CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION
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1.1 Status of Women in Society

Woman is the mother of race and is the liaison between generations. Indian culture attaches much importance of this section of the society, therefore, India has been symbolised as Mother India, keeping in view the exemplary qualities of women, namely, patience, endurance, love, affection, sympathy and generosity.\(^1\)

The first Prime Minister of India, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru once said:

\textit{To awaken the people, it is the woman who must be awakened. Once she is on the move, the family, moves, the Village moves, the nation moves.}\(^2\)

Traditional 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 identity or rights of her own.

Women were treated as custodian of the family and responsible for the well-being of children, inculcating in them, the cultural values and heritage of the Indian civilization.


\(^2\) Jawaharlal Nehru, as cited by Ibid. P.178.
As they saw it, if women were to perform these roles efficiently and effectively, then they must be ensured a position of some dignity within the family. Very few of the reformers thought in terms of women's rights to participate in social functions outside the family framework.

Gandhi, while lending his support to the cause of improving women's condition through education and reform of marriage laws, declared himself to be

"Uncompromising in the matter of women's rights".

Further, he says that women have been suppressed under custom and law for which man was responsible and in the shaping of which she has no end.

"A horse sweats, a man perspires, but a lady only glows".

This statement illustrates the general attitude towards exercise and athletics for girls during the latter part of the last century, and probably in the beginning of this century. But during the past 50 years, women have indulged in sports and games gradually.

Because of traditional, cultural and social attitudes towards Women in sports, some women have been limited in their opportunities and their outlook, many girls have not reached the full potential in sports simply because they have been defeated psychologically even before they compete.

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1 M.K.Gandhi, "The Role of Women", Young Indian (October 1929), 71.

The participation of women in competitive sports has been hampered by myths and superstitions.

Women’s role in society has changed greatly in the last few decades. This change has been accompanied by a change in the public attitude towards women’s participation in sports.

Unlike in a permissive society, the social bar of an Indian woman from taking part in outdoor sports activities almost pegged the gentler sex to the background of the home.

As it has been mentioned earlier, almost all cultures in the world have given the girls and women a passive domestic role only. This participation in social activities and sports competitions were rather limited.

In Indian society, except Kerala, Punjab, West Bengal etc., especially in rural areas, there are restrictions for women taking part in sports, wearing sports uniform and exposing their bodies are not encouraged like an Olympic athlete and coaches are also not appreciated by our society. Such free mixing may pose a problem to the women in marriage arrangement.

Women often are discouraged from participation in vigorous physical activity for fear of injury. One hundred years ago, Baron de Coubertin stated,

Respect of individual liberty requires that one should not interfere in private acts...

But in public competitions (women’s) participation must be absolutely prohibited. It would be indecent that spectators should be exposed to the risk of seeing the body of a woman being smashed before his eyes. Besides, no matter how tough
need a sports woman may be her organism is not cutout to sustain certain risks. Her nerves rule her muscles, nature wanted it that way.

"Women, you are made for men", is absolute today and women have realised all merciful lord endowed them with light and wisdom but some ignorant men on earth have immuned them in their homes. They are trying to do away with the discrimination as sex basis widely propagating and honouring the concept of equality of two sexes and are jumping into outdoor activities like politics, sports etc., like men and with men.

Women entering into the sports-life should have a courage of conviction to face the problems associated with the life of sports women. It is always possible for women to fall in line with men counterparts because sometimes it involves long waiting or late coming to home. By and large, morality is a big question and therefore women think twice before they take a leap into sports.

Our Indian culture expects our women to be committed to family or house and a woman entering the field of sports has to bear A social stigma and psychological tension in overcoming the restricted life.

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6 Gerber, Ibid.

7 W.B. Sen, Development of Women's Education in New India (New Delhi : New Book Society of India, 1973), P. 94.
Prior to the 1970’s opportunities for girls and women to compete in sport were limited. In the past 15 years, dramatic increases in girls and women’s participation is observed. This increase is visible at all levels of competition – the Olympics, National, inter collegiate Professional and amateur sport, have been noted.

Coakley\(^8\) identified several other factors that contributed to the increase in girl’s and women’s participation. These include changes in traditional sex role models, the women’s movement and the fitness boon of the 1970’s.

The changing cultural image of women athletes has contributed to the growth of women’s sport. Where once women athletes were perceived by many as unfeminine or stigmatized for engaging in high levels of competition, athletic participation is now regarded as acceptable.

