

Barriers to Women Participation in Sports and Physical Activity in Southern Rajasthan

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Abstract

Women in sport can shape women's capabilities as leaders especially in traditional male areas. Women's participation in sport can create a substantial contribution to social life and overall development. Sports for women represent a fast growing area in India and it can be used as tool to empower women. Recent trends show that the knowledge and awareness among female towards sport participation is increasing. But as compare to other country and per ration of male and female, there is need to increase participation of female in sport and physical activities. Females of all ages generally have lower physical activity participation rates than males. Increasing physical activity levels for females is important for health and mental wellbeing.

This Paper proposes to examine the situation of woman sports statuses in Southern Rajasthan. There are many factors which become barriers in women participation in sports activities.

This paper highlights the barriers to women in participation in sports and physical activities. The paper is attempted to examine which barrier create more hurdle for females participation. The paper objective is also to find out the overall opinion of women toward sports activity. Final the researchers try to give recommendation to increase or motivate the women participation in sports and physical activities.

Keywords: Women Participation, Barriers, Factors, Sport and physical activities

JEL Classification : I 20, I 21, J 16.

1. INTRODUCTION

Sport is a universal in nature. Earlier day's only men used to participate in most of the games, sports and women were not allowed to participate. Earlier women faced many constraints such as physiological, psychological, family, social, cultural; religious and so on but

later they also started active participation in all events. Women sports participants face many constraints or hurdles during the sports career. Such constraints prevent them from either involving in sports or prevent them from training.

Sport is an integral part of the culture of almost every nation. However, its use to promote gender equity and empower girls and women is often overlooked because sport is not universally perceived as a suitable or desirable pursuit for girls and women

At the same time, many international frameworks support women's participation in sport, with some national laws requiring equal

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access and opportunities for females. A small but growing body of evidence has also begun to establish sport as a viable tool for addressing gender equity on a broader scale. Research on sport, gender, and development indicates that sport can benefit girls and women by:

- Enhancing health and well-being;
- Fostering self-esteem and empowerment;
- Facilitating social inclusion and integration;
- Challenging gender norms; and
- Providing opportunities for leadership and achievement.

The current scenario says that Female participation in sport has come a long way. Efforts have been and are being made in getting more females to participate in sports. However, a lot more effort is still required to generate greater female participation in the world of sport. (LeUnes and Nation, 2002).

Even if they are a step ahead, a number of factors ensure that sportswomen stay two steps behind. Though the Indian culture looks up to a woman as a mother of a race, the Indian people are steady with the belief that women are naturally inferior to human beings because of the faith that a females duty is bound only to come at a housewife care of her Childs. The degree of physical education and sports for females has been blocked because of the endless limitations. They generally face prejudice, low tone and traditional barriers. So need to reduce prejudice behavior to open new area for empowerment.

2. BARRIERS IN WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN SPORTS AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES

a) **Economic Barriers:** Practical barriers include poverty and scarcity of economic means. For women this means a lack of time, a lack of appropriate, safe and accessible infrastructure, and no adequate clothing. Women tend to earn less than men. Low income families may

not be able to afford to invest in coaching and training or pay for sporting clothing and equipment, and parents from low income families are unlikely to be able to afford childcare to give them the time to take part in sport.

b) **Personal safety:** Personal safety on the streets, on public transport, and in and around sports and community venues is a particular problem for women. Women face problems during travelling alone.

c) **Responsibility as Women:** It is misconception that females are responsible for all household work and take care of children and other family members. Due to these responsibilities they have no enough time for sports training and activities. Also they are not able to identify the skills and interest towards sports activity.

d) **Access to facilities:** Women and girls cannot play sport if they cannot get access to the necessary facilities. Access can be limited by physical barriers such as inaccessible entrances, reception areas, changing rooms and sports facilities, or lack of accessible transport and parking

e) **Body image:** Research shows that in general, female adolescents report greater body image dissatisfaction than males. However, body image is a particularly important issue in sport research shows that women are far more self-conscious than men when taking part in sport and physical activity. For girls and women the relationship between body image and physical inactivity is a vicious circle; the more self-conscious they feel about their bodies, the less likely they are to take part in sport, and yet participation in sport has a positive effect on girls' perceptions of their bodies.

f) **Fear of Femininity:** It is perceived that

sport is masculine and elitist. It is a widely shared perception transmitted by men and women through traditions, beliefs and social practices. This entails that women are not meant to be competitive and their body should not be muscular. A further barrier is the false correlation between participation in sport with socially unacceptable behaviors. It includes another factor which is particularly relevant to the world of sport 'homo-negativism' which is a fear among heterosexuals that they may be perceived as homosexual.

