

# **Role of the Family in Female Participation in Sports and Games: Girl Students' Perception**

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## **Abstract**

Various traditional social factors discourage women from taking up sports as a hobby, leave alone as a career. The few women who participate actively and successfully, do so because their family background factors encourage participation. This study reports the findings of students' perception of the role of their families towards their participation in sports. For this purpose, 50 girls from a city college were selected as subjects and a questionnaire was used to collect their responses. Data was triangulated using semi-structured interviews of the same sample. The findings showed that students feel that families play an important role when a girl decides to participate in sports, and it is only when the family is supportive that there is effective participation of women in sports.

**Key words:** Girl student, family, gender, perception, child rearing

## **Introduction**

Gender stereotyping is part of society we live in and is reflected in everyday life in most families and so there is a qualitative difference in the psychological experience of being a male and a female. Even when parents set out to undermine gender based child rearing practices, they cannot prevent their own subliminal responses. These responses affect the choices that women make later in life including their participation in sports and games when they grow up.

## **Purpose of the Study**

Although the participation of women has increased in the recent times, choosing it as a career option is a dim prospect. There may be many factors like the attitude of school, government, peers, etc playing a role in women not taking it seriously enough to take up as a profession but family being the basic unit of the society must be playing a greater role in this decision making as compared to other factors.

The purpose of this study is to find out the students' perception about the role their families play in deciding whether sports can be chosen as a career.

## **Hypothesis**

It was hypothesized that the family played a major role in girl students decision to choose sports as a career.

## **Review of Literature**

Hellstedt (1987) conceptualized parents' involvement in their children's participation in sport on a continuum from under involved, to moderate, to overinvolved. Hellstedt's moderate level of parental involvement describes parents that promote the best interest of their children, even if this means sacrificing personal interests.

Eccles and Harold (1991) proposed that parental expectations influence the decision to engage in particular activities, the intensity of effort expended, and children's actual performance level. This hypothesis is supported by research which indicates that children's actual levels of participation in physical activity are related to parents' expectations and beliefs regarding their children's physical competence.

Sullo way, (1996), although competition between siblings has been observed as a more common characteristic of sibling relationships, cooperation emerged as an important antecedent and outcome of sibling relationships. Siblings often have to coordinate interaction within a family in order to reach a common goal. Cooperation between siblings may, in some instances, create an environment favorable to the development of sport skills.

## **Methodology**

Since the purpose of this study was to find out the girl students' perception of their family's role in deciding to take sport a a career, 50 girl student were selected using systematic random sampling technique from Chellammal college for women in chennai. A questionnaire was designed keeping in mind the theoretical background of the study. The sequencing of questions were done based on the objective of the study so that it would enable the respondents to understand the purpose of the study and respond with clarity and objectively. Data was triangulated using semi-structured interviews of the same sample. The respondents were counseled and assured that the responses would be used purely for research purpose and would be kept confidential before the questionnaire was administered.

## **Results & Discussions**

The result of the analysed data is presented below

**Table-I****Distribution of Age, Area, Education, Community and Caste of Samples in Percentage**

Age		Area		Education		Community		Caste	
Yrs	%	R/U	%	UG	%	com	%	cas	%
17	12	Rural	10	BA	48	Hindu	80	FC	10
18	42	Urban	90	BSc	52	Christian	8	BC	60
19	22					Muslims	3	MB C	14
20	22					others	5	SC	6
21	2							ST	2
								OC	8

**Table-II****Percentage and Frequency Distribution of Suitable Job for Women, as Perceived**

Suitable Jobs	I st Option	II nd Option	IIIrd Option	IV Option	V Option
	Frequency (Percentage)	Frequency (Percentage)	Frequency (Percentage)	Frequency (Percentage)	Frequency (Percentage)
Teacher	41(82)	6(12)	2(4)	0(0)	1(2)
Nurse	4(8)	30(60)	8(16)	3(6)	5(10)
Sports Person	1(2)	1(2)	20(40)	22(44)	6(12)
Engineer	2(4)	10(20)	19(38)	14(28)	5(10)
Employee in a Factory	2(4)	3(6)	1(2)	11(22)	33(66)
Total	50(100)	50(100)	50(100)	50(100)	50(100)

Out of the fifty respondents 82% feel teaching profession is best suited for women, and the data shows that the suitable job for women after teaching is to be a nurse, followed by engineers. Choice of sport as a profession comes only as a fourth choice and only being employed in a factory is seen as a worse option.