People’s ideas about what is masculine, what is feminine are based on societal definitions and maybe needlessly restrictive, creating barriers to participation. In future, a society’s attitudes continue to change. sport may be perceived not as a masculine activity but rather as a human activity\(^9\).

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\(^9\) Ibid., P.167.
As participation by girls and women increased, more women role models became available. Athletes, such as, Chris Evert, Lloyd, Cherry Milles, and Mary Lov Retton have encouraged many girls to start athletic careers and pursue their athletic ambitions. Older sisters, mothers, and female friends who are athletes, while not famous, have served as significant role models for girls.

Many factors have contributed to the increase in opportunities for girls and women in sports. Changing social attitudes about the role of women have also contributed to this growth in participation. It is hoped that this growth and interest in athletics for women continues and that individuals of all uses and abilities desiring the opportunity to participate in competitive athletics can realize their ambitions.

Women have always played a definite role in the history of mankind. It is said that education begins in the mother’s womb. Gandhiji had stated long back that, “Educating a man is educating an individual while educating a woman is educating a family10". The position of women in any society has been the subject of many inexpert opinions and guesses and has often been misrepresented by stereotyped portrayal. A more balanced and scientific way to assess women’s position has been given by many anthropologists.

Status of women in any society depends on her recognized rights, duties, liberties and opportunities chiefly in the domestic, economic, social, political, and religious spheres.

1.2 Women’s Role in Society

When women have an appreciation of their own value and are able to throw off their inhibitions of fear and dependence, their contribution to society is felt in a number of ways.

Firstly, there is a significant impact on children and subsequently the future of our world. The first educators in a natural and holistic way, are women. They influence the young in a way which shapes their lives and the world. For, the future young girls and boys have to be treated with equality and allowed to develop in a natural way without being forced into compartments through the toys given to them, the game they are told. When children learn balance and full development are able to treat each other with respect, then the future of society is guaranteed.

Secondly, there is growing tendency in education to have women take responsible roles within the educational system. It means that curricula will be more balanced and girls will also be encouraged to develop their capabilities to the fullest potential instead of taking education only up to certain basic levels.

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Thirdly, there is a significant effect on social atmospheres. The influence of cinema and television in society is such that there is a general negativity in the atmosphere where evil, rather than truth and purity, seems to dominate all situations. When women become aware of their own capacity for and use this to influence the media in particular, their attitudes in society will change dramatically. The media has become a major educator and the portrayal of women in all forms of media is generally speaking, extremely negative. Women themselves exercise a force to change their portrayal, image, and therefore gradually influence society.

Finally, there is the impact of the religions. Religions have traditionally given women a second role never to be teachers. Gradually a change is coming. The shackles of religion are weakening and women are gaining equality in status with their male counterparts.

1.3. Society’s Norm for Women

Women physical educators find themselves confronted with the image that society had of the role of a woman. Women physical educators were most anxious. The norms projected by the society for women tended to be retrograde in many significant ways. Society did not accept sports women as normal human beings. Sports still remained suitable for ‘male’ part of the society. Women in this profession were not considered to be respectable.
1.4. Competitive Sport for Women

Another extremely important sub-problem that had loomed larger with each passing year was the matter of competitive sport for women. There was, no doubt, that athletic competition for boys and young men had been and was being carried unwarranted extremes in many educational institutions. The leading women in-games and sports reached violently to many of these excesses and, to their credit, saw to it that similar problems did not arise in the programme for girls and women. In so doing, they were able to set quite a good, and in many cases, an excellent standard in the other phases of the total programme.

1.5 Women’s participation in Sports in India - Historical perspective

Our source enable us to have only a glimpse of the recreations of girls during the Vedic and Epic periods. Music and dancing formed the principal indoor games. Public and dramatic concerts were often organised and girls used to go out to see them along with their elders or lovers. In fashionable circles, game with the ball (Kandukarida) seems to have been the chief outdoor physical exercise. Shakuntala and Kunti are, for instance, represent as spending their leisure hours in this games in the Mahabharata. Players could so regulate this game as to have just the amount of exercise they wanted. The Ramayana represents girls are going in the evening to gardens for playing and talking with their friends, but this was probably possible only in towns and cities.\(^{12}\)

We have some references to girls going out to swim as well as girls playing a number of court and games like 'hide and seek' and 'run and catch'. These gave very good exercise to the players and were well calculated to help their general development and gave suppleness to their limbs. These games have been very popular with all classes of society since very early times. They were, however, played usually before the marriage.

