

# An Analysis of Role of Extracurricular Activities (ECA) in Higher Education

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**Abstract:** Extracurricular activities (ECA) are invaluable for fostering holistic development and enhancing personal growth (Lamaey, 2022). Beyond the confines of academia, these activities provide fertile ground for individuals to cultivate essential skills such as leadership, teamwork, and time management (Soe, 2014). Research tells that by participating in ECA, individuals not only diversify their skill set but also nurture passions and interests outside the classroom (Hart, 2010). Moreover, these activities serve as platforms for social interaction, fostering friendships and teaching invaluable interpersonal skills. Whether through sports, clubs, or community service, extracurricular engagement promotes physical health and well-being, while also instilling a sense of responsibility and empathy towards others (Wilson, 2009). Additionally, extracurricular involvement enriches resumes and college applications, showcasing an applicant's initiative, commitment, and diverse interests (Stevenson, Sealey & Clegg, 2011). So, this study tries to analyze the role of ECA in flourishing the higher education with the help of literature review a qualitative research approach.

**Keywords:** Extracurricular Activities, ECA, HRM, Student, Higher Education

## 1 | INTRODUCTION

Extracurricular activities refer to activities that take place outside of the regular curriculum or academic program of an educational institution. These activities are typically voluntary and can include a wide range of interests and pursuits such as sports, clubs, student government, community service, arts, music, theatre, and many more. They are often seen as an important part of a student's education because they provide opportunities to the students to develop skills, explore interests, and build relationships outside of the classroom. They can also help students to develop leadership, teamwork, time management, and problem-solving skills, as well as provide opportunities for their personal growth and self-expressions. Participation in extracurricular activities can also be beneficial in colleges and universities, as it converts students into full-fledged professionals.

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## 2 | TYPES OF EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Depending on the size and kind of institution or university, the variety of extracurricular activities offered varies greatly due to the wide range of interests held by college students. Intercollegiate sporting programs, governance groups, and social organizations make up the majority of extracurricular activities. Every task gives pupils the chance to collaborate with others and acquire valuable life skills. The following are the extracurricular activities that are most frequently seen on college campuses, however there are many others.

1. **Personal Development Activities:** Extracurricular activities offer students opportunities for personal growth and self-discovery. Through participation in clubs, organizations, sports teams, or volunteer activities, students develop important life skills such as leadership, teamwork, communication, time management, and problem-solving. These experiences help students build confidence, resilience, and a sense of identity, contributing to their overall well-being and success beyond the classroom.
2. **Academic Engagement and Achievement Related Activities:** Research suggests a positive correlation between involvement in extracurricular activities and academic performance. Engaged students tend to demonstrate higher levels of motivation, persistence, and academic achievement. Participation in extracurriculars can enhance students' ability to apply classroom learning to real-world contexts, foster intellectual curiosity, and promote critical thinking skills.
3. **Social Integration and Campus Community Related Activities:** Extracurricular activities serve as important avenues for social integration and community building on college campuses. By joining clubs, attending events, and participating in group activities, students form meaningful connections with peers, faculty, and staff. These social networks provide support, friendship, and a sense of belonging, which are essential for student retention, satisfaction, and overall well-being.
4. **Leadership and Professional Development Related Activities:** Extracurricular involvement offers students opportunities to develop leadership skills and explore career interests. Holding leadership positions in student organizations, organizing events, or participating in internships and co-curricular programs can help students develop valuable leadership competencies, network with professionals in their field, and gain practical experience relevant to their future careers.
5. **Cultural and Diversity Enrichment Activities:** Extracurricular activities often celebrate cultural diversity and promote intercultural understanding and exchange. Through participation in multicultural clubs, cultural events, and international programs, students gain exposure to diverse perspectives, traditions, and experiences. This fosters a more inclusive campus environment and prepares students to thrive in an interconnected, globalized world.
6. **Health and Well-being Related Activities:** Engaging in extracurricular activities can promote physical health and mental well-being among college students. Participation in sports, fitness classes, or outdoor recreation activities encourages regular exercise, stress relief, and a healthy lifestyle. Additionally, involvement in clubs, hobbies, and creative pursuits provides outlets for self-expression, relaxation, and emotional support.

