

## Perceptions of Teachers and Students on Extracurricular Activities

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### Abstract

*This study investigates the perceptions of teachers and students regarding extracurricular activities in schools within Khairahani Municipality, Chitwan district. The aim is to understand how these activities are perceived and valued at the school level. The municipality hosts 51 schools, including 21 secondary schools and 30 basic schools. A total of 102 respondents, consisting of 51 teachers and 51 students, participated in the study, selected through a simple random sampling method. Following a positivist research paradigm, the study employed a quantitative survey approach. Data were collected through structured questionnaires administered in schools and analyzed using SPSS software. The analysis focused on frequencies and percentages to identify key trends and insights. The findings provide a deeper understanding of the value and impact of extracurricular activities in the educational context of Khairahani Municipality.*

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**Keywords:** Extracurricular activities, Academic performance, educational impact.

### Introduction

Breaking down the term extracurricular activities into its roots, extra means outside, while curricular refers to the academic work conducted in the classroom. Therefore, extracurricular activities are those that take place outside of regular classroom learning.

According to the Curriculum Development Centre (CDC, 2003), extracurricular activities are school-based programs designed to support students' physical, mental, social, and emotional development alongside their academic studies. These activities provide students with opportunities to practice social skills, explore new interests, and even discover potential career paths. Unlike academic subjects, extracurricular activities are not graded and do not contribute to academic credits.

It is undeniable that the ultimate goal of education is to support children's physical, mental, social, and emotional development. However, a formal curriculum alone is not enough to meet the diverse needs, interests, and aspirations of both learners and society. Recognizing this, schools are increasingly incorporating extracurricular activities into their programs. A curriculum-based education, while essential, is not sufficient for the holistic development of students after all, overall growth is the central purpose of education.

From my observations, students' academic achievements seem to be declining. In most cases, learning remains confined within the four walls of the classroom. This limited approach may explain why students' performance often falls short of expectations. Many acquire theoretical knowledge but lack practical exposure. By

engaging students in well-structured extracurricular activities, we can help nurture their physical, mental, social, and emotional development, ultimately enhancing their overall educational experience.

Extracurricular activities are considered psychologically important as they provide students with a continuous source of energy and engagement. While these activities are recognized as a crucial part of education, their full potential has yet to be fully realized for various reasons.

In Nepal, extracurricular activities were first introduced at the Montessori School of Ranipokhari. Over time, institutions like Chetvawan have expanded these programs at the school level, incorporating activities such as games, dancing, singing, and one-act plays (CDC, 2003).

According to the National Education System Plan (NESP, 1971), extracurricular activities were designated as an integral part of school programs, with active participation required from both teachers and students. This was further reinforced by educational statutes in 1971 and 2002, which granted extracurricular activities official recognition and made them compulsory in schools.

Extracurricular activities offer students the freedom and opportunities to showcase their hidden talents beyond the constraints of traditional school policies. Additionally, they play a crucial role in students' emotional and social well-being. The National Education System Plan (NESP, 2028–2032) has recognized extracurricular activities as a compulsory component of education, including activities such as gardening competitions, quizzes, folk songs and dances, debates, and arts.

Despite the numerous benefits of extracurricular activities in education, their implementation and understanding remain limited in Nepal's education sector. This raises an important question: Why are extracurricular activities no longer a significant part of school-level education? Given their positive impact on student behavior, academic performance, and overall school success helping children grow into well-rounded and socially capable adults it is concerning that students are not being encouraged to participate. If this trend continues, extracurricular activities may gradually disappear from Nepal's school system.

To address this issue, it is essential to explore the challenges surrounding extracurricular activities in Nepali schools. A deeper understanding of these barriers will help identify solutions and shape future policies to enhance the education system.

Extracurricular activities have long been recognized for their significant benefits to students, particularly in fostering creativity—an essential skill for future career success. These activities contribute to improved behavior, academic performance, school completion rates, and overall social development, helping students become well-rounded and successful adults (Massoni, 2011, as cited in Rafiullah et al., 2017).

