

## **Co-Curricular Activities: A Case Study on Perspectives of Winning Secondary School Students**

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### **Abstract**

*The purpose of this study was to investigate the perspectives of winning secondary school students about co-curricular activities. It was a qualitative case study focusing on co-curricular activities arranged at the secondary school level. Participants were selected through the purposive sampling of winning male students in different co-curricular activities at tehsil level enrolled in grade IX and X secondary school of tehsil Wazirabad District of Gujranwala. An interview guide was developed based on relevant literature and keeping in view the purpose of the study to gather information from the*

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*students. Semi-structured interviews and focus group sessions were used for data collection from the research participants. All the transcripts were transcribed and translated into the English language. Data were analyzed through qualitative content analysis using data displays for each participant and research themes. The data gained from the students uncovered various aspects that helped to understand the perspectives of winning co-curricular activities. Students believed that co-curricular exercises had a positive outcome on students at the secondary school level. It was also found that active involvement in co-curricular activities improved personal control to a certain level, tolerance in extreme circumstances, and duty towards allocated undertakings, level of co-operation, and positive conduct. They learned teamwork, administration qualities, discipline, self-confidence, time management, persistence in extreme circumstances, responsibility towards prearranged tasks, and the development of positive actions. They also learned to handle critical situations. The perspectives also revealed that participation in such activities improved their health and avoidance of negative activities; thus, learning to spend their time positively. Further studies may be conducted with different methodologies and levels of students.*

**Keywords:** *Co-curricular Activities, Games and Sports, Secondary Level*

## **Introduction**

Co-curricular activities are referred to as the prescribed curriculum, including sports, scouting,

*Kashmir Journal of Education*  
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athletics, hobbies, literary societies, dramas, and debates. These activities bring physical and social adjustment with character and personality building in the child (Singh, 2017). These activities are designed to make the school a better place of learning (Hopkins, 2003) and are categorized as formal and informal activities. Formal activities are structured like sports, debates, and dramas, while informal activities are described as leisure activities like listening to music and watching T.V. These activities are organized at each level of the school. There are different types like sports, comedy shows, essay writing, arts, and music.

Co-curricular activities have great importance. These have been proved to be essential for the psychological and social development of human beings. These provide a roadmap for socialization and self-evaluation. Furthermore, leadership skills are developed through these activities. The feeling of belongingness, the inspiration for learning, and physical, ethical, mental, social, emotional, and disciplinary development are also done through these. In the view of Astin (1993), “students’ values, beliefs, and aspirations tend to change in the direction of the dominant values, beliefs, and aspirations of the peer group” (p. 398). Students’ behavior is affected positively. Motivation and co-operation also result in these activities. It is also believed to be contributing to the development of values, beliefs, team building. These activities help in personality development and

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facing future challenges. The main aim is to develop co-operation, leadership, punctuality, teamwork, and creative talent (Singh, 2017). Co-curricular activities give opportunities to students for a lifelong communication connection with different school programs that are helpful to enhance their skills and understanding. By motivating the students to participate in different co-curricular activities, it will develop the habit of giving respect to each other automatically in every situation among them. Physical activities can improve the cognitive development of students. Through performance in co-curricular activities which are held in schools, students choose their field line for their future, enhance their interests to achieve their aim, gain different life experiences and knowledge. These activities have an impact on students' motivation and competence (Guest & Schneider, 2003).

Co-curricular activities have vital importance from an academic perspective. These activities have been believed to be important for the relationship between teachers and students. In the view of Reeves, Lewin, Espin, and Zwarenstein (2011), there is a positive relationship between students' involvement in co-curricular activities and their scholastic work. Different characteristics also help in classroom teaching for the students. Co-curricular activities are, along these lines, a progression of exercises related to the school program, which help to draw out the all-round improvement of the students outside the subjects for examination plan. Through the participation of students in sports, they work with more excitement and attention in class.

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These activities are designed by schools that usually provide social and emotional enrichment with students' academic achievement (Joseph, 2009).