Knowledge barriers: It includes the lack of awareness of the benefits of physical activity. They however also deal with the myths such as the still prominent and thoroughly false perception that sport is a potential impairment to female fertility.

3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The involvement of women in sport continues to be a fascinating issue, which has prompted a variety of responses from a wide range of sports psychologists and researchers, thus contributing to differing and sound debates on the subject matter. The purpose of review of literature is to critically review some of the material put forward by researchers on the participation of females in sport. A sizeable number of studies focusing on female sport participation have linked sport with the educational and physical well being of a young body. Participation in sport also leads to the holistic development of the learner (Van Deventer, 1998). Involvement in sport and other sport related activities, is significant as it leads to competence in the physical world of sport and can also extend to the real life situation.

Jarvie (as cited in Dunning & Rojeck, 1992), indicated that Mr De Klerk, South Africa's new Nationalist party leader, revealed a new "plan of action" to Mrs Thatcher in June 1989. The Nationalist party was prepared to talk with

the intention to create structures through which all South Africans would have the right to take part in decision-making through a 'one man vote'. In 1990 F.W de Klerk took the initiative and he lifted the state of emergency, freed Mr Mandela and a number of activists and the South Africa Communist Party (ASCP).

Davies (1996), found that a greater number of high performance female athletes were under weight and they frequently had an intense desire to lose weight as compared to non-athletes. As a result they were more at risk of developing eating disorders like anorexia, bulimia and bulimia nervosa. Plaisted (as cited in Morris and Summers, 1995), indicated that for some sporting codes it is important to maintain an ideal body weight in order to participate in activities like rowing and horse racing. In other sports like running and swimming, low body weight is associated with successful performance.

Brettschneider and Hein (1997) argued that self-concept allows females to assess themselves by acknowledging their weaknesses and strengths. Often females compare their performance to that of other participants and with time, if their performance improves, then their self-concept also improves and the female sport participant feels competent in what they are involved in (Brettschneider and Hein, 1997). Being competent in a particular sporting code enables the girls to be self-motivated and builds selfconfidence. Can (as cited in Buffer, 1996), also argues that the socialising process at home for both sexes is different. Boys usually get more support and encouragement to get involved in activities, which offer sporting opportunities. They are furthermore provided with role models who encourage and support participation in physical activities.

Digest (1997) states that one and a half black girls compared to one-quarter of white girls said that they cannot consider taking part in competitive sports when their families could not finance their transportation needs. According to

Hargreaves (1997), lack of parental support has been indicated as one of the factors, which discourage female sport participation.

Higher education can play a significant role in the development of sport by familiarizing students with various sports and development of them in university, and holding competitions in different and various competitive and recreational sport matches and awarding the winners(Eftekhary, 2000).

A very few literature was found on the topic.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Based on the literature, the primary aim of this study is to gain clarity as to why females do participate or do not participate in sport. The underlying reasons for sport participation and non participation will be identified and analysed.

a) Objective: The main objective is to examine the Barriers and challenges affecting the participation and to analyse the ranking of Barrier affecting female participation.

b) Research Instruments: Questionnaire: A self-drafted questionnaire based on the literature review had to be formulated as all the other available questionnaires were irrelevant and as a result something relevant had to be designed. The questionnaire was distributed among female in colleges or educational institute of southern Rajasthan. The questionnaire has three sections. Section A consist of personal information, section B consist of statement related to Factors affecting women participation.

5. DATA ANALYSIS

The designed questionnaire was distributed among 110 respondents and only 92 questionnaires were returned. The table shows the demographic background, most of the respondents are up to graduate level and moderate income level group.

