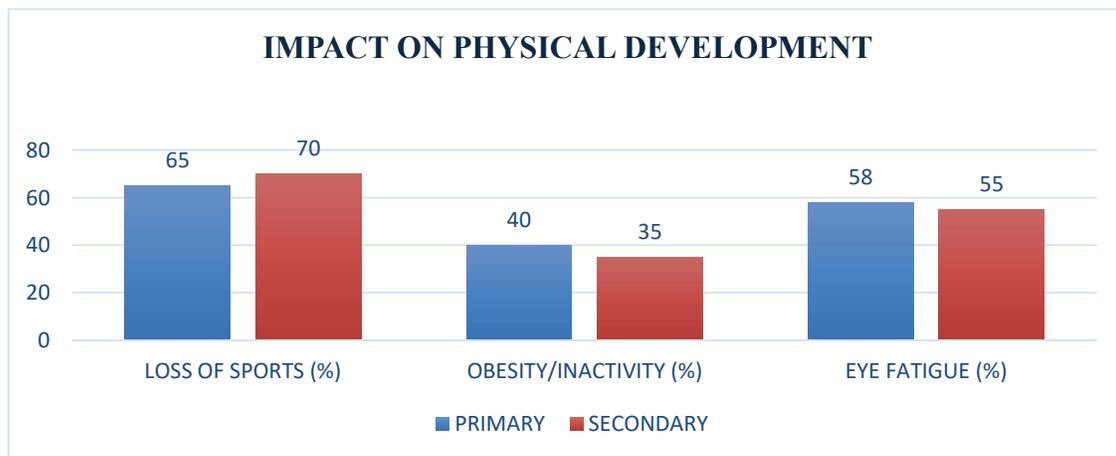


TABLE-3

IMPACT ON MENTAL DEVELOPMENT

| LEVEL | STRESS (%) | LOSS OF ATTENTION (%) | DEPRESSION/ MOOD SWINGS (%) | LOSS OF SELF CONFIDENCE (%) |
|------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| PRIMARY | 60 | 50 | 35 | 30 |
| SECONDARY | 65 | 50 | 40 | 35 |

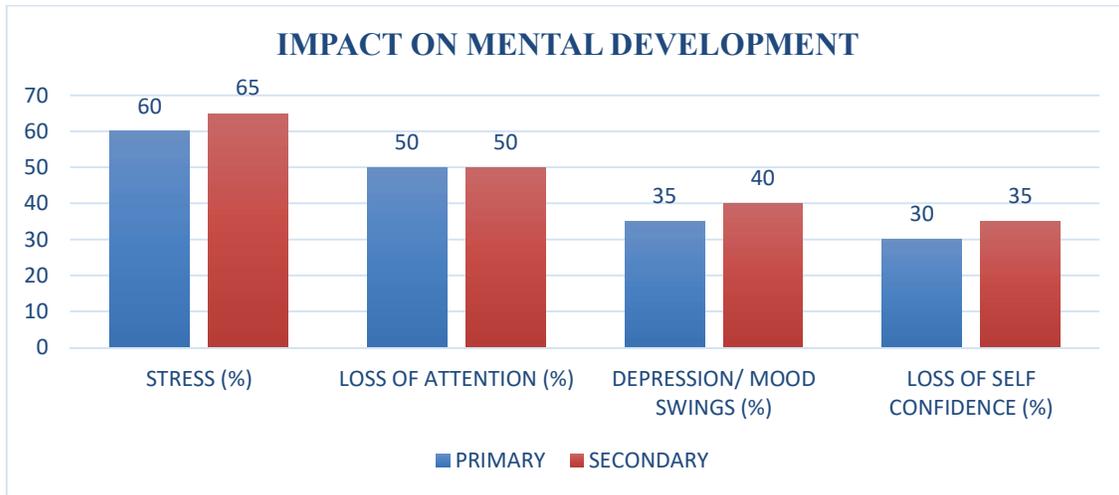
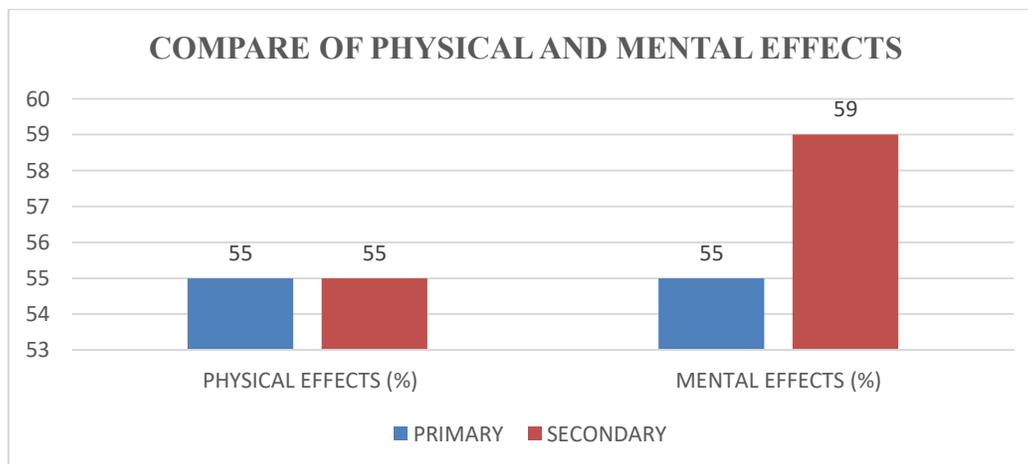