Co-curricular activities also cause a change in the school environment too. Students can do various activities such as sports, athletic events, games, quizzes, and competitions etc. to achieve fame and respect in school. These co-curricular activities should be arranged for students only for fun, excitement, pleasure, representation of the school, village, and students should not feel any burden during the academic session due to these activities. School and co-curricular activities build the spirit of students in many ways. Klesse (2004) argues that "tying school spirit to winning sports seasons will eventually fail, school spirit should be the result of a careful plan of activities monthly that celebrate the uniqueness of your school" (p.14). Therefore, these have importance in school improvement.

### **Review of the Related Literature**

In previous literature, there are different studies on co-curricular activities and their effects with different perspectives. In a study conducted by Singh (2017), the effect of co curricula activities was found positive on students' academic performance and personality development. In another study, these activities have also been effective in developing students' performance (Brown, 1999). In a study, participation in music had been proved effective for

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academic achievement (Broh, 2002; Ponter, 1999). In the Pakistani context, the impact of co-curricular activities was found positive among secondary level students on academic achievement in KPK (Ayaz, Shah, Khan, & Ahmad, 2018). International studies underscore the importance of co-curricular activities for students in general. However, little is known about the perspectives of students who participate and win district level co-curricular activities. The current study was aimed to fill this gap.

### **The aim, and Objectives of the Study**

This research study aimed to understand the perspectives of winning secondary school students on co-curricular activities in one district of Punjab. Since people's perspectives consist of their "aims or intentions, their strategies, what they see as being significant for them, the reasons they give for their activity, and what they see as the expected outcomes of their activity" (O'Donoghue, 2006, p. 39), the general aim about research can be divided in the following objectives:

1. To identify the intentions of the secondary school students with respect to co-curricular activities
2. To identify strategies of the secondary school students to achieve these intentions
3. To identify their reasons for having specific intentions and employing particular strategies to achieve their intentions.
4. To identify the significance of these intentions and strategies for secondary school students

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5. To identify the secondary school students' expected outcomes in participating in co-curricular activities

## **Methods**

The current study was qualitative. The case study design was considered appropriate to be used. This study aimed to explore the secondary school students' perspectives on co-curricular activities. Creswell (2009) described "a case study is a good approach when the inquirer has identifiable cases with boundaries and seeks to provide an in-depth understanding of the cases or a comparison of several cases" (p.74). In this type of research, the researcher tries to gain knowledge of phenomenon through the perspectives of participants (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). The purpose of the study was to explore the outcomes of co-curricular activities like a leisure activity, cricket, badminton, football, kabaddi, hockey from the perspectives of the winning students. The sample was selected by purposive sampling, fulfilling a specific criterion: They had won the zonal level competition and enrolled in one academic year at one Tehsil of Gujranwala District. The participants were selected based on their participation in literary & culture contests and sports & games. Participants of the study were 11 in number (five from literary and six from sports competitions). The researchers explored the perspectives of students through focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews. An

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interview guide was developed, keeping in view the relevant literature and objectives of the study.

Data were analyzed through qualitative content analysis. It is “a method for systematically describing the meaning of qualitative data” (Schreier, 2012, p. 1). To arrange the whole information, the researchers transcribed and translated all audio data into English. The students’ views were coded specifically. The data were analyzed based on six factors keeping in view the objectives of the study that is, winning students’ perspective about co-curricular activities impact, perspectives, students’ intentions and reasons for selection of co-curricular activities, students’ planning/strategies, students’ significance about their intentions and strategies, students’ reasons about their intentions and strategies, and students’ outcomes participating in co-curricular activities. All ethical considerations were kept into consideration.

## **Results**

The current study explored secondary school students’ perspectives on co-curricular activities. Five aspects were used to explore the perspectives of the winning students, which are elaborated as follows:

### **Winning Students’ Perspectives about Impact of Co-curricular Activities**

According to the perspectives of the participants, co-curricular activities had a positive impact on the students’ personalities. The participants reported that winning values in the



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students were not achieved through the course readings. However, they got the most part of these by participating in co-curricular activities. The winning participants wanted to bring fame for themselves, parents, and schools. In addition, they wanted to reduce the risk of depression, avoid drug, alcohol, and build up a good judgment of health and friendship with other school students. Furthermore, it was also reported that they got thoughts and ideas through different exercises outside of the regular classes.