However, it has been observed that students are dedicating less time to extracurricular activities, instead spending a considerable amount of time on activities that do not contribute to their academic growth. Research suggests that students who actively participate in extracurricular programs tend to exhibit fewer behavioral issues. Their engagement in structured activities enhances self-discipline, fosters a sense of routine, and ultimately boosts their self-confidence and self-esteem (Massoni & Erub, 2011, as cited in Rafiullah et al., 2017).

Extracurricular activities play a crucial role in the all-round development of children. As educators, we must recognize their impact on students' academic and personal growth. According to Cosinger (2011), students who engage in extracurricular activities tend to achieve higher grades compared to those who do not participate.

In Nepal today, the education system faces several challenges, including behavioral issues, declining academic performance, moral concerns, and increasing dropout rates. The results of the Secondary Education Examination (SEE) over the years indicate a consistent decline in students' academic outcomes. Various newspaper reports and research studies have highlighted the recurring cases of dropouts and even student suicides following SEE result announcements in different parts of the country.

With over fifteen years of experience teaching at the secondary and tertiary levels, I have observed that issues such as moral decline, criminal behavior, school dropouts, and low academic achievement are more prevalent in community schools compared to private or institutional schools. Addressing these challenges requires a stronger emphasis on extracurricular activities, as they not only enhance academic performance but also foster discipline, resilience, and emotional well-being among students.

Various studies in Nepal have highlighted a decline in student engagement with extracurricular activities, as well as challenges in their effective implementation. Instead of being a strong and integrated part of education, extracurricular activities are often overlooked at different levels of schooling.

This study raises important questions about the role and perception of extracurricular activities in education. Are we failing to provide teachers, students, parents, and other stakeholders with a deeper understanding of extracurricular activities and their positive impact on academic achievement and overall child development? Furthermore, what are the perspectives of students and teachers regarding the concept and implementation of extracurricular activities in schools?

This is why I have chosen to conduct research on extracurricular activities. The primary objective of this study is to explore the perceptions of students and teachers regarding the implementation of extracurricular activities in secondary schools in Nepal.

Specifically, this study aims to examine how these key stakeholder's students and teachers, understand and perceive extracurricular activities at the school level. To achieve this, the research focuses on the main question, what are the understandings and perceptions of stakeholders (teachers and students) regarding extracurricular activities in schools?

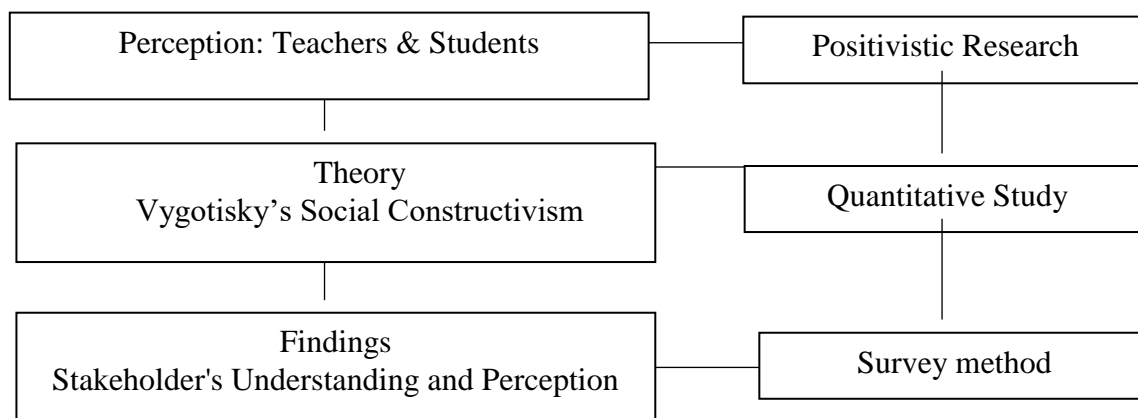
A quantitative descriptive research approach, based on deductive procedures, was employed to meet the study's objectives. The research follows a simple survey design while maintaining flexibility in its execution. Although a structured questionnaire was used, adjustments were made after piloting the tool to ensure its effectiveness. Given the study's scope, survey research was chosen as the primary data collection method, involving a large number of respondents and standardized questionnaires.