Diverse extracurricular activities have a significant impact on the lives and destinies of adolescents. Adolescents who are exposed to a variety of groups are more likely to develop into responsible, socially aware adults. Being surrounded by other populations is not enough, though, as it is only useful if participants interact with one another. Engaging in deeper conversations with a wider variety of peers enables individuals to develop qualities like more socially conscious leadership. Ethnic clubs also helped those from minority groups feel more a part of their own cultures and gave others the opportunity to learn about and comprehend those of other cultures. This has two key benefits: minority groups have a safe place to feel a sense of belonging to their cultural roots and background, and people of differing ethnic backgrounds have an opportunity to learn more about other cultures and thus become more culturally competent. Correlational studies showed positive relationships with involvement in

ethnic/cultural clubs and intellectual and psychosocial development, multicultural competence, interpersonal skills, and leadership. There are two main advantages to this: people from different ethnic backgrounds can learn more about other cultures and so become more culturally competent, and minority groups have a safe space to feel a connection to their cultural heritage. Positive correlations between membership in ethnic/cultural clubs and leadership, multicultural competency, intellectual and psychological growth, and interpersonal skills have been demonstrated by correlational research.

### 3 | 4 TIERS OF EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Extracurricular activities are typically categorized into four tiers based on their level of involvement, commitment, and significance.

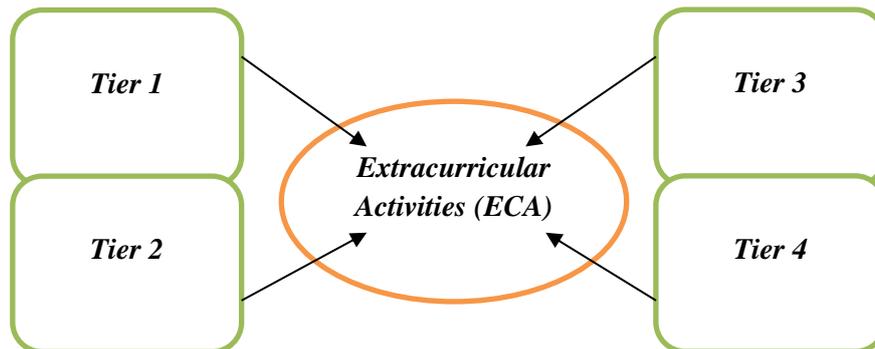


Fig. 1.14 Tiers of Extracurricular Activities  
(Source - Scholar)

**Tier 1** Activities that show extraordinary leadership or achievement are uncommon. Students' achievements are highly significant to admissions officers because of how rare and impressive they are, as well as how striking they are. Activities can be classified as either Tier 1 or Tier 2. Sports accomplishments, like as a nationally rated tennis player or a highly recruited basketball player, might be included in this category of activities. Similarly, this activity includes receiving national acknowledgment for one's musical abilities, such as a young artist award. Securing a spot in the International Biology Competition (IBO), earning an Intel Award, or taking home top national academic honors such as the United States of America Mathematical Olympiad (USAMO) are also considered Tier 1 activities.

Participation in prestigious summer programs like the Anson L. Clark Scholars Program constitutes a Tier 1 extracurricular activity. Additionally, self-initiated endeavors can also fall under this tier, as can certain volunteering commitments. For instance, students who initiate and lead regional or national organizations, garnering media attention, often attain the high-profile recognition sought after by colleges. These volunteer initiatives can vary widely, from organizing food drives for disaster-stricken communities to leveraging a passion for soccer to spearhead the construction of fields in underserved areas.

**Tier 2** Extracurricular activities are noteworthy achievements to have on a student's resume since they demonstrate high levels of achievement and leadership. Extracurricular activities classified as Tier 2 and Tier 1 differ in that the former are somewhat more popular and, consequently, have less of an impact on college admissions than the latter. Serving as president or chair of a reputable club, such as the Model UN, debate team, or Science Olympiad, is an example of a Tier 2 activity. Being in a leadership role demonstrates to schools that a student is not just involved in a group but also deeply committed to it and actively shaping its future. Achievements in the classroom and on stage, such as being selected for

the all-state football, band, or orchestra teams, are also great examples of Tier 2 extracurricular activities. Similarly, a Tier 2 activity would be winning a regional competition, such as the Junior Science and Humanities Symposium (JSHS).

Self-directed pursuits can also be considered Tier 2 extracurriculars. These might entail achievements such as producing a prize-winning short film at a regional level or reaching the finals in esteemed national contests like the National Youth Poet Laureate competition. Moreover, volunteer efforts that gain recognition at the regional or statewide level can fall into Tier 2. For example, a student who garners media attention for establishing a well-received initiative to integrate refugees into their community would qualify as a Tier 2 activity.

**Tier 3** Extracurricular activities don't have the same distinction as the endeavours found in the higher levels, but they do show colleges that a student is involved in activities outside of the classroom and provides a more full image of the student. Being a modest leader in extracurricular organizations such as Science Olympiad, Model UN, and debate team are excellent examples of Tier 3. Holding a position in a club, such as secretary or treasurer, also counts as a Tier 3 activity. These activities are less significant and impressive than holding a higher position, such as captain or president, even though they do exhibit leadership and your potential for dedication to prospective universities.