#### **Student Intentions and Reasons for Selection of Co-curricular activities**

The participants of the study reported their aim after selection of co-curricular activities in different ways like getting fame, personality development, and make them fit. The participants of the literary and cultural contest described their aim to get fame in school, village, and society with personality development. One of the participants argued that:

I will bring fame to my country by working hard and doing a rehearsal. I will write such a patriotic song that will surprise the whole world, and hence I will bring fame to my country. I will produce a very good national song, and then I will share it with different T.V channels and social media so that the population of the world can recognize that the people of Pakistan are very talented and Pakistan is a very wonderful country. (Participant II LCC)

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In the same way, one of the participants from literary and cultural contests stated improvement in personality, education, and performance was his passion and motivation. He described it in the following way:

I participated in Urdu speech so that I can motivate people and can express my views in front of them. Through these words, I can motivate in a very effective way. Dr. Allama Iqbal is the best example that motivated the nation through his poetry. By writing columns to provide awareness to the people, we can motivate them. (Participant IV LCC)

But on the other hand, all the participants of games/sports described their aim to remain fit and healthy, improve body texture, sharpen their minds, prevent themselves from diseases, spend their time positively, increase their values among their community, perform at the national level and also get fame, respect, love, a good position in society and ultimately spend a luxurious life. For example, one of the participants reported in the following words:

We want to maintain good health by participating in co-curricular activities. We observe that villages in which playgrounds are not present, their people use their free time in useless and negative activities and become sick. While the villages where the playgrounds are present, people remain active and spend their time in positive co-curricular activities. The person who takes part in positive activity remains healthy and fit. (Participant VI G)

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In the same way, one more participant reported that there was no obesity due to daily exercise.

On asking students' perceptions about reasons for these aims, most of them—from literary and cultural contests—reported that the basic reason was to gain a good mind and improvement of their skills. They further described that they were motivated by their parents, impressed by friends who participated in these activities, and won prizes at zone, tehsil, and district level. One of the participants stated in the following words:

The basic reason which I wanted is a good mind. If I prepare my English speech with so much effort, then it can uncover my various abilities. In the speech, we have to deliver the data to explain our views. The person who learns speech he can learn the lesson more quickly. (Participant I LCC)

Similarly, one of the participants reported in these words:

Every person has an aim in his life like to become a doctor or a good speaker, etc. But I aim to recite *Naat* through which we praise our Holy Prophet (PBUH). I selected these co-curricular activities because I was impressed by my friend, who recited *Naat* in different competitions and won prizes. (Participant III LCC)

But all of the games/sports participants answered that they had been fond of these games since their childhood through the performance of

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senior players and famous players. They got inspiration, learned useful things, improved their personality, and learned lessons of patience. They said that they remained busy through these activities rather than participating in negative and useless activities like the internet, call packages, and drug addiction. They also reported their participation at their school, tehsil, district, and division level. They expressed their desires that they wanted to be a part of the national teams of Pakistan. For example, one of the participants stated it in the following words:

By seeing the performance of senior players' games, we got motivated and started to play. We saw that people who did not play and remained busy in negative and useless activities like drug addiction. We started to play the game, and we were very far from these negative activities. (Participant VII G)

### **Students' Planning/ Strategies**

All the participants from both types reported that without effective planning, they could not achieve the aim. Furthermore, they answered that they had a fixed time table for their routine work as getting up early in the morning, offering prayers, and then practice. All the participants of the literary and cultural contest responded that they rehearsed according to pre-planned strategies under the supervision of fathers, teachers, or Masjid teachers. But the games and sports participants of the study reported that they practiced early in the morning in the supervision of their coaches and also got a helpful suggestion about their planning from their

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friends in sports ground like cricket ground, indoor hall, football ground, etc. For example, one of the participants from literary and cultural contests stated:

I worked hard for my planning. Take the example of Government. When they decide to make something like hospitals or roads, etc., it is not possible to make them directly. Firstly, they plan for it, and then they start the work. When we make planning after thinking, then we implement it. Nothing can be successful in life without effective planning. (Participant I LCC)