**Table 1.
Age wise Distribution**

Age	N	%
18 yrs	12	13
19 yrs	15	16.3
20 yrs	20	21.7
21 yrs	36	39.3
>21 yrs	9	9.7
Total	92	100.00

The table shows that maximum respondent from 21yrs or above group.

**Table 2.
Education**

Education	N	%
Below graduate	30	32.6
Graduate	40	43.4
Post Graduate or Higher	12	13.0
Professional Education	8	8.7
Illiterate/Others	0	0
Total	92	100.00

Education level is one of the important indexes of social-cultural which is in close relation with other dimensions of social lives of people. Higher education is considered as one of the important and effective factors on awareness rate. Women with higher education have more complete information about exercising provided that facilities and effective areas of participation are provided. Research's findings show that most of the respondents are literate in bachelors.

**Table 3.
Monthly Family Income**

Income	N	%
20,001 - 30,000	47	51.1
30,001 - 40,000	27	29.4
40,001 - 50,000	10	10.9
Above 50,000	8	8.6
Total	92	100.00

6. REASONS FOR NOT PARTICIPATING IN SPORTS ACTIVITY

The above table shows that major reason of lack of participation in sports and physical activity are Responsibility of being women, Family support, Economic condition and Social Support. The female respondents think that being women they have lots of responsibility toward family and society so they have no time to prepare themselves for sports activity. Due the responsibility family members are not supportive and do not motivate for participation. Due to the family structure economic conditions are not allowed to participate because generally family dependent on single earning male member. Sometime female have fear of social environment.

Table 4.

Top 10 Barriers in Women Participation in Sports

Barrier	Score
Female have no time for sports activity due to household duties	4.38
Poverty or Scarcity of economic means	3.88
Lack of financial support/sponsorships/scholarships	3.76
Lack of motivation (Women/girls are never encouraged to participate in sports/physical activity from their families)	3.64
For girls physical activity often becomes less important in their lives as they encouraged by pressure from their peer group to seek other activities associated with their preferred perception of feminity.	3.62
Girls are sometimes not confident enough with their own bodies to participate without feeling ashamed or embarrassed.	3.50
Lack of adequate female coaches	3.50
On female athletes there is too much focus on what women look like rather than what they accomplish	3.46
Lack of government support/encouragement to participate in sports	3.38
Lack of infrastructure (fields, facilities etc.) in place where I reside.	3.38

Source: Primary

The respondent feels that government support is very limited. The respondent expects the financial support and job security from the government. At the institute level such type of government schemes are not easily accessible so it affects the women participation.

The data shows that there is lack of access of facilities. Participants have no training institute, clubs and grounds where they can easily get the training and coaching. Lack of facility discourages the participants.

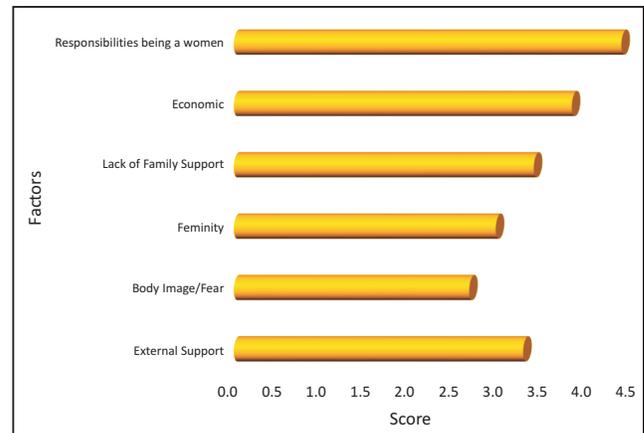
Table 5.

Major Barriers in Women's Participation in Sports

Factors	Mean	SD	Rank
Responsibilities being a women	4.38	0.67	1
Economic Means	3.82	0.97	2
Lack of Family Support	3.39	0.31	3
Femininity	2.96	0.48	5
Body Image/Fear	2.66	0.68	6
External Support	3.27	0.65	4

Graph 1.