### **Conceptual Framework of the Study**

Conceptual framework is the most essential part of any research study since it serves as the basis for the entire study work and also a good guide to direct the researcher to

think about the research. Accordingly, I also prescribed below framework for my study work:

**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework**



The diagram above shows the conceptual framework of the Research work, which guided the researcher throughout the research process. The conceptual framework is divided into two: methodological and theoretical. The methodological concept deals with the research paradigm, the frame of analysis, and the respondents. Similarly, this research is based on the positivistic research paradigm.

## Method

The researcher personally developed the questionnaire after reviewing relevant literature, including books, journals, articles, and online resources. In addition, discussions with the different researcher helped shape the final tool. A questionnaire was chosen as the primary data collection method, and the survey questions were designed using a Likert scale to align with the study's objectives. Once the data was collected, it was organized and analyzed using descriptive statistics. SPSS software was employed to process the data, and for the descriptive analysis, frequencies and percentages were calculated for each response.

## Analysis and Interpretation

This chapter presents, analyzes, and interprets key data to address the specific research questions of the study, which focus on extracurricular activities in secondary schools within the Khairahani Municipality of Chitwan District, Nepal. The perspectives on extracurricular activities vary among students, teachers, head teachers, and parents. The survey consisted of two main questions, each with different categories of responses. The first question asked participants to define extracurricular activities. The results revealed that 45.09% of teachers and 37.5% of students disagreed with the notion that extracurricular activities are conducted outside of the regular school day. Instead, they perceived extracurricular activities as a part of the regular school day. The findings are presented in the following table.

Table 1. Perception of extracurricular activities are conducted outside of the regular school day

Response by Ratings	Teachers		Students	
	No	%	No	%
Strongly Disagree	15	29.41	16	31.37
Disagree	23	45.09	19	37.25
Neutral	3	5.88	2	3.92
Agree	7	13.72	8	15.68
Strongly Agree	2	3.92	5	9.8
Missing	1	1.96	0	0
Total	51	100.0	51	100.0

According to Hensch (2020), a key aspect of teaching is that educators not only conduct classes but also participate in non-classroom activities during the school day. While many extracurricular activities are typically held outside of regular school hours, these activities contribute to learning that takes place outside the classroom. From the discussion above, we can conclude that all participants agree that extracurricular activities do not occur solely outside the regular school day, but are integrated into the classroom activities.

In the second category of responses to the first question, 45.09% of teachers and 37.25% of students disagreed with the notion that extracurricular activities are simply social activities offered outside the school curriculum. This indicates that extracurricular activities are viewed as more than just social events and can also be integrated within the school setting. The findings are presented in the table below.

Table 2. Perceptions of extracurricular activities are social activities delivered outside of the school curriculum.

Response by Ratings	Teachers		Students	
	No	%	No	%
Strongly Disagree	13	25.49	8	15.68
Disagree	23	45.09	19	37.25
Neutral	5	9.8	5	9.8
Agree	4	7.84	16	31.37
Strongly Agree	6	11.76	3	5.88
Missing	0	0	0	0
Total	51	100.0	51	100.0

According to Anjum (2021), extracurricular activities encompass those that influence peer groups and other social relationships within the school, as well as socioeconomic activities that fall outside the formal school curriculum. The data presented in the table above shows that there is disagreement among participants about whether extracurricular activities are exclusively offered outside the school curriculum, yet all participants agree that these activities are an integral part of the overall school experience.

Similarly, the majority of respondents, with 54.9% of teachers and 50.98% of students, do not view extracurricular activities as purely voluntary activities. This suggests that they are open to recognizing extracurricular activities as a standard part of the school program. They highlight the importance of extracurricular activities as a crucial component of school activities and overall programming. The findings are presented in the table below.