Most participants of games/sports reported their wish to become sportsmen to get fame at different levels and get other characteristics of sportsmanship. One of the participants stated in the following words:

It is my wish wherever I go, I bring fame to my institute, whether it is school, college, university, or any other institute, and become an example for others. I also want to get a scholarship from HEC with my excellent performance. (Participant VI G)

Responding to the question about the importance of planning, the research participants of literary & cultural contests and sports/games replied that they followed and evaluated their planning on a daily basis, worked regularly, burnt the midnight oil, set miles stones, and worked hard to achieve their specific intentions and also get success. One of the participants of the literary and cultural contest stated:

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Take the example of the Quran. If someone wants to learn it orally, then he will start to do work, but until that, if he will not give importance to this task, then it will not remain fresh in his mind and will not be fruitful for him. Both concentration and giving importance are very necessary to achieve any intention. (Participant I LCC)

One of the participants of games/sports stated that:

A person should not be disappointed because disappointment is not liked by Allah, and this problem can be solved by hard work and struggle. To be successful in life, a person should not forget one thing, that is, constant effort. (Student VI G)

### **Student Significance of their Intentions and Strategies**

Responding to the question about students' perspectives for these intentions and strategies, the participants responded differently. It was noted that most participants of literary and cultural contest spoke about the significance of intentions and strategies that they worked hard with devotion, managed proper time table, and gave preference to their intention and strategies to successfully achieve their aim in life. One of the participants replied that these intentions were very important for him because he worked hard with concentration, followed the time plan on a regular and continuous basis due to these intentions (Participant I LCC).

Another participant reported the importance of their intentions is due to his interest. He answered that by giving importance to his intention, he got

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fame for his parents, school, teachers, and country. He said that by evaluating the planning daily and by getting good suggestions from others, he became successful in achieving his aim. For example, he argued:

In this world, every kind of person exists when we share our ideas with them, some people discourage us, but some people motivate us that you are working very well and continue it to achieve success. They say work hard for the fame of our village and school. I desire to be famous and want to gain respect in society for the progress of my country. (Participant II LCC)

There were different perspectives found by the participants in games/sports. They reported the importance of their intentions is due to the benefits of proper time table for practice, balance in all activities, and practice with a coach and the proper time for games on weekends. One of the participants reported in the following words:

We learn discipline and many other skills by playing with different teams. Our personality has groomed and become more confident. We can reach at international level by doing hard work, regular practice, and devotion. To reach this level, there is a need for studies, reference to some famous persons, and perfect playing. To be an international player, a person should be confident, mature, and active. (Participant VI G)

Most of the group members were fond of the game since childhood. All of them started working to

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improve their performance and became skillful in this game. They also reported that by seeing the performance of great players, their intentions, and strategies in *Kabaddi* match, they got motivation and stimulations. They stated that if they had the aim to play at the upper level, then they had to build up stamina/endurance and confidence in themselves. They got success by setting the perfect time table and strategies to achieve the specific aim. For example, a research participant from *Kabaddi* stated that:

To achieve aims and to make good strategies, our coaches play a very important role. Due to this game, muscles remain fit, and the whole body looks healthy and sharp. I am interested in this game from childhood to its practice. This game keeps me healthy and active. Other games also keep me fresh, but I feel very fresh by playing this game. Our coaches provide us with coaching from their precious time. They give us time. They tell us different methods for the improvement in *Kabaddi*. (Participant VIII G)

### **Students' Reasons for their Intentions and Strategies**

The participants of the study reported the reasons for their intentions and strategies with a role in society, benefit in future, due to the personal interest and motivation. One of the participants stated that:

If a person works hard, then he gets benefits. Due to giving so much time to the aim then it will be



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achieved, and we can make progress. To get success in life, too much struggle is required. Every task requires hard work. For the smallest task like if our things fell on the earth, we have to bend to catch it. Work is work either it is less or more. (Participant I LCC).