Tier 3 sports are available to athletes who did not make the all-state squad but still achieved awards such as Player of the Week. Similarly, musicians can list their musical endeavours as Tier 3 activities if they were chosen for a prestigious regional ensemble but were not picked for an all-state band or orchestra. Self-directed tasks with limited scope, like grocery shopping for an elderly neighbour or teaching a younger pupil, are also frequently placed in Tier 3.

**Tier 4** extracurricular activities, while not as impactful on college admissions as those in higher tiers, remain valuable in presenting a holistic view of an applicant beyond their academic record. These activities, commonly encountered by admissions officers, offer insight into an individual's interests and character. Examples include participating in clubs like Model UN, debate, or Science Olympiad in a general capacity, as well as engaging in sports such as track or pursuing martial arts training over an extended period. Additionally, activities like playing in the marching band or learning an instrument independently, along with general volunteer work, fall within Tier 4.

#### 4 | OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

This study's primary goal is to investigate how ECA contributes to the general advancement of higher education. So, for the purpose of analysis of this objective three research questions (RQ) have been framed which are as follows -

**RQ: 1** What is the role of ECA in the overall development of students in higher education?

**RQ: 2** What is the role of ECA in involvement of teachers and parents for the overall development student and higher education?

**RQ: 3** What is the role of ECA in involvement of college for the overall development of students and higher education?

#### 5 | METHODOLOGY

For analysing the objective of this study an exhaustive literature review has been taken in to consideration. The entire qualitative study was completed in its entirety by employing the Laplume et al.'s (2008) paper selection approach, which selects journal papers by looking at the impact factors included in Harzing's (2011) journal quality list. (Srivastava, Gupta, Singh, & Srivastava, 2017).

## 6 | ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

### Analysis - 1

#### ***RQ:1 What is the role of ECA in the overall development of students in higher education?***

According to a study, becoming involved in ECA can boost students' mental health wellness, raise their achievement and engagement in college, improve their long-term educational results, and reduce problem behavior (Daley & Leah, 2003). According to a study, it's critical to recognize how extracurricular physical activity engagement can improve young people's mental health by lowering stress, maintaining physical fitness, and making them feel better about their appearance in general (Daley & Leah, 2003). According to a study, students' evaluations of themselves may actually increase when they participate in extracurricular activities (Eccles, 2003). The association between students' participation in extracurricular activities and their academic success has been the subject of a study. Even though numerous studies have demonstrated a beneficial correlation, educators continue to disagree about the necessity of ECA.

According to a study, involvement in student leadership and volunteer work was positively correlated with positive development; however involvement in the creative arts was negatively correlated. The conversation focuses on where research on meaningful engagement, extracurricular involvement, and positive youth development (PYD) should go in the future. Bundick (2011). There is a positive association between student performance and extracurricular activities, according to a study done on a range of students to determine the significance of thinking about how engaging with an activity benefits them (Eccles, 2003). This occurs because it makes it easier for people to develop stronger social and emotional ties, join peer groups that support pro-social behavior, and learn interpersonal skills and favourable social standards. Extracurricular activities have a lot of beneficial effects on schooling, according to a study. Better behavior, higher grades, and personality development among pupils are these beneficial benefits, which help them become more successful and socially confident individuals (Reeves, 2008). Remedial education may promote early persistence in college, per a study (Calcagno & Long, 2008), albeit these early advantages are not always linked to gaining college-level credits or moving closer to a degree. However, the results of this study clearly demonstrated that remedial students who engaged in extracurricular activities had higher persistence rates. Although a study examined the possibility of a college scholarship for students involved in sports or other extracurricular activities, there were still numerous additional benefits of extracurricular activity participation that have been demonstrated by research (Denault & Poulin, 2009).

So, here our analysis tells that involvement of students is very noteworthy in ECA and every effort of students for participation in ECA will help them to develop themselves from every aspect of individual development and become successful professional and citizen of the country.

### Analysis- 2

#### ***RQ:2 What is the role of ECA in involvement of teachers and parents for the overall development student and higher education?***

Universities play a crucial role in fostering students' engagement in extracurricular activities, which are integral to their holistic development. By offering a diverse array of activities ranging from sports teams to cultural clubs and community service initiatives, universities cater to a wide range of interests and passions. Encouraging faculty involvement as advisors and mentors provides students with valuable guidance and expertise. Moreover, integrating extracurricular activities with academic programs creates opportunities for practical learning and interdisciplinary collaboration. Adequate resource allocation, promotion, and community engagement further enhance the vibrancy of these activities. By prioritizing inclusivity, recognition, and evaluation, universities ensure that extracurricular offerings are accessible, impactful, and enriching for all students, contributing to their personal growth, leadership development, and overall university experience.