Table 3. Perceptions of extracurricular activities are volunteer work; they are not sponsored by a school

Response by Ratings	Teachers		Students	
	No	%	No	%
Strongly Disagree	28	54.9	26	50.98
Disagree	15	29.41	11	21.56
Neutral	3	5.88	5	9.80
Agree	3	5.88	7	13.72
Strongly Agree	2	3.92	2	3.92
Missing	0	0	0	0
Total	51	100.0	51	100.0

According to Wells (2019), extracurricular activities are typically considered volunteer activities that are not supported by the school or university. However, as shown in the table above, respondents disagree with the notion that extracurricular activities are merely volunteer work and not funded by the school. This indicates that they all recognize the importance of extracurricular activities being supported and funded by schools.

The second question asked participants about their understanding of the importance of extracurricular activities. The majority of teachers (58.82%) and students (54.90%) agreed that extracurricular activities are essential for developing students' interests. Additionally, 15.68% of teachers and 19.60% of students strongly agreed on the value of extracurricular activities in fostering students' interests. The findings are presented in the table below.

Table 4. Different Responses on Exploration on Students Interest

Response by Rating	Teachers		Students	
	No	%	No	No

Strongly Disagree	4	7.84	3	5.88
Disagree	3	5.88	5	9.80
Neutral	6	11.76	5	9.80
Agree	30	58.82	28	54.90
Strongly Agree	8	15.68	10	19.60
Total	N= 51		N= 51	

Extracurricular activities are crucial in determining a student's interests, aptitude, values, and opportunities, as well as providing a foundation for other career choices (Vogel & Adelman, 2012). This research also revealed that participants share the same thoughts as the literature, implying that stakeholders recognize extracurricular activities as a means of expressing students' interests.

According to the respondents, extracurricular activities are also crucial for preparing students for their future and higher education. A total of 43.13% of teachers and 50.98% of students agreed that extracurricular activities are essential for students' future preparedness, while 31.37% of teachers and 35.29% of students strongly agreed. Vogel and Adelman (2012) suggest that students who engage in extracurricular activities find it easier to prepare for careers and further education. The table below illustrates these findings.

Table 5. Different Responses on Preparation of Future and Higher Education

Response by Ratings	Teachers		Students	
	No	%	No	%
Strongly Disagree	2	3.92	1	1.96
Disagree	5	9.8	2	3.92
Neutral	6	11.76	4	7.84
Agree	22	43.13	26	50.98
Strongly Agree	16	31.37	18	35.29
Total	51	100.0	51	100.0

Extracurricular activities are vital for students' emotional and physical development, according to 45.09% of teachers and 19.60 % of students are agreed where as 49.01% teachers and 76.47% students are strongly agreed. Some parents, on the other hand, refuse to recognize that extracurricular activities are necessary. This is presented in the following table.

Table 6. Different Responses on Tools for Emotional and Physical Development

Response by Ratings	Teachers		Students	
	No	%	No	%
Strongly Disagree	0	0	1	3.3

Disagree	0	0	1	3.3
Neutral	3	5.88	0	0
Agree	23	45.09	10	19.60
Strongly Agree	25	49.01	39	76.47
Total	N= 51		N= 51	

Literature also suggests that extracurricular activities help teenagers develop the social and cognitive skills needed to navigate various settings and situations. These activities can also play a role in reducing negative or violent behaviors while promoting positive personality development (Bornstein & Leventhal, 2015).

Extracurricular activities are seen as effective in reducing antisocial behavior, with 47.05% of teachers and 49.01% of students agreeing, while 37.25% of teachers and 31.37% of students strongly agreeing. As a result, extracurricular activities contribute to the development of social skills. ECAs are also an excellent way to enhance social harmony, collaboration, and teamwork (Bornstein & Leventhal, 2015). The findings are shown in the table below.

Table 7. Tools for Decreasing Unsocial Behaviours and Developing Social Skills

Response by Ratings	Teachers		Students	
	No	%	No	%
Strongly Disagree	0	0	1	1.96
Disagree	2	3.92	1	1.96
Neutral	6	11.76	8	15.68
Agree	24	47.05	25	49.01
Strongly Agree	19	37.25	16	31.37
	N=51		N=51	

According to the responses, extracurricular activities are viewed as beneficial for academic outcomes. Among teachers, 58.82% agree, and 19.60% strongly agree, while among students, 60.78% agree, and 15.68% strongly agree. This suggests that extracurricular activities support not only physical, social, and emotional development but also contribute to cognitive growth. The relevant statistics are provided below.

