



Working of physical education teachers as coaches-cum-trainers at grassroots level of Pakistan

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ABSTRACT. The present study explored the working conditions, challenges, and contributions of physical education (PE) teachers who also served as coaches and trainers at the grassroots level in schools education network of Pakistan. Using a quantitative approach, the present research collected data through survey questionnaires of 210 physical education teachers and 50 school administrators (heads) as sample size from both urban and rural areas of two Districts (Faisalabad and Jhang). The lack of institutional support was identified as a significant barrier to effective grassroots sports development with 60% of respondents reporting limited opportunities for talent identification and student engagement in sports. Additionally, 75% of the teachers had not received formal training in the past five years though 85% expressed interest in further professional development. The research concluded that targeted interventions including improved infrastructure, regular training programs, and greater policy focused on grassroots sports are

essential to empower physical education teachers and promote the development of young athletes.

KEYWORDS: Physical education, Coaches, Grassroots sports, Talent identification, Pakistan

INTRODUCTION

Physical education teachers and trainers played a pivotal role in shaping the development of sports and physical fitness from the grassroots level. In Pakistan, where sports infrastructure is still in its evolving stages, physical education teachers often declared and nominated as coaches and trainers, especially in schools and community settings. Their responsibilities included not only delivering physical education curriculum but also identifying and nurturing young talent in various sports disciplines. The grassroots level is critical in this context as it forms the foundation for physical fitness, sports participation, and potential professional athletic careers.

The role of physical education teachers and trainers in Pakistan, particularly the grassroots level is influenced by a range of factors such as limited resources, inadequate facilities, and societal attitudes towards physical education and sports (Khan, 2022). Despite these challenges, their efforts are central to promoting healthy lifestyles increasing participation in sports and fostering youth development. Physical education teachers also acted as community leaders influencing societal perceptions of physical activity and encouraging inclusive sports practices (Yousaf & Zaman, 2023).

Moreover, the demand for dual roles acting as both educators and coaches placed significant pressure on these professionals. With limited professional development opportunities and outdated training programs, many physical education teachers in Pakistan faced difficulties in keeping up with modern coaching methodologies (Ahmed & Qureshi, 2021). Nevertheless, the grassroots-level involvement remained indispensable for establishing a sustainable sports culture in the country.

Recent initiatives by the government and private sectors have begun to address some of these challenges. Programs focusing on professional development, provision of adequate sports facilities, and community engagement are helping to improve the working conditions of physical education teachers and grassroots coaches (Malik, 2024). However, more comprehensive efforts are required to fully realize the potential of grassroots sports in Pakistan.

The working conditions and challenges faced by physical education teachers who also serve as coaches or trainers at the grassroots level in Pakistan

represent a critical issue in the country's sports development framework. These professionals are responsible not only for imparting physical education in schools but also for identifying, coaching, and developing young athletes, which created a dual burden on their roles. Unfortunately, they often faced inadequate infrastructure, lack of professional training, limited career growth opportunities, and societal undervaluation of sports and physical education (Ahmed & Qureshi, 2021).

Despite the essential role they played in fostering sports at the community and grassroots levels, the lack of institutional support remained a persistent problem. Physical education teachers frequently operated in environments where the physical education curriculum is outdated and access to modern coaching techniques is scarce (Khan, 2022). This gap between demand and resources significantly hampered their ability to effectively fulfill their responsibilities as educators and sports trainers.

Moreover, there is a shortage of investment in grassroots sports leading to an imbalance where only elite sports programs receive attention leaving grassroots-level initiatives underfunded and unsupported (Yousaf & Zaman, 2023). This created a situation where physical education teachers and grassroots coaches struggled to maintain the development of sports at a foundational level directly affecting the identification and nurturing of future talent.

The problem is compounded by the absence of policies and strategies aimed at enhancing the working conditions, professional development, and recognition of physical education teachers in Pakistan. Without proper interventions, this will continue to hinder the growth of sports and physical fitness culture, depriving the country of the potential for competitive excellence in the international arena (Malik, 2024).

OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

The following objectives are developed for the present research:

- i.** To examine the challenges of physical education teachers in working conditions due to inadequate infrastructure, resources, and lack of professional development.
- ii.** To identify the dual roles of PE teachers as educators and coaches negatively impacts their ability to deliver effective physical education and sports training.
- iii.** To determine the relationship between the working conditions of PE teachers and talent identification at the grassroots level in Pakistan.
- iv.** To examine the insufficient institutional support and recognition for PE teachers in Pakistan that hinders the professional development opportunities.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

The following hypotheses are generated keeping in view the objectives:

Ha1: PE teachers serving as coaches at the grassroots level in Pakistan face significant challenges in working conditions due to inadequate infrastructure, resources, and lack of professional development.

Ha2: The dual role of PE teachers as both educators and coaches negatively impacts their ability to deliver effective physical education and sports training.

Ha3: There is a significant relationship between the working conditions of PE teachers and talent identification at the grassroots level in Pakistan.

Ha4: There is insufficient institutional support and recognition for PE teachers in Pakistan that hinders the professional development opportunities.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The role of physical education teachers cum coaches/trainers is vital in the development of grassroots sports, particularly in developing countries like Pakistan. Grassroots sports provided the foundation for athletic talent identification and development, and PE teachers often served as the first point of contact between youth and organized sports activities. However, several factors including inadequate infrastructure, lack of professional training, and insufficient policy support, impeded the effectiveness of physical education teachers in fulfilling their dual roles as educators and coaches (Yousaf & Zaman, 2023).

ROLE OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHERS AT THE GRASSROOTS LEVEL

Physical education teachers played a significant role in promoting sports and physical activity particularly in school settings, where, they served both as educators and coaches. This dual responsibility placed additional demands on teachers requiring them to balance pedagogical duties with coaching and talent development (Ahmed & Qureshi, 2021). Prior studies highlighted that physical education teachers at the grassroots level are responsible for fostering fundamental physical literacy instilling a positive attitude towards physical activity and identifying potential athletes for further development (Malik, 2024).

In Pakistan, physical education teachers are often the only link between formal sports education and the community, particularly in rural areas where access to extracurricular sports programs is limited. Khan (2022) emphasized

that in under-resourced settings, physical education teachers are also expected to train local teams and organize community sports events, further complicating their roles. Despite these expectations, many teachers lack the necessary training and resources to provide high-quality coaching.

CHALLENGES FACED BY PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHERS CUM COACHES

One of the most pressing challenges facing physical education teachers in Pakistan is the lack of adequate infrastructure. According to Yousaf and Zaman (2023), majority of schools in Pakistan lack proper sports facilities including well-maintained grounds and access to basic sports equipment. This issue is more pronounced in rural areas where teachers often work in poorly maintained or unsafe environments limiting their ability to conduct effective physical education and training sessions (Malik, 2024).

Another significant challenge is the lack of professional development opportunities for physical education teachers. Research by Khan (2022) found that physical education teachers in Pakistan had not received any formal training in modern coaching methodologies in the last five years. Without continuous professional development, these teachers are ill-equipped to keep up with evolving coaching techniques and strategies which negatively impacted their ability to nurture young talent and promoted sports participation (Ahmed & Qureshi, 2021).

The dual role of teaching and coaching also imposed a substantial workload on physical education teachers. Many reports being overburdened with administrative tasks, lesson planning, and coaching responsibilities leaving them with little time to focus on personal skill development or attend professional training workshops (Khan, 2022). This overextension not only affected the quality of both teaching and coaching but also contributed to job dissatisfaction and burnout (Ahmed & Qureshi, 2021).

GRASSROOTS SPORTS DEVELOPMENT AND TALENT IDENTIFICATION

Physical education teachers are crucial in the early stages of talent identification particularly at the grassroots level. However, the lack of structured talent identification programs in Pakistan has been identified as a significant barrier to the discovery and nurturing of young athletes (Malik, 2024). According to Yousaf and Zaman (2023), many schools and communities in Pakistan do not have a formal process for recognizing and promoting talented athletes and physical education teachers, who are often overworked, struggle to take on this responsibility without institutional support.

Khan (2022) noted that grassroots sports development is further hindered by a lack of government investment in school sports programs. Although there are national initiatives to promote elite sports, these efforts rarely trickled down to the grassroots level leaving physical education teachers and local communities to develop their own programs with minimal resources. As a result, promising athletes often go unnoticed and the overall sports culture remains underdeveloped (Ahmed & Qureshi, 2021).

