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Women in Sports: Finding out the Social and Economic Characteristics

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Abstract

One of contemporary western society's universal practices are sports. Sport pervasiveness can be seen in all social circumstances from the vast amount of primary and secondary participation of people of all ages in it, social strata sports infiltrate and play a major role. Sports emerged as a key divisive subject regarding men and women's positions. Traditionally, sex roles have enabled women to be passive, gentle, delicate and submissive. These cultural expectations challenged those features which are often related to sports, such as reliability, competitiveness, physical endurance, independence and domination. Thus, female first puberty was encouraged to bypass sports unless the sport retained participants' femininity. At present, very rapid changes are taking place. Undoubtedly, the biggest shift in contemporary sport is the rapid development and widespread acceptance of women's participation in sport. In this report, proof of the shift in urban sports is reviewed and interpreted.

Keywords: Sports, Women, Socio-economic characteristics.

Introduction

Today, sport is closely linked to the picture and national profile of the country. In many countries, sport has attracted the kind of public support that has made sport not just self-sustaining, but also a profitable business for many, though essentially sporting practices are built to play, exercise and preserve the sound health of individuals.

When sport was as much a part of the day-to-day life in India as it was elsewhere, it never became a formal competition like the Olympics in Greece. In India, the ritualistic and educational role of sports was more pronounced as a means to an end and never an end in itself, and thus they were never strictly competitive. Sports in India have not been seen from a strictly competitive point of view. More focus in Hindu philosophy on working without any desire for reward may also have had an effect on the essence of sports in India.

Throughout history, sport participation has been greater for men than for women. Not only have less women participated, but they have generally participated less frequently and in less sporting activities. Sport remained closely associated with the so-called masculine aspect of our society, and women in sports are still considered outsiders in the territory of men. In a traditional country like India, this issue is more severe due to various psycho-social prejudices and traditional social prevalence.

Sport was more a myth than a fact for Indian people. The views of our culture against women are shifting. Indian families recognize the value of their daughter's academic and educational qualifications to make her independent. However, they also need to understand that promoting sport among girls is as important to the growth of their personality as their academics are. Only in the area of sport the values such as team spirit, teamwork, decision-making skills and versatility can be learnt.

Modern world sports are omnipresent. It includes members of various academic and technical societies. Gender studies have been one of the most discussed phenomena in anthropology and (sports) sociology. One reason is the relationship between empirical topic (gender) and theoretical approach (feminism). "While feminist theory is not to be, the main focus of all works on gender relations driven by feminist theories is not to be confused with a focus on" women in sport.

Sports have emerged as a key field of male and female status controversy. The sports studies researcher argues that women's sports have changed a little, and it would be socially beneficial to synthesize elements of traditional, men's and women's sports experience. The shaping



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of "Masculine and Feminine" sports experiences has achieved selective socialization as well as cultural transmission of males and females through sports. In traditional sports the impact of the women's movement and the theoretical problems of feminism has been instrumental instead of masculine. A new sports conception is presented which theoretically is hypothesized. This is necessary for the occurrence of ideational synthesis.

In sports, gender inequality is very evident. The issue is socio-psychological more than something else. It is regrettable to know that in this era of New Millennium men and women, are treated very differently. As mentioned above, gender inequality is one of the key issues that prevents India from making faster progress.

A society which does not allow a girl to do something simple as primary education is unlikely to let her participate in sports without any hurdles. Even before taking part in a kabaddi team competition or 400-meter hurdles the girl has to pass many more social hurdles in her immediate family as well as mainstream society. Some researchers have shown that participation in sport can inspire and promote women's personal activities. Sportsman or player can change a woman's perspective, particularly if she can be a practitioner. Being an athlete or player, especially skilled to be a professional one, can change the way a woman sees herself.

It can make her feel physically and socially stronger more competent, and more control her life as an independent individual. Today the complete sports participation also provides girls and women with opportunities to reconnect the power of their own bodies and culture. Therefore, it is important to understand that the synthesis of men & women's role in sports or that the gender equality in sports is a complex but pertinent issue to be encountered.

