Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

Woman, colloquially known as the better half of man, is in reality his worse half. According to H. Sipla, "Half of the humanity, that is women have yet to go a long way to achieve equality of status and opportunities along with men. Equality between men and women does not exit. It is still often a disadvantage to be born a female." The historical evolution of human beings has witnessed the ebb and flow of women's status.¹

The traditional polarization of sex roles has produced in our society two different kinds of human beings women and men, who are expected to play different roles, hold different attitudes, different values and express different feelings. Women are to assume roles in the private sphere as wife, mother, and home maker. Men are expected to assume role's in the public sphere as worker, citizen and active creator of social and cultural life.²

Traditionally, India had seen a woman only as a member of the family or a group - as daughter, wife, or a mother and not as an individual with an identify or rights of her own. The radicalism of the constitution and its deliberate departure from the inherited social system lay in its implicit assumption.³

The females participation in sports has been a cultural concern with a negative connotation. The socio-cultural milieu of each society somehow but invariably has webbed out certain constraint systems which desist women from participation in sports requiring physical power. In general, mostly it is considered appropriate that women are born for feminine roles only and sports roles fall out of this social orbit.

In relationships between the sexes, males have had a disproportionate amount of resources under their control. They could bargain their power, status, money, land, political influence, legal power and educational and occupational resources, [all usually greater than women's] against women's more limited range of resources, consisting of sexuality, youth, beauty, and the promise of paternity. Men also could bargain their aggression, strength,  

competitiveness and leadership capabilities against women's domestic and clerical services. In addition men could offer women potential maternity, reciprocally the ultimate validation of a women's feminity.⁴

The tendency to view males and females as vastly different creatures is grounded in the undeniable fact that the two sexes differ biologically. But the existence of biological differences between the sexes by no means proves that inherent psychological differences also exists although that false assumption has profoundly affected the way we deal with women and men in our society.

Available information suggest that in early infancy there are measurable differences between males and females in their activity levels and perceptual tendencies. Studies found that the consistency of active and expressive behaviours in boys, and more complaint, passive and introverted behaviours in girls. It is usually, found that girls are more consistent over time in these dimensions of behaviour.

The reasons both sexes tend to compete and strive during the elementary years may diverge. It is suggested, for example that although both sexes first compete to gain social approval from parents, in time the boys tend to internalize achievement for its own sake and evidence intrinsic motivation, where as girls continue to achieve because of continuing social rewards, rather than marked interest in the task itself.\(^5\)

A variety of family and situational variables may interact to influence a young girl's entry into sport. After she enters, even more forces may impinge upon her, encouraging her to either continue or terminate her efforts. Role models to athletic women may include an athletic father or mother, brothers who are athletes, other on the team, or the coach. The status she is likely to enjoy depends on the support and the nature of the social climate in which the sport is imbedded.\(^6\)

Having once become involved in sport and exercise, there then follows logically the question of the psychological characteristics,

---


personality and motivation of the participant. Is she different from other women in her psychological make-up? A related, conceptually separable, but practically linked issue concerns the psychological consequences of participation. Does participation affect a woman psychologically? Does she experience role conflict, does she enhance herself concept, suffer less depression etc.? Finally, and impacting on both the above are the views and attitudes that society holds about the sports and exercise participant. Is she viewed as behaving in a manner discrepant from her traditional female role, is she seen as a jock? Or, does the changing position of women in society mean that female athletes are now respected and admired?

In organizing the review in this manner, it is acknowledged that each area is not totally separable from, but must form and depend on the other to a great extent. For example, the way in which society views the female athlete will to some extent cause psychological consequences of participation, and may also influence whether a woman chooses to be a participant or chooses to reject this avenue of development, conversely the psychological concomitants of participation,
or more properly the perceived concomitants, could influence how society, in particular the media, views the participant.

Sports, besides requiring certain physical attributes on the part of the athlete, also requires specific psychological characteristics. To be able to take part in sporting activity an athlete needs to manifest competitiveness, self assertion, independence, controlled aggression the will to win and the ability to dominate his or her opponent. These attributes are the same as those that are designated stereotypically ‘musculine’ - that is normal desirable and appropriate in the male. And, by contrast, abnormal, undesirable and in appropriate in the female.7

Women possessing these traits are considered to be deviant. The typical womanly temperament includes being passive, non-competitive, submissive, nurturing and non-achievement oriented. These characteristics are supposed to be possessed naturally only by women, and have been designated feminine as a result. Men manifesting such traits are deemed to be out of the range of the normal

male, and indeed are treated derogatorily, just as so called 'musculine' women are treated as social misfits.⁸

Many women still do not 'come in'. The reasons for this are no doubt complex and hinge on many interrelated factors. Concerning personal needs, motives and incentives, however several research studies do provide some interesting ideas.

Maccoby and Jacklin⁹ have suggested that one of the main reasons that women are under represented in some professions of other achievement oriented areas in that they lack confidence in themselves, confidence in their ability to carry out the task in hand.