Barriers in women participation



The following are the most important reasons that the respondent ranked as the most important reason for not participating in sport. With higher mean of 4.38 female indicated that the main reason of not participation in sports activity is Responsibility as a women, while second they give rank to Economic condition are

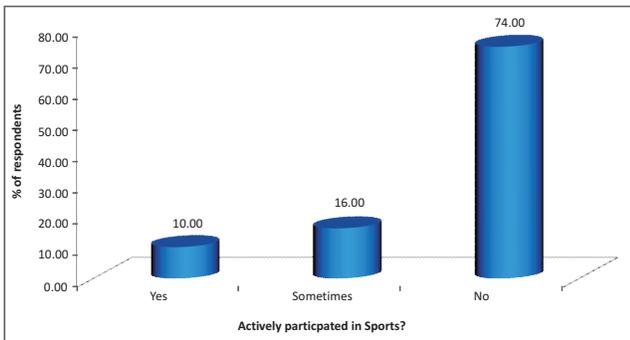
not allowed to take participation in physical activities, third factor is family members are not supportive and fourth fear of external social environment females are not participative.

Table 6.
Participation in Sports Activity

Response	N	%
Yes	9	10
Sometimes	15	16
No	68	74
Total	92	100.00

Source: Primary

Graph 2.
Participation in Sports Activity



The above table shows that 74% female respondent doesn't participate in Sports activity and only 10% participate regularly. The reason for less participation also mentioned above. So it is time to increase the female participation in sports and physical activities.

Hypothesis Tests

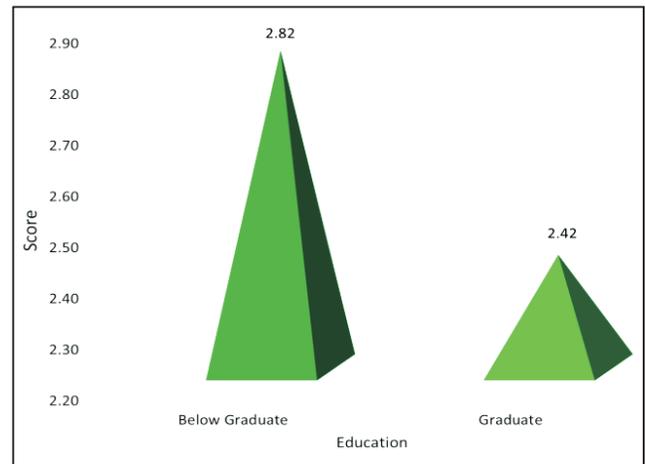
H1 : There is Relationship between body Image and education.

Table 7.
Body Image

Education	N	Mean	SD	Z	Result
Below Graduate	28	2.82	0.83	2.37	*
Graduate	21	2.42	0.28		

The significant relationship was found between Body image and Education. It means less educated females are more body conscious due to lack of knowledge. Higher the education increases the awareness and knowledge level of women toward role of body in physical activity. They know that sports activity does not negatively affect the body physically and mentally.

Graph 3.
Relationship between Body image Education



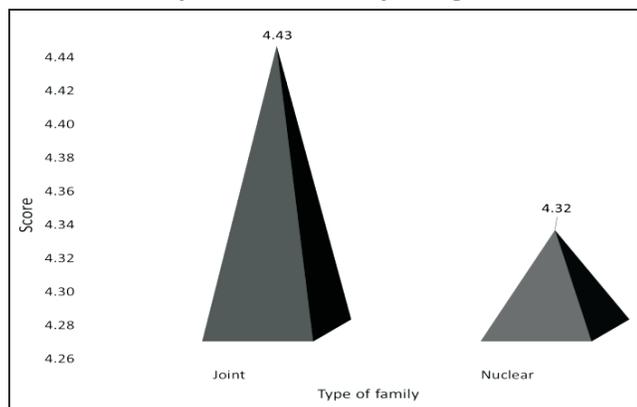
H1: There is Relationship between responsibility being a woman and type of family.

Table 8.
Responsibilities being a woman

Type of Family	N	Mean	SD	Z	Result
Joint	28	4.43	0.79	0.61	NS
Nuclear	22	4.32	0.48		

The Non significant relationship was found between responsibility as a women or family structure. It means joint or nuclear family does not affect reduce the household work and responsibilities. It does not affect the participation of women in sports activity.