Review of Literature

The participation of women in sport is still a fascinating subject. There is also a broad variety of literature on gender studies. A number of studies on sporting subjects, such as performance, group cohesion, etc. are also available. However, there are not many studies dealing with gender in sport. Again, the majority of studies outside India are concentrated; very few are carried out in an Indian sample. These studies explore issues such as the performance of women athletes, self-image, social status and involvement in sports, sexual assaults, sports politics and economics, etc.

First, a number of review articles attempted to map the scope of the 'gender and sports' area and/or examined the application of feminist approaches to sport (e.g. Birrell 1988; Hall 1988, 1993; Hargreaves, 1990; Cole 1993). Second, a number of 'gender and 'sports' readers and anthologies were published as teaching aids. Some like G. Cohen's *Women in Sports: Issues and Controversies* (1993) and M. Costa and S. Guthrie's *Women and Sports: Interdisciplinary Perspective* (1994), P. Creedon's *Women Media And Sports* (1994) combined feminist approaches with media studies of sports while Birrell and Cole's *Women*

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Sports and Culture (1994) was the most distinctly sociological in focus along with having an anthropological significance, examining ideologies of women and sports, the gendered organization of sports, the media's portrayal of female athletes, women's experiences of challenging the male preserve of sport and the politics of sexuality in sport.

In 1994, J. Hargreaves published *Spotting Females*, perhaps the comprehensive monograph devoted to the lived experiences of women in sports and structural forces influencing participation (1994:2). Women Issues under the purview of gender now had a significant presence in the sociology and anthropology of Sports

A.V. Bharathi tried to measure perceptions of the strength of specific sports activities in the metropolitan region of India. The investigators used a standardized questionnaire and self-administered a convenience sample of 782 adults, 441 of whom were aged between 17 and 70 years in Bangalore City. The results of this study indicate that the severity rated for females is substantially higher than for males when it comes to jogging, manual Labour and walking uphill.

Parveen Gahlawat was trying to explore pre-competitive anxiety among Indian University athletes. The investigator took a sample size of 94 university athletes, 51 male and 43 females. The data was analyzed on the basis of CAT data collection test and the tables and graphs were made with help of the excel software. The analysis had a confidence level of 0.05. The results of the study have shown that there are major variations in improvements in the level of anxiety of male and female players. This study proposed to the coaches of Indian universities that they be advised to train their players psychologically so as to make them mentally ready for tournaments.

Ashitha, tried to explore the relationship between the patriarchy and the involvement of sports in Kerala. In her study, she examines how gendered practice of sports marginalizes women in a variety of ways. By providing the perspective of a female athlete, the author reveals that sexism and exclusion reign in the field of sport. It is difficult to unravel the nuances of the notion of masculinity and femininity through theoretical discussion on women's bodies and their involvement in sports. In the report, the investigator attempted to outline the problems of female Kerala athletes. The study shows that, according to several statistical studies on Kerala, women in Kerala have a higher social status compared to other women living in other parts of India. The investigator revealed in her study that women in Kerala are still subjected to domestic abuse in her study results. She also raised the argument that cases of female suicides are rising annually. In the case of Kerala sports women as well, she demonstrates that this paradox can also be seen.

Namarta Vadhera, discovered that the prevalence of gender inequality in sports derives from the patriarchal mode of Organisation, thought, meaning and orientation. It is the socialization mechanism that determines the position of women in sports through its various agencies, such as family, peer group, neighborhood, government, state,

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education, media, etc. This is society's awareness that impedes women's enthusiastic and fair participation in sports in comparison to their male counterparts.

In their book "Gendered Worlds," Aulette, Judy Core, W. Judith, and Blakely Kristin (2009) concentrate on prevailing inequality and sexism against women and their gender marginalization around the world. In this regard, they clarify beautifully how all systems (social, economic, political, religious) contribute. The writers have attempted to clarify the development and persistence of gender disparities at three levels:

1. Social learning and psychological sex disparities at the person level.
2. at the interactional level of social contact in real life.
3. To constrain and form behaviour at the level of systemic and institutional forces.

Flanagan (1951) discovered that football players, volleyball players, and boxers were more powerful than fencers and more feminine than basketball players. The badminton players were judged to be the most extroverted group, and the most emotionally insecure were the volleyball players.

Peterson et al. (1967) stated that there were dominant, daring, sensitive, progressive, creative, self-sufficient, and more frank women athletes who engaged in individual sports. They also noticed that female athletes in team sports were intellectually smarter and more conscientious and violent than athletes in team sports, yet both classes were distinguished by emotional stability.