Given that many sports are perceived as being musculine in nature, and are by definition competitive situations, it is not surprising that many women feel a lack of self-confidence and therefore avoid the situation altogether by opting out. Some women of course do not opt out of competitive sport, they manage to overcome or avoid the self-confidence trap, possibly due in some measure to

---

⁸ Ibid.
positive socialization experiences, the complexity at which we are only just beginning to unravel.

Monagan\textsuperscript{10} [1983] suggested that many women are leaving co-ed sports situations and are favouring single-sex activities. It is possible that this is a manifestation of the desire to avoid social comparison situations, and/or situations where the opponent is perceived as being high in ability. But of course not all physical activities and exercise are of this nature. Many women run, cycle, work out in the gymnasium, attend aerobics and keep fit classes. Research evidence has shown that many women are likely to become involved in activities which focus on health, appearance and which provide social ou.

Motivation is a topic that is as vexed and as complicated as personality. Motivation, in common with many psychological terms, is employed everyday to explain behaviour. It is what psychologists call an intervening variable, and must be inferred from observed behaviour. The concept of need, and need reduction has led psychologists to establish lists of needs or in one instance a hierarchy of needs. In this conceptualization the participation by a female in a

sport or physical activity would be a function of the extent to which that activity satisfied or reduced particular needs. It is necessary at this point to differentiate sport from noncompetitive physical activities. It may be that totally different needs are important in these two areas.

In 1968 Matina Horner\textsuperscript{11} published a highly influential paper which claimed that many women where motivated not by a need for achievement or a fear of failure, but by a fear of success.

Sport reflects values found in our everyday lives and even in our entire society. Women have been excluded from certain areas of significant participation in various aspects of living and this is also true for their involvement in sport and other physical activities. There is perhaps no domain where myths, attitudes and beliefs remain so persistent as in the world of sports. There are myths related to the female's physical and psychological masculinization, the female's monthly cycle, pregnancy, the female's physical and psychological limits of performance capacity etc. Most of these beliefs are rooted in

long sociocultural attitudes: however, their validity has not been demonstrated scientifically. Social approval is relative. It differs from era to era and from culture to culture with in a given era. There are nations which actively oppose any competitive efforts for women other nations urge their women to enter the Olympics. While still others merely permit them to do so. However, even today some forms of competition are officially unacceptable for women as indicated by their exclusion from Olympic level competition perhaps an explanation for these attitudes could be found in the history of sport colored by male orientation and domination such a domination resulted from cultural patterns and perceptions which determined not only who participated in sport but how the sport was to be conducted and experienced. However, today sport is seen as human activity, not just an activity more suitable for men than for women.

Women's sport is expanding rapidly, but we must realize that the situation is not entirely satisfactory. For example, if one looks at the participation either in recreational sports by women in local communities, or at the international level of sport competitions, it is clear that women do not enjoy enough equal opportunities to fully engage in sports.
In a 14 nation study of the working mother, conducted under the auspices of UNESCO and published in 1967, it was shown that women in general, work longer hours and have less leisure time than men. This means that both categorizes of women, the working and the non-working, are at a disadvantage as compared with men. Mainly working woman have the largest disadvantages because they are still doing the major part of the house-hold and family - raising work. However, the housewives are also disadvantaged because their labours are underestimated and most often do not follow a fixed and limited working schedule. Even if the burdens of the domestic work have been considerably lightened it is more difficult for a woman to find opportunities for participation in sport.\textsuperscript{12}

This less participation both in number and quality has naturally raised the question of scientific investigation and study in the area of women and sport. It is an important issue but the gap of scientific knowledge in this field is still enormous.

\textsuperscript{12} K.J. Borms and M. Hebbelincle, Cited in Medicine Sport 15 (Karger, Basel, 1981).
Therefore the researcher has made an attempt to find out the psychological factors responsible for female participation in physical activities.

**Statement of the Problem**

The purpose of the study was to investigate psychological factors influencing the female's participation in physical activity.

And also to investigate the dominating psychological factors influencing the female's participation in physical activity at various levels.

**Delimitations**

1. The study was delimited to the Indian population.
2. The study was again delimited to the selected population of Kerala and Madhya Pradesh states.
3. The study was also delimited to school, college and working classes.
4. Selected psychological variables were again a delimitation of this study.
Limitations

1. Non availability of standardized instruments for measuring different psychological variables considered as a limitation of the study.

2. The authenticity of the responses given by the subjects in a questionnaire technique can not be tested which is further considered as a limitation of the study.

Hypothesis

On the basis of the available literature, observations and consultations with experts, the following hypothesis were drawn.

Various psychological factors will have significant influence on participation of females in physical activity.

The psychological factors influencing the participation of females in physical activities will differ at various levels.
Definitions and Explanation of Terms

Participation in Physical Activity

"Participation in physical activities are the joy of creation, fellowship, a sense of achievement, emotional experience, the enjoyment of beauty and relaxation."\textsuperscript{13}

Participation in physical activity means involvement in any kind of organised sports or regular exercise for fitness or the recreational activities which needed physical involvement of the individual.