The results of a study indicate that community agency staff, college administrators, professional instructors, and counselors can work together to target the academic progress of other uninvolved or off-track students through extracurricular activities (Howard & Ziomek-Daigle, 2009). According to a survey, college life is more than just attending courses and hanging out with friends. Parents and instructors are becoming more conscious of the value of early childhood education (ECA) for their kids. Teachers and parents are pushing more and more pupils to get involved in extracurricular activities. It is thought that by supporting the application of skills and character development, these activities help foster personal growth in other stakeholders, including parents, teachers, and college administration. This study examines the participation rates of students in academic groups, athletics, and the arts—the three main extracurricular activities. The results show that students' experiences and personal growth varied between activities. Additionally, parental involvement in the classroom has a significant impact on students' participation and growth. Students can participate in more activities and are drawn to teachers who provide them with emotional and mental support. Consequently, it is critical that educators comprehend the roles that their students play in extracurricular activities (Xu, 2017).

Teacher development in extracurricular activities is essential for creating enriching experiences beyond the classroom. Colleges can foster this development through professional workshops, mentorship programs, and collaborative planning meetings. Providing access to resources, establishing professional learning communities, and promoting cross-curricular connections are also effective strategies. Encouraging feedback, offering professional growth opportunities, and recognizing teachers' contributions are vital for continuous improvement. By investing in teacher development, schools can ensure that extracurricular activities are engaging and beneficial for students' holistic growth.

So, our analysis tells that involvement of teachers and parents is very significant and every step of colleges to encourage the participation of teachers and parents in ECA will help in the overall development of students as well as higher education.

### Analysis – 3

#### ***RQ:3 What is the role of ECA in involvement of college for the overall development of students and higher education?***

Higher education institutions have consistently endeavoured to enhance their academic performance; yet, the present economic climate in our nation is compelling college levels to make difficult financial choices. There have occasionally been reports of college and university budget cuts, a decrease in student involvement, and the elimination of extracurricular activities and other non-essential programs. By interacting with other students and members of the community, ECA students can quickly establish a sense of identity and a connection to the college. It is evident from the thorough literature analysis that extracurricular activity involvement can benefit students' social, emotional, and cognitive development.

According to a study, extracurricular activities have the same objectives and purposes as the curriculum's obligatory and elective courses. They do, however, offer experiences that are not covered in official curricula. They give pupils the chance to apply what they have learnt in earlier classrooms and pick up ideas about democratic living (Lunenburg, 2010). According to a further study, the New Education Policy 2020's current mandate is to equip students for the changing skills and practices of the sector. The curriculum's emphasis on academic credentials alone is insufficient to prepare students for the VUCA (Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity) environment. When combined with co-curricular activities and ECA can promote students' overall personality development.

So, our analysis tells that involvement of colleges is very significant and every step towards allocating the budget towards ECA by the colleges and universities' management will help in the holistic development of students and higher education as well.

## 7 | CONCLUSION

With the above analysis we move to a conclusion that, numerous advantages of extracurricular activities highlight their critical role in developing students into well-rounded people prepared for life's difficulties. By engaging in these activities, students develop vital abilities like communication, teamwork, leadership, and time management in addition to discovering their hobbies and passions, which promotes a holistic approach to learning. The positive impact extends beyond personal development, as extracurricular involvement has been shown to correlate with improved academic performance, enhanced social integration, and increased career readiness.

However, it is imperative to recognize and address the barriers that hinder equal participation in extracurricular activities. Time constraints, financial barriers, and limited access to opportunities can disproportionately affect certain groups of students, perpetuating inequalities in education. To truly harness the potential of extracurricular activities for all students, collaborative efforts are needed from educational institutions, policymakers, and stakeholders. By implementing inclusive policies, providing adequate resources, and fostering a culture of support and encouragement, we can ensure that every student has the opportunity to benefit from extracurricular involvement.

In essence, extracurricular activities serve as a cornerstone of a comprehensive education, offering students avenues for personal growth, skill development, and exploration. By overcoming barriers to participation and fostering an inclusive environment, we can maximize the transformative power of extracurricular activities, empowering students to thrive academically, socially, and professionally. In doing so, we not only invest in the future success of individuals but also contribute to the creation of a more equitable and vibrant society.

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