Graph 4.
Relationship between Body image Education

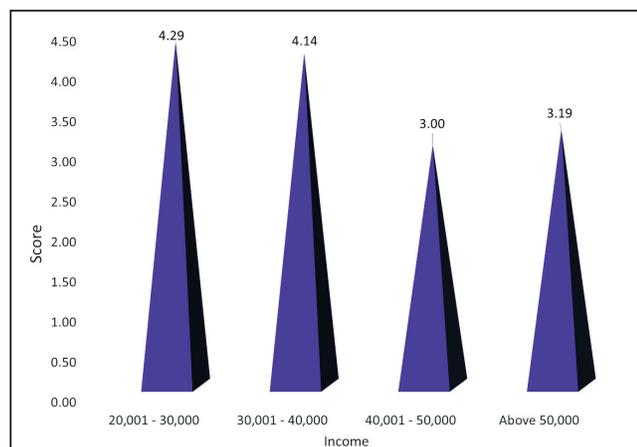


H1: There is Relationship between economic barrier and income.

Table 9.
Economic

Income	N	Mean	SD	F	Result
20,001 - 30,000	21	4.29	0.89	7.76	***
30,001 - 40,000	11	4.14	0.32		
40,001 - 50,000	10	3.00	1.05		
Above 50,000	8	3.19	0.75		

Graph 5.
Relationship between Economic barrier and Income



The significant relationship was found between economic barrier and income level. It means less income create the economic barrier among women. Finally it affect the life participation of women in sports and physical activity. The more women are economically

lower, the more they have problems for earning their living; consequently, this affects their rate of participation in sport activities.

7. SUGGESTIONS

There are five pillars which improve the participation of women in Sports activity:

a) Education Institution

- i) Education play important role in changing perception of male and female toward sports activity. The curriculum should focus on the more and more engagement in physical activities. School physical education is a foundation of life-long physical activity. Fundamental movement skills need to be developed from an early age, for all children, with the emphasis on the individual body, rather than sporting outcomes. Through Education we can get rid of the misconception or prejudice toward physical and mental health.
- ii) The education institution can make provision for a variety of different sporting activities that could help to accommodate a variety of individuals without any gender biasness.
- iii) The educational institution should encourage girls to be involved in sport at an early age because involvement would contribute towards the improvement of their health.
- iv) Provide fund, on-going capacity building and skill development for all staff and volunteers (including ongoing CPD for PE teachers). Educational institutions must raise funds to purchase sporting equipment, to facilitate transport and even out source sponsors for certain aspects of the sporting activity.

b) Parents

- i) They are the root of the children. It is the responsibility of the parents
- ii) Parents can become a role model for female participants.
- iii) Parents can motivate and encourage them to build a career in sports activity.

c) Government

- i) The government policy also play important role in building the structure which motivate the female participation in sports and physical activities.
- ii) The government can sponsored sports activities especially for women. Also motivate them by implementing schemes of scholarships and financial grant to the female who actively participate in sports activity.
- iii) The government should encourage companies to sponsor females who have potential and to facilitate their sporting career.
- iv) The government facilitate to the institutions to allocate money to take females for further training, upgrading and umpiring and overall female sport participation.

d) Sports Bodies/NGO and Corporate sector

- i) The awareness programmes should be implemented through NGO or

organization under CSR to change the negative perception level of society towards female participation in sports activities.

- ii) The corporate sector can sponsor sportswomen for participation in sports activity.

e) Coaches

- i) The coaches also key founder for sportswomen. They can emphasis the importance of a healthy mental state through involvement in sport.
- ii) Coach must be able to identify potential, polish up the skills and direct the player.

8. CONCLUSION

In recent years, sport and physical activity as a strategy for the empowerment of girls and women has been gaining recognition worldwide. Sport is the growing field where women can make their own identity. But for this it is necessary to improve the overall environment so that females motivate to participate in sports activity. Three broad areas which can be use as tool to motivate female participation and they are Education, Role of Government and Coaches. Education and government combined create the support machinery through awareness programmes and financial support. A sport system that provides quality sport experiences, where women are actively engaged and equitably supported is the need of the hour.

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