Motivation

Motivation is the process of arousing and sustaining behaviours or changing the pattern of activity in progress. Some psychologists will limit the definition of motivation to the determination of purposive behaviour alone but, in the broad meanings of the word, all not is motivated i.e. causally determined by the release of energy.\textsuperscript{14}

\textsuperscript{13} C.D. Kachalin, \textit{Preparation and Participation of Soviet Footballer in the XVI Olympic Games} (Moscow, 1957).
\textsuperscript{14} \textit{Encyclopedia Britanica}, 1768 ed. S.V. "Motivation," by Paul Thomas.
Attitude

An attitude is normally defined as a perceptual orientation and response readiness in relation to a particular object or class of objects.\(^\text{15}\)

Travers defined “An attitude is a readiness to respond in such a way that behaviour is given certain direction.”\(^\text{16}\)

Emotion

Emotion is an effective experience that accompanies generalized inner adjustment and mental and psychological stirred-up states in the individual, and that shows itself in his overt behaviour.\(^\text{17}\)

Emotion is disintegrative behaviour and takes the form of random or abortive pattern reactions which usually run their course rapidly. Emotional patterns are generally denoted by such terms as fear, anger, etc. according to the nature of the stimulating situation.\(^\text{18}\)

\(^{16}\) Encyclopedia of Psychology 'Attitude.'


Achievement

1. General term for the successful attainment of some goal requiring a certain effort.

2. The degree of success attained in a task.\(^{19}\)

Interest

A tendency to behaviours oriented toward certain objects, activities or experience, which tendency varies in intensity from individual to individual.\(^{20}\)

Aspiration Level

The level of aspiration is the possible goal an individual sets himself in his performance.\(^{21}\)

Incentive

(a) Something which incites to action.

(b) An incidental reward.\(^{22}\)

\(^{19}\) Encyclopedia of Psychology 'Achievement'.
\(^{20}\) Ibid. 'Interest'.
\(^{21}\) Ibid. 'Aspiration Level'.
\(^{22}\) Ibid. 'Incentive'.

Anxiety

Anxiety is a subjective feelings of apprehension and heightened physiological arousal.²³

Competitiveness

Competitiveness is an achievement orientation focused on entering and striving for success in competitive sport.

Dominance

A personality factor approximating to extroversion: a striving for self-assertion and independence.²⁴

Will

In traditional psychology, the faculty which produces voluntary actions.²⁵

---

²⁴ Encyclopedia of Psychology ‘Dominance’.
²⁵ The Encyclopedic Dictionary of Psychology ‘Will’.
Self-concept

Self-concept is the totality of attitudes, judgements, and values of an individual relating to his behaviour abilities and qualities. 'Self-concept' embraces awareness of these variables and their evaluation.\(^\text{26}\)

Self-confidence

Self-confidence is an expression of a person's self-worth and the ultimate self confidence is the confidence in one's ability to become competent.\(^\text{27}\)

Body Image

A spatial idea of one's own body which changes according to information received from one's body and the environment: in this image the parts of the body have a different appearance.

Values

What individuals consider good or beneficial to their well being. Unlike needs values are not innate but are acquired through experience.\(^\text{28}\)

---


\(^{27}\) Ibid.,p.137.

\(^{28}\) Ibid.,p.651.
Affiliation

The finding of attaining, maintaining and consolidating close, warm, personal relationship with others.

Role Conflict

Occurs when a person is faced, occasionally or constantly, with mutually contradictory and competing role expectations which result from his membership of several different groups, and make it difficult for him to behave in conformity with individual role expectations.\(^{29}\)

Significance of the Study

There are many gaps in our knowledge in terms of what causes girls and women to become involved in sporting activity. We need to know more about the processes of socialization and how girl child can be helped to internalize positive images of women in general, and of sportswomen in particular. We need to know more about how changing societal attitudes towards involvement in sporting activities are affecting them and if more positive approach is now evidenced.

\(^{29}\) Encyclopedia of Psychology 'Role Conflict'.
The psychology of sports women who like to exercise for jog or keep fit in a noncompetitive way has not been studied much. It would be helpful to know more about the problems of exercise adherence, and how some females manage to keep themselves motivated, while others fail to maintain regular participation. Many women still do not participate in any kind of physical activities. The reasons for this are no doubt complex and hinge on many interrelated factors concerning personal needs, motives and incentives: however, this study will provide some insight about the factors influencing their participation.

The results of the present study seems to be worth while in the following ways:

1. The results of the study will reveals the psychological factors influencing the participation of females in physical activity.

2. The results of the study will be useful for understanding the existing situation of female's participation in physical activity.

3. The study may help the teachers, coaches, administrators and social workers to make better environment for female participation in physical activity.
4. The results of the study may help to educate the females to participate in physical activity.

5. The results of the study may educate the common public about the female participation in sports.