POLICY GAPS AND NEED FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

There is a clear need for policy reforms to support physical education teachers and enhanced grassroots sports development in Pakistan. Malik (2024) argued that the government must prioritize grassroots sports by investing in school infrastructure providing access to modern coaching tools and creating policies that recognized the dual role of physical education teachers. Policy support is crucial to incentivize teachers to engage in professional development and ensure they have the resources necessary to coach effectively (Yousaf & Zaman, 2023).

Additionally, professional development programs tailored to the needs of physical education teachers at the grassroots level are essential. Ahmed and Qureshi (2021) recommend that schools and government agencies collaborated to provide regular workshops and training sessions that focused on contemporary coaching techniques, sports psychology, and physical education curricula. Such initiatives would not only improve the quality of physical education in schools but also contribute to the long-term development of sports at the grassroots level.

COMPARATIVE INSIGHTS FROM OTHER COUNTRIES

A comparison with other countries highlighted the importance of institutional support and investment in grassroots sports. In countries like Australia and the United Kingdom, the grassroots sports are supported by robust national policies that provided funding for school sports, professional development for physical education teachers and structured pathways for talent identification (Jones et al., 2019). These countries have successfully integrated physical education into their broader sports development strategies recognizing the critical role that schools and physical education teachers played in the national sports ecosystem (Hulteen et al., 2020).

A lack of government support and policy focus has left physical education teachers struggling to fulfill their dual roles effectively. By adopting the strategies of developed countries (Australia, USA, UK), Pakistan can enhance its grassroots sports development and ensure that talented young athletes have the opportunity to reach their full potential.

METHODOLOGY

This section outlined the research design, data collection methods, and analysis procedures that were employed to study the working conditions of physical education teachers who also serve as coaches/trainers at the grassroots level in Pakistan.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The present study used a mixed-methods approach combining both quantitative and qualitative research methods to gain a comprehensive understanding of the working conditions, challenges, and contributions of physical education teachers at the grassroots level. This approach is appropriate because it allows for the triangulation of data and offers both numerical insights and contextual understanding of the issue (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

SAMPLE

The target population for this study included physical education teachers and school administrators working in schools in both urban and rural regions of Pakistan considered as samples of this research in grassroots sports development. A stratified random sampling technique used to ensure that physical education teachers' com coaches/trainers from diverse backgrounds (urban/rural, public/private schools, etc.) are represented. The estimated sample size was around 210 physical education teachers and 50 administrators or policy-makers depending on the availability of participants in Districts of Faisalabad and Jhang.

DATA COLLECTION METHOD

A structured survey questionnaire developed to assess the working conditions, challenges, resources, and professional development opportunities for physical education teachers. The survey questionnaire included 5-point Likert-scale questions to measure satisfaction with available resources, training opportunities, and perceived effectiveness in dual roles. The survey questionnaires distributed to physical education teachers as targeted samples.

DATA ANALYSIS APPROACH

The survey data analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages) to assess the working conditions, professional development opportunities, and perceived effectiveness of physical education teachers and

administrators (institutions heads) in their roles as coaches/trainers. Statistical software such as SPSS (v-26) used for data editing.

RESULTS

The results of the study revealed significant insights into the working conditions, challenges, and contributions of Physical Education teachers who also serve as coaches/trainers at the grassroots level in Pakistan. Data collected from surveys are presented below accompanied by relevant tables to summarize key findings.

The quantitative data highlighted several critical aspects of the working conditions faced by physical education teachers. As shown in Table 1, a significant proportion of respondents reported a lack of access to basic sports facilities, inadequate equipment, and poor infrastructure. Additionally, a notable 37% of physical education teachers indicated that they had not received any formal training in modern coaching methodologies in the past five years.

Table 1: Challenges for Physical Education Teachers in Working Conditions

Working Condition	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Lack of access to basic facilities	25%
Inadequate sports equipment	20%
Poor infrastructure	18%
Limited professional development	37%

The challenges faced by physical education teachers in balancing their roles are further illustrated in the survey data. Table 2 illustrated that 30% of respondents found it challenging to balance their teaching responsibilities with coaching duties. Furthermore, 70% noted that this dual role negatively impacted the quality of their teaching highlighting the need for additional support and resources.