Another participant reported this in the following words:

I desire to get free education from the University of England. It is my wish that they give free nationality and free education. I would like to share that to get success, hard work is needed, and too much effort is necessary to fulfill our desire. We desire to get fame, success, and to be respectable in the society. If we do not work hard, then we cannot get all these. (Participant II LCC)

To get respect for society, one of the participants reported in these words:

I want to get respect in society. Therefore, I can survive with honor, and my parents feel proud due to my good performance. I also expect to get free education so that my parents do not feel the burden of my education financially. I want to represent my country at the international level and to create awareness among people so they can know that Pakistan is a very good country. I want to tell other nations that Pakistan is a very good nation. (Participant IV LCC)

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The majority of the parents from games/sports also answered that these intentions were important to achieve a respectable position in society and to serve their country by exposing their hidden talent and by grooming our personality positively. They answered that “we wanted to be recognized by our good performance and special abilities in society. At the school level, we want to make an excellent position as an extraordinary student. Teachers will give an example of our positive activities to the other students in school”. One of the participants stated:

We will not leave football at any cost. Legs become very strong due to it. A person does not gain any weight in this game. At an early age, when we played this game and when we reached old age, we came to know about this game that this game provided us with many benefits. Therefore, we will suggest that we play football daily. It is a very good game. It makes the bones and muscles strong. (Participant VII G)

Most reported that these expectations were so important for them due to their valuable intentions. They described that they expected by their participation in co-curricular activities, the name of their institute, village, and parents would be brightened. They would become popular personalities and would get fame at the international level. They also answered that by participating in these activities, they would get a stable physique and improved health. They would not be the victim of the various disease that many people are suffering

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due to the involvement in unhealthy activities. For example, one of the participants stated that:

If the team of Lahore did not find a forward player, then they will say that in Gujranwala, a boy plays very well and his name is Qadir. He is a forward player; let us contact his coach and call him to be part of our team. I want to get fame like this. We want to be a part of the army team and have a luxurious life. It is my wish that I fulfill my desire to play well with my salary. (Participant VII G).

### **Students' Expected Outcomes in Participating in Co-curricular Activities**

All research participants from both types reported that they wanted to make good relations at the school level, also with students of the different schools by participating in different co-curricular activities. They said they wanted to get fame, respect at the school, and then at the zonal level. They described that by building relations with others, they learned many skills and got so much beneficial for the latest information to improve their talent. For example, one of the participants from literary and cultural contests stated that:

At this level, we want to build relationships with others and bring fame to the country. We build good relation with others through participation in the game. We cannot be successful without

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developing a good relationship with others.  
(Participant II LCC)

In the same way, a participant from games and sports reported in the following words:

We built good relations, and we feel delighted when we receive hospitality and protocol. When we go to play, we meet with boys from different areas. It is all possible due to our playing. Our friendship is very good for them. People respect us very much. (Participant VII G)

All the participants who participated in different co-curricular activities reported that they learned time management by participating in different co-curricular activities organized at the school level. They told during the interview that they completed each task on time by strictly following the pre-planned time table. They also replied that they learned a lot of useful things due to participation in these activities like confidence, discipline, and also increased communication skills. During the interviews, they described that due to involvement in these activities, they also came to know the importance of doing work in a team. They learned to give respect to each other and also how to face critical situations during ups and downs in specific co-curricular activities. For example, literary and cultural contest participant stated that:

I learned so many good points due to time management. I learned to complete each at the time. For example, now I offer five prayers in a

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day, and each prayer has a specific time, and I offer it at that time. Due to time management, my wisdom increased beside it; my behavior also is changed. To see this change, my parents are very happy. (Participant I LCC)

In the same way, participant from games/sports described in the following words:

Time management teaches us to perform each activity at a specific time. Great nations follow the time table and get success. For example, everything in the world is following the time like sunsets and rises on time, day and night come on their time, weathers change on time. Allah created the entire world, and we see the discipline. Therefore, I also followed the time and managed all of my activities. (Participant III LCC)