1.6 Games, Sports and other Past Times

It is true that before the advent to the Muslims in India, our women used to enjoy a good deal of freedom. They were allowed enough opportunities to take part in games and sports, both indoor and outdoor. But the life of Indian Women during the Muslim period became very much secluded due to the growing practice of 'purdah' and as such they got very little opportunity to take part in games and sports. They passed most of their leisure hours in gossiping and sleeping.

In course of time, around 1950's, Indian women had distinguished themselves in many walks of life. They have earned high offices and positions of responsibility.

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14 Ibid., P.122.
There has been little or no reluctance on the part of the Indian women to take part in sports. Her effort indeed had been conspicuous for its quantity judged by international standards of achievement; there had been depressingly little evidence of quality in the sporting endeavour of our women.

There are many reasons for this sad state of affairs. Foremost perhaps, is one deeply rooted in tradition - a tradition of parental prejudice and false sense of modesty. The Indian women were seen reluctant to wear the rather scanty attire of the modern sports field. The sari, of course, is a beautiful and elegant garment, but it did not allow the freedom of movement so essential to the racket players or the track or field competitors. The 'Shalwar and Khemise' traditional clothing of the north were no less of a handicap. The sporting progress of Indian women, inevitably, would be retarded as long as they fight shy of turning out in the proper kit.

The more westernised communities - the Anglo-Indians and the Persians - were the first, in which, women came to the forefront in sports. These women were more advanced in athletic than those of other communities, and so it was inevitable that they should monopolise the titles and trophies at lawn tennis, badminton, swimming, and track and field events. There was supremacy more evident than in women's hockey. But today, women of all communities compete on equal terms on the sports field.

1.7 Problems Faced by Indian Women

Formal organisation for games and sports in India, women and girls have long been deprived of participation in games and sports by direct or indirect social inhibitions. The earlier social handicaps were 'purdah' early marriage attitude, and the idea that physical, cultural and games unsex the girls and make them into 'tom boys'. These factors are still handicaps to our women in general and even students who have greater freedom of movement and thought are also affected by these bias to a great extent.

In India, sporting world is still man's world. Women constitute almost 50 percent of the total population, but in no sense do equal the male athletes in numbers, inspite of the facilities being available or equal for every one either male or female.

Although contemporary women's sports in India cannot entirely claim to be of world class sport by itself, is by no means something new or strange to the country.

There are innumerable instances in Indian mythology of women who excelled at games of skill. It was the famous Indian heroine Shakuntala who taught archery to her son, the son of the equally famous king Dushyanta.

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Indian history similarly provides striking examples of women of martial race fighting side by side with their men in times of emergency. Invasion tales of the Rajputs and Maharashtrians schivalry suggest that the women of those races were skilled in riding and chase.

Miniature paintings of the Moghul period show women playing Polo, and there are charming anecdotes which have been handed down from generation to generation. Chess is still another courtly game where women proved their prowess in golden times.

If we stretch the word 'sport' to that allied art 'dancing', we find that Indian women have distinguished themselves for centuries at this most graceful and classical art.

Less inhibited and shy thus the city women, the village maiden wholeheartedly took part in folk dancing, which was part of village life to celebrate seasonal joys and domestic blessings and helped to make village and family events a time for mass exuberance and community participation.

Indian women were not seriously interested in sport until the early 1900. Clublife, which was introduced in India by the British did, however, encourage women of the leisure, official class to indulge in a little lady like exercise to kill their long hours of leisure but the average Indian woman remained unaffected by this mild form of sporting activity. However, this much can be said to the credit of club-life that it did stimulate sufficient interest in sport on the part of mothers to make them agree to let their daughters participate in games and physical exercises when these were introduced as part of the curriculum in modern progressive schools.
Besides, parents noticed that the health of their daughters as well as their qualities of leadership and poise increased as a result of their sports participation. No longer was sport considered immodest or an outdoor life and bad for complexion.

Because of this traditional association of Indian women with folk and classical dancing and also because of the nucleus of sporting activity provided by club-life, a certain amount of seriousness inevitably crept into the women's sports.

It first became noticeable in the early 1930's. Already, women pioneers had started blazing trail. Rajkumari Amrit kaur, Health Minister in India, first set an example for North Indian Women by taking to competitive tennis. In western India, a brave woman, who had already poached into men's preserves and established as a renowned Sanskrit scholar, also winning tournaments.