The literature review reveals that there are so many stereotypes and myths against participation in women's sports at all times. These misconceptions, however, become apparent during the period when society's standards and principles have also gone through the change phase when triggered the constructive shift in society's conventional mind set. It can be used as a battleground and a mirror everywhere, a stage for gender wars and a sign of women's shifting status for a natural right to play, but it still happens because there are so many countries and cultures that are stopping women from playing sports.

We should not rule out the presence of any flexibility in our culture nowadays, but it is also true that there is still ample evidence of hierarchy, class, racial discrimination, gender and ethnicity that adversely affect the participation of women in sports. Even then, as seen in recent years, participation in sports and physical activity is increasing rapidly, but the participation of women in sports is not sufficient and is not proportionately comparable to male sports. There are geographical and society-specific concerns about women's involvement, along with these vertically common issues.

Traditionally, it is believed that the fruits of social change and progress will not be equally accessible across gender and caste sectors. Although we gained a lot as a society, but it's not its half-truth and matter of concern, if we know that a certain segment of society belongs to the highest number of

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female participants in sports. For the sake of society's advancement, these explanations should be discussed.

Objectives of the Study

1. Studying the demographic profiles of women in athletics.
2. To research women's social standing in India's sports.
3. To research the economic condition of women involved in India's sports.
4. To recommend recommendations on the basis of the results.

Scope of the Study

There is a lot of space for women's advancement in the field of sports, but women's participation in sports is below the average level, because of the lack of publicity, motivation and moral support from society at large. Therefore, to assess the social and economic status of sportswomen in India, the present study was undertaken.

Methodology

The system of the survey is used for data collection. The organized questionnaire methodology is used to carry out the analysis to gain insight into the problems discussed in the study. In order to achieve the goals formulated, both primary and secondary data are obtained for the purpose of analysis. The primary data is obtained at different levels from the sportswomen competing in various games. Books, magazines and blogs are used to collect the secondary data. To evaluate and interpret the gathered data, statistical methods such as the percentile method are used.

The investigator chose to use a descriptive / survey approach for the research after thorough and objective research of the available literature and discussions with experts in the field of sports and physical education. The standard socio-economic status questionnaire was used to collect the data. The questionnaires were distributed to the participants at events, sports meetings, coaching camps, etc. If any, the objective of the study and clarifications sought were clearly outlined and clarified to the respondents in detail.

For the purposes of the present study, the participants are sportswomen from different disciplines representing universities and nationals who have represented university, state, national and international competitions. Approximately 200 questionnaires were issued to respondents from different categories of sports, of which 159 full responses were obtained, but only 150 samples were considered for the analysis.

Data analysis and interpretation

Nature of Habitants

Nature of Habitant	Frequency	Percentage
Rural	55	37
Urban	95	63
Total	150	100

Table 1: Nature of Habitants

Table 1 shows that out of 150 respondents 95 of the women respondents are from urban area

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whereas 55 of the women respondents are from rural background.

Educational Qualification of Respondents

Educational Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
Below High School	29	19.4
High School	62	41.3
Undergraduate	35	23.3
Post Graduate	14	9.3
Technical	10	6.7
Total	150	100

Table 2: Educational Qualification of Respondents

The above table shows that out of 150 respondents 62 of them have completed their education till high school. 35 of the respondents are undergraduate. 29 of the total respondents are qualified below high school. The remaining 14 and 10 respondents out of 150 are post graduated and the latter have completed their technical education.

Caste of the respondents

Caste	Frequency	Percentage
General	80	53.3
OBC	45	30
Scheduled Caste	25	16.7
Total	150	100

Table 3: Caste Distribution

Table 3 represents the caste distribution of the respondents. Out of 150 respondents 80 of them are from general category. 45 of the respondents are from OBC category, while the remaining 25 of the respondents are scheduled caste.