**Table-III**

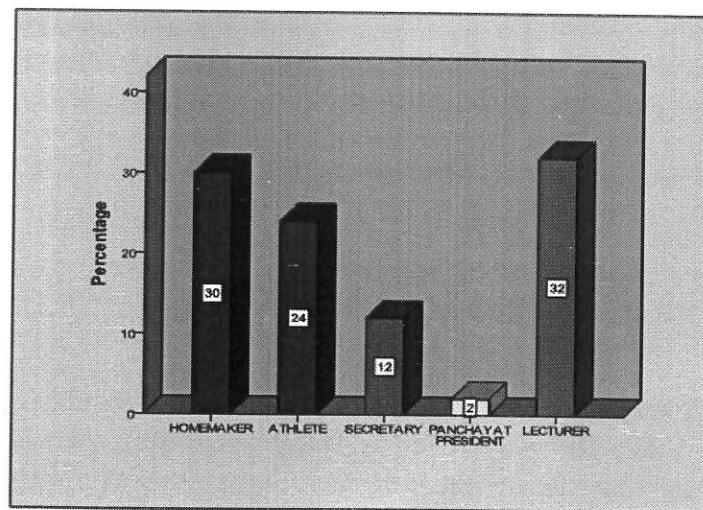
**Percentage and Frequency Distribution of Job Preference of the Respondents**

Suitable Jobs	I st Option	II nd Option	IIIrd Option	IV Option	V Option
	Frequen cy (Percent age)	Frequen cy (Percent age)	Frequen cy (Percent age)	Frequenc y (Percent age)	Frequenc y (Percenta ge)
Teacher	25(50)	12(24)	3(6)	6(12)	4(8)
Nurse	3(6)	17(34)	16(32)	9(18)	5(10)
Sports Person	9(18)	4(8)	14(28)	13(26)	11(22)
Engineer	10(20)	14(28)	13(26)	8(16)	5(10)
Factory Employee	3(6)	3(6)	4(8)	14(28)	25(50)

The data shows that the respondents' perception of the profession most suitable for women and their choice of profession without considering other factors is the same in the order of teaching, being a nurse, an engineer, a sports person and finally a factory employee.

**Figure-1**

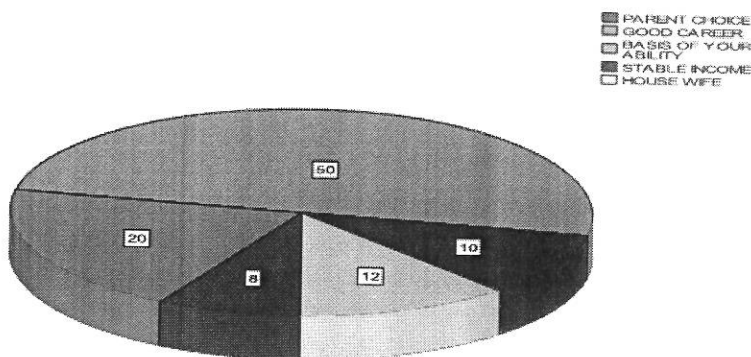
**Bar Graph Showing the Happiest Woman by Profession as Perceived by Respondents**



The respondents think that a lecturer is the happiest professional. This view could be because, teaching is normally considered a suitable profession given other roles allotted to women professionals. Even a homemaker is considered happier than an athlete. Only a secretary in a company and a Panchayat President (political role) are considered less happy 'professionals'.

**Figure-2**

**Pie Chart showing the Factors Affecting the Choice of Career**



The pie chart shows that the respondents would be most happy when they choose careers based on their abilities as the consideration more than on stable income or parental choice. This is quite an informative chart because most respondents show that they would potentially choose a career in sports if they could identify their abilities in sports or if sports is seen as a good career option, in society.

**Table-IV**

**Respondents' Perception of their Family**

S. No	Reasons	SA	A	N	D	SD
1	Girl should be a homemaker	6	12	10	24	48
2	Baby sitting becomes important	12	32	38	6	12
3	Sport destiny is controlled by men	16	44	14	22	4
4	Women have to take care of domestic needs	8	22	14	32	24
5	Have less time in family situations	6	20	30	24	20
6	Sports participation is an aggressive behaviour	6	20	34	22	18
7	No family member is a sports person	2	20	22	36	20
8	Academic education is key to future	14	32	20	24	10
9	Siblings laugh at sporting ability	4	24	10	46	16
10	Chores at home take time	8	34	26	22	10
11	Siblings do not like sport	6	20	22	30	22
12	Sports is a male domain	14	34	14	30	8
13	Sports not as a career	10	30	18	28	14
14	Getting groom is difficult	26	30	20	22	2
15	No financial support	12	28	12	36	12

More than 2/3rd of the women do not think of being mere home maker but would like to choose some career. However more than 3/4th of them think that baby-sitting is an important role to play in their life. A majority of the women do not consider absence of a sports person in a family as a discouragement for taking up sports. Nonetheless the fear of not being able to get a life partner who would accept a sports person as their wife is an important consideration for 3/4th of them. Although almost half of the respondents did not think the lack of financial support would be a limiting factor in taking up their chosen profession, quite a few consider participation in sports leading to aggressive behavior.

### **Conclusions**

The study clearly shows that in spite of the sense of empowerment, young women feel vis-a-vis choosing their profession based on their ability and financial support being available from family, their important social factors such as child care, home chores and husband's consent are overwhelming debilitating factor when it comes to their choosing sports as an important hobby or choosing it as a profession.

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