TABLE-4

COMPARE OF PHYSICAL AND MENTAL EFFECTS

| LEVEL | PHYSICAL EFFECTS (%) | MENTAL EFFECTS (%) |
|-----------|----------------------|--------------------|
| PRIMARY | 55 | 55 |
| SECONDARY | 55 | 59 |



5.0 CONCLUSION & SUGGESTIONS

5.1 CONCLUSION



The present study provides a comprehensive understanding of how the current education system influences the physical and mental development of students at the primary and secondary levels. The findings indicate that although the system has opened new avenues for knowledge acquisition and digital learning, it has also created challenges for the holistic growth of learners. From the perspective of physical development, the results highlight a significant decline in sports, yoga, and physical exercise. Students are spending more time with books, coaching classes, and digital devices, leaving very little scope for outdoor activities. Prolonged screen time due to online classes, excessive mobile use, and reliance on computers has resulted in eye strain, fatigue, and physical inactivity. Furthermore, rising tendencies of obesity, weakening of muscles, and reduction in stamina indicate that the education system, in its current form, is unable to support students' physical health adequately. Equally important are the findings related to mental development. Students reported high levels of stress, anxiety, and depressive symptoms caused by exam pressure, competition, and parental expectations. The focus on marks and performance has diminished their ability to concentrate, reduced their memory capacity, and decreased their intrinsic interest in learning. Secondary-level students, in particular, demonstrated lower self-confidence and greater tendencies toward social withdrawal, suggesting that the transition from childhood to adolescence becomes even more challenging under the burden of academic expectations. The study also reveals social and educational effects of the system. The decline in teamwork, peer cooperation, and participation in group activities reflects a growing imbalance in students' social development. Co-curricular activities, which play a vital role in nurturing creativity, leadership, and collaborative skills, have been overshadowed by an overemphasis on examinations and academic results. Consequently, the aim of holistic development, which is central to education, remains only partially fulfilled. Nevertheless, the research also points toward several positive aspects. Digital education has enhanced technological competence among students, preparing them for the demands of the modern world. The availability of online resources has widened the scope of knowledge acquisition, while independent and self-directed learning skills have also improved. These developments suggest that when utilized effectively, technology can complement traditional teaching and enrich the overall learning process.

In summary, the study concludes that the present education system has both constructive and adverse impacts. While it fosters technological growth and academic achievement, it simultaneously neglects physical health and mental well-being. To overcome these challenges, the system must adopt a balanced and practical approach that integrates sports, yoga, and co-curricular activities into the curriculum, reduces the overemphasis on examinations, and introduces regular counselling services for students. Only



then can education truly achieve its ultimate goal of nurturing the holistic development of children—physically, mentally, socially, and emotionally.

5.2 SUGGESTIONS

1. Make sports and physical education mandatory in schools.
2. Provide counselling services for students' mental health.
3. Balance screen-time with physical activities.
4. Create a stress-free and practical teaching-learning process.
5. Educate parents about the harmful effects of excessive expectations.
6. Regularize yoga, meditation, and sports in schools.
7. Appoint school counsellors in every institution.
8. Reform examination systems to focus on skills and abilities rather than marks.
9. Promote co-curricular activities (music, arts, drama, debates).
10. Introduce reforms in education policy to ensure balanced physical, mental, and social development.

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