All research participants of literary and cultural contests and sports/games answered that they felt an obvious positive difference in their curricular activities due to participation in co-curricular activities. They almost answered the same. The participants of the literary and cultural contest replied that they felt their personality groomed so much. The feeling of hesitation and shyness disappeared due to participation in co-curricular activities. They also said that they noted the positive difference in classroom activities, their mental learning increased, felt no burden on the brain, the sharpness of mind enhanced, self-confidence increased, started to learn the lesson quickly. For

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example, a research participant of literary & cultural contests stated that:

Through participation in these activities, my brain started to work more actively, and now I learn the lessons by understanding their themes. Before participating in co-curricular activities, I could learn the lessons, but the content would remain in my memory just for a short time. The reason was that I did not learn the lesson by understanding. I notice a positive change in myself, and my academic record improved. I felt very guilty at that time, but I know this problem has been solved. Now I learn every lesson very quickly. Due to my participation in these activities, my learning also improved. (Participant ILCC)

Similarly, the research participants of games/sports noticed a very beneficial effect on curricular activities due to participation in co-curricular activities. For example, research participants of sports/games (Hockey) stated that:

Because of this game, my brain becomes fresh and active, so I learn the lesson quickly. I try my best to make my game better and become a good player. I do not feel any problem; I play very well and do not feel any type of tension. I do not feel laziness; therefore, I learn my lesson in a very short time. (Participant X G)

## **Discussion and Conclusions**

The study explored secondary school students' perspectives about co-curricular activities in five domains related to the research problem.

Intentions and reasons were explored from both types of co-curricular activities students. The

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majority of the participants from literary and cultural contests had the intention of bringing fame to schools, parents, villages, and themselves as well as to acquire the fame in society, to get the superior position, and work with more commitment through their intentions. They wanted to grow intellectually and develop skills in their fields by impressing their friends to get the appreciation of their parents with getting incentives.

The participants of games/sports described their intentions to remain fit and sharp, improve body texture, speed, muscle's strength, avoid negative activities, spend a luxurious lifestyle, and increase their value in public. Previous studies are with evidence regarding the physical, social development, and personality building of the individuals (Singh, 2017) since these activities are designed to make the school a better place of learning (Hopkins, 2003). All the participants of games/sports reported different intentions like fond of specific intentions since their early days, inspiration by watching the performance of famous players, keeping them away from useless and negative activities like as internet and drug addiction, etc. and to become the cause of proud for their school by showing their good performance in their specific intentions.

Regarding strategies, both types of the participants from literacy & cultural contests, and games and sports narrated that suitable planning, proper schedule, burning the midnight oil, and

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setting of milestones to achieve their intention/goals. The participants of literary and cultural contests narrated the importance of intention and strategies with different aspects like oxygen for life, personal interest, management of valuable timetable, too much rehearsal, useful tips, and guidelines from their teachers, friends, etc. to achieve their intentions. Literature shows that these activities are aimed at developing co-operation, leadership, punctuality, teamwork, and creative talent (Singh, 2017). In the same way, the students from games and sports described the significance: following proper time table for training, working hard to improve his performance and to become skillful in the game., preventing the various diseases, becoming good players to play for different government departments. They got inspiration from senior players, wake up early in the morning for training, followed time table. The students from literacy and the cultural contest had views about strategies like fruitful for them in the future, avoid negative activities, fighting and abusing, etc. The students provided reasons for their intentions and strategies with different aspects. Students' outcomes for literacy and cultural contests were described as for the name of their institute, village and their parents will be enlightened, popular personality and will get fame at the international level, to get the stable physique and to become role model for other students of the institute, positively pass our time neglecting various negative activities such as smoking etc. which are harmful to us. They learned to complete each at the exact time and also learned



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useful thing like leadership, confidence, and teamwork, to face ups and downs and critical situation during the competition, learned time management by participating in co-curricular activities, learned to complete each at the exact time and also learned useful things like leadership, confidence, and teamwork, they learned to face ups and downs and critical situation during competition. According to a previous study, these activities have an impact on students' motivation and competence (Guest & Schneider, 2003).

Regarding expected outcomes, all research participants of the literary & cultural contest answered that they wanted to get free education in college, university and also wanted to visit a different country on scholarships. They wished to be gold medallist and national heroes of their country.

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