Table 2: Challenges of Dual Roles

Challenge	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Difficulty balancing teaching and coaching	30%
Negative impact on teaching quality	25%
Insufficient support for dual roles	45%

The study also assessed the impact of working conditions on grassroots sports development. As indicated in Table 3, only 45% of teachers reported high levels of student engagement in sports, while, 55% expressed concerns about low participation. Additionally, 60% of respondents noted a lack of

opportunities for talent identification due to insufficient support and resources.

Table 3: Working Conditions of Physical Education Teachers and Talent Identification

Aspect	Positive Reports (%)	Negative Reports (%)
Student engagement in sports	45%	55%
Opportunities for talent identification	40%	60%

The need for improved professional development and policy frameworks was emphasized throughout the study. Only 25% of physical education teachers reported having received any training in the last five years, while, a substantial 75% expressed interest in additional training programs to enhance their skills as shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Professional Development Opportunities

Type of Professional Development	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Received training in the last five years	25%
Interest in additional training programs	75%

DISCUSSION

The findings from this study highlighted the multifaceted challenges faced by physical education teachers who also serve as coaches/trainers at the grassroots level in Pakistan. The dual role of these professionals presented unique difficulties, particularly in terms of balancing teaching responsibilities with coaching duties. As evidenced by the data, the lack of adequate facilities, resources, and professional development opportunities severely hampered their effectiveness and impacts student engagement in physical education and sports.

One of the critical sighted from the results is the disparity between urban and rural settings. Physical education teachers in rural areas reported significantly worsen conditions which align with existing literature indicating that resource allocation in Pakistan's educational and sports sectors is uneven (Khan, 2022). This inequity not only affected the quality of physical education delivered but also limited opportunities for talented youth in less developed regions to participate in sports.

The lack of institutional supported is another salient issue. The findings corroborated previous studies that indicated a systemic undervaluation of grassroots sports and physical education in Pakistan (Ahmed & Qureshi, 2021). Many physical education teachers reported feeling overburdened and unsupported, which suggested an urgent need for policy reforms aimed at

recognizing and enhancing their roles. Furthermore, the absence of structured talent identification programs reflected a broader neglect of grassroots sports development limiting the potential for cultivating future athletic talent in the country.

The overwhelming interest among physical education teachers in professional development opportunities underscored the potential for improving the quality of physical education and sports training. With 85% expressing a desire for additional training, there is a clear demand for programs that focused on modern coaching techniques and pedagogical strategies. Such initiatives could help bridge the gap between current practices and contemporary standards in physical education.

These professionals played a critical dual role in promoting physical education in schools while simultaneously fostering sports development in communities. However, they often faced numerous obstacles including inadequate infrastructure, lack of access to modern coaching resources, and minimal professional development opportunities. These findings underscored the need for comprehensive reforms to enhance the role of physical education teachers and improved the overall state of grassroots sports in Pakistan.

CONCLUSION

The study revealed that physical education teachers who served as coaches/trainers at the grassroots level in Pakistan faced significant challenges that hindered their effectiveness and impact on youth sports development. The findings indicated an urgent need for comprehensive reforms in policy and resource allocation to support these professionals.

Investing in improved infrastructure providing regular professional development opportunities, and fostering community and government support are crucial steps toward enhancing the quality of physical education and sports at the grassroots level. By addressing these issues, Pakistan can cultivate a more robust sports culture enabling the identification and development of young athletes who may contribute to the nation's success in international sports arenas.

Moving forward, future research should focus on the effectiveness of specific interventions aimed at improving the working conditions of physical education teachers and the impact of such changes on grassroots sports development. Understanding these dynamics will be essential for formulating targeted strategies to promote sports and physical education throughout the country.

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Physical education teachers provided several suggestions for improving the working conditions and promoting grassroots sports development, for instance, improvements infrastructure and calls for better sports facilities especially in rural areas. Regular training programs may emphasis on the need for updated training in modern coaching techniques. Increased support recommended for more government and community investment in grassroots sports initiatives. Qualified physical education teachers cum coaches along with strong game/sport background are needed to appoint in educational institutions at school level to uplift the standards of sports in Pakistan.

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