Table 8. Medium for Students to Perform Better Grade Result in School Years

Response by Ratings	Teachers		Students	
	No	%	No	%
Strongly Disagree	1	1.96	2	3.92
Disagree	5	9.80	4	7.84
Neutral	5	9.80	9	17.64



Agree	30	58.82	31	60.78
Strongly Agree	10	19.60	8	15.68
Total	N= 51		N=51	

To support the previous explanation, Agyekum (2021) noted that while extracurricular activities may not directly contribute to academic credit, they can significantly enhance a student's overall academic achievement.

According to the respondents, 50.98% of teachers and 35.29% of students strongly agree, while 47.05% of teachers and 39.21% of students agree that extracurricular activities help students form friendships, build self-esteem, develop socialization skills, and improve their physical well-being. Extracurricular activities also contribute to students gaining social recognition, boosting self-esteem, and enhancing physical fitness (Deb, 2018). The findings are presented below.

Table 9. Need to Facilitate Friendship, Build Self Esteem, Learn Socialization Skills and Improve Physical Fitness

Response by Ratings	Teachers		Students	
	No	%	No	%
Strongly Disagree	1	1.96	5	9.80
Disagree	0	0	2	3.92
Neutral	0	0	6	11.76
Agree	26	50.98	20	39.21
Strongly Agree	24	47.05	18	35.29
Total	N=51		N=51	

According to the table below, 52.94% of teachers and 54.90% of students agree, while 50.98% of teachers and 33.33% of students strongly agree that extracurricular activities help children discover their inherent qualities and develop their skills.

Table 10. Facilitator to Discover Natural Abilities and Build their Skills

Response by Ratings	Teachers		Students	
	No	%	No	%
Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0
Disagree	4	7.84	1	1.96
Neutral	0	0	5	9.80
Agree	27	52.94	28	54.90
Strongly Agree	26	50.98	17	33.33
Total	N= 51		N=51	

Deb (2018) argued that participating in arts-related activities can enhance creativity, imagination, fluency, as well as critical and divergent thinking, which aligns with the previous discussion. Moreover, engaging in extracurricular activities helps students set new goals and find greater meaning in life.

According to the table below, 60.78% of teachers and 49.01% of students agree, while 35.29% of teachers and 41.17% of students strongly agree that extracurricular activities are an effective way to prevent students from engaging in antisocial or risky behavior.

Table 11. Means to Avoid Risky Behaviours

Response by Ratings	Teachers		Students	
	No	%	No	%
Strongly Disagree	0	0	1	1.96
Disagree	2	3.92	3	5.88
Neutral	0	0	1	1.96
Agree	31	60.78	25	49.01
Strongly Agree	18	35.29	21	41.17
Total	N=51		N=51	

According to various research reports, adolescents who participate in extracurricular activities are less likely to engage in harmful behaviors such as substance abuse, including drinking and drug addiction (PISA, 2018).

### Finding and Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that stakeholders share a common understanding and perspective on extracurricular activities. Both teachers and students define extracurricular activities as social activities that occur within the school day, are considered volunteer work, and are not typically funded.

Moreover, the respondents emphasize the importance of extracurricular activities in various aspects of student development. These include exploring students' interests, preparing for future careers and higher education, enhancing emotional and physical development, reducing antisocial behaviors, improving social skills, achieving better academic results, fostering friendships, building self-esteem, socializing, avoiding risky behaviors, and promoting physical fitness.

### Conclusion

Based on the research questions, conclusions were drawn from the findings of this study. The implementation of extracurricular activities (ECAs) in schools is essential to enhance the quality of education and make the teaching-learning process more effective. The perceptions and understanding of ECAs by teachers and students have a direct influence on their successful implementation. According to the data, it can be concluded that these stakeholders possess a strong awareness of the importance of ECAs in fostering students' educational, physical, and social development.

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