Sports Participation	Upper	Upper-Middle	Middle	Lower-Middle	Lower	Total
Football	4 (11.76)	4(11.76)	14(41.18)	8(23.52)	4(11.76)	34(22.7)
Volleyball	8(12.69)	10(15.87)	21(33.33)	16(25.4)	8(12.69)	63(42)
Badminton	8(29.62)	6(22.22)	5(18.5)	4(14.8)	4(14.8)	27(18)
Karate	3(18.75)	3(18.75)	6(37.5)	3(18.8)	1(6.25)	16(10.6)
Athletics	1(10)	1(10)	4(40)	3(30)	1(10)	10(6.7)

Table 6: Class Differences in Sports (Percentage figure are in parentheses)

The above table shows the class preferences in different sports activities. It is seen that upper class women majority of them prefer badminton (29.62%) and minority of them prefer athletics (10%), among the upper middle class women also prefer badminton (22.22%) and less of athletics (10%), middle class women prefer more of football (41.18%) and less of badminton (18.75%), lower middle class women prefer volleyball (25.4%) and less of badminton (14.8%) and lower class women prefer more of badminton(14.8%) and less of karate(6.25%).

Conclusion

The following conclusions have been drawn within the limitations of the present study and on the basis of the results and findings: From the present study, it is noted that the majority of respondents supported the view that 'sports are played at all levels

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Sports Played by the Women Respondents

Sports Events	Frequency	Percentage
Football	40	26.7
Volleyball	54	36
Badminton	35	23.3
Karate	10	6.7
Athletics (flat run, short sprint, long sprint and jump)	11	7.3
Total	150	100

Table 4: Sports Played by the Women Respondents

The above table represents the sports played by the respondents. Out of the 150 respondents 54 of them plays volleyball, 40 of them plays football, 35 of them plays badminton. The spots karate and athletics (flat run, short sprint, long sprint and jump) have almost the same number i.e. 10 and 11.

Family Income of Parents

Family Income	Frequency	Percentage
5000-10000	25	16.7
10000-15000	30	20
15000-20000	86	57.3
20000-25000	09	6
Total	150	100

Table 5: Family Income of Parents

The above table shows the family income of the parents on monthly basis. Out of the 150 respondents 86 of them says that their monthly family income is from 15000 to 20000 rupees. 30 of the respondents says that their monthly income is from 10000 to 15000 rupees. 25 of the respondents says that their family income is from 5000 to 10000 per month. The remaining 9 respondents says that their family monthly income is from 20000 to 25000.

Class Differences in Sports

of competition. The study samples were taken from sportswomen who were represented at regional, national, inter-university and state levels. Women in sports played all the games with no barriers. The participants are from various walks of life that belong to the general group, SC and OBC. They are from a rural and urban background that states that parents do not limit themselves. The study respondents are students from the undergraduate and post-graduate levels.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made in light of the results and conclusions of the study:

1. The distribution of budgets from government / institutions to sports should be equitable and unbiased. Sufficient financial support should be provided to the Associations to provide more facilities for women of the backward social-

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economic class. Financial assistance for the practice of sport should be provided to women.

2. It is important to motivate women to take part in sports and to strive for a higher level of participation.
3. In order for girls to take up sports, women should be rewarded by society for their achievements in sports.
4. In the curriculum, physical education should be made compulsory, which would help create interest in the participation of women students in sports.
5. In order to allow women to make use of the government sports hostel for further growth in the field of sports, basic sports infrastructure facilities should be provided at the basic level alone.
6. For sports promotion, more and more public ads should be made to draw women to sports, in which social and ethical standards can be maintained.
7. Undergraduate students should be given additional points for their participation at the national and international levels of participation.
8. Universities should allow students who fail an examination the opportunity to compete in a higher level of sports competition, so that the student does not waste a year.
9. Although admissions for sportswomen should be granted a separate quota in professional / undergraduate colleges.
10. The media should play a central role in supporting sports. It should concentrate on uplifting women's sports in India by advertising, etc. More encouragement from society at large should be given to women in sports.
11. An avenue like education should reflect sports. Women participating in sports should seek a career in sports and promote coaching and physical education as a profession that will, in turn, increase women's participation in sports and improve their social and economic lives. It is advisable to do sports as a profession.
12. For outstanding women in sports and sports celebrities, more job opportunities will be developed. Job opportunities should be offered directly to athletes so that they can support their families.
13. Sports should foster equality between men and women and motivate women.
14. In order to foster peace and improve socio-economic stability, sports should serve as a means. Economic and social growth can lead to sports.
15. In order to clarify the reasons for the inadequate involvement of women in sports, more research on women's sports should be conducted.

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