Pandit Kshama Row who had started serious tennis in the 1920's set the same example in Western India as the Rajkumari did in the north.

The Indian women have passed through various phases of civilization as women in other countries. Traditional India had seen women only as a member of the family, as daughter, wife and mother, and not as an individual with an identity of rights of her own. Indian society is only awakening to a new life and to new conceptions of freedom for women.
Women's physical education and sports have been hampered not only by the place of physical education in a particular society, but also by the place that women held in any society. The social status of women even in the so-called progressive nations has been characterised by restrictive influence of prejudices and taboos. Nevertheless, during recent years, the situation in general has changed.

The earlier social handicaps were purdah, early marriage, inferiority complex, inconvenient dress, jewellery, parental attitude and the idea that physical culture and games unsex the girls.

False understanding and misconception about femininity, menstruation, and deep-rooted social traditions and customs were also responsible to preserve their ignorance and understanding about exercise and sports.

These factors are still hurdles to our women in general and students in particular who have greater freedom of movement and thoughts are also affected by the bias to a great extent.

That is why, sports-minded mothers are one of the best possible guarantees of healthy and progressive nation. India's outstanding sportswomen could for the past mostly be counted on the fingers, their achievements are by no means negligible. The talent hunt was, however, all over the country, 'Catch them Young' scheme, talents from rural areas, backed up by scientific coaching and training schedule, sports science and sports. Biomechanics have produced the world class sportswoman like Anusayabai, Geeta, Zutsi, Valasamma, Vandana Rao, Bhuvaneshwari, Usha Agrawal, Bula Choudhary Amighia,
Women athletes have already started winning laurels for the country. India's track sensation P.T. Usha was the cynosure of all eyes at Seoul winning the 200 metres, 400 metres, 400 metres hurdles and 4 x 400 metres relay events, and she became the first Indian to be among the quadruple gold medal winners in the Asian Games, inspite of the fact that all these constraints have come their way to the success.

Thus, the purpose of the study is to find those constraints which are still obstructing our women from participating in games and sports.

The history of sports has been generally one of masculine domination. That is why, women in sports have been a topic completely ignored by most scholars in our country. Participation of women in games and sports has been a topic relatively unexplored area of research.

Much has been said in recent years against and in favour of women's participation in games and sports. While many people have ardently advocated the idea of girls and women taking part in physical activity and competitive sports, many others have viewed the whole affair with scepticism.

Today, all over the world, there prevails a mass of diverging suggestions and judgement on the subjects.
The whole question of women's participation in sport is not peculiar to any one country. On the other hand, it is of international importance. Although medical experts have a big say in the matter, it is hard to agree whether the physician, the educator, the physiologist and the social worker could be the deciding authority. In any case, almost everyone interested in physical education and recreation seems to have his or her own opinion. Not all such opinions are based on medical or other scientific evidence.

Many people who condemn sports are, those who have been influenced by personal bias and prejudices. It is most interesting and sometimes confusing to discuss the pros and cons of the issue that women are born unfit for games and sports.

To a large extent, this phenomenon has been caused by strong social traditions and environmental forces under the control of male members and of the society.

Women have, in general, been forced to occupy a secondary position in the society in relation to men and to remain 'Cribbed Cabined and Confined'. This unenviable position has been not because of feminine characteristics or inabilities, but by rigid bond of customs on civilization. So, even today it is believed that games and sports foster a love of vain pleasure which is detrimental to home and other associated interests. A variety of prejudicial views have stood in the way of introduction of an effective system of physical education for girls in India.
The social status of women in the so-called progressive nations has been characterised by restrictive influence of prejudices and taboos. Nevertheless, during the recent years, the situation in general has changed.

Women in India, especially in villages and rural areas, are backward and orthodox is an acknowledged fact. Many parents raise objections when their daughters go to play games. Several points are generally disputed, one of which is the athletic custom. However, the social environments of the Indian women are changing at a fast pace.

Traditionally bashful and for centuries oppressed by the male, Indian women are now coming into their own. Since the dawn of political independence, commendable progress has been made. The constitution of Republic of India has guaranteed all citizens irrespective of sex, caste, community or religion, equal opportunity of advancement. If today they are not as much involved in sports as they ought to be, it is not exactly due to denial of opportunities but it is because of the fact that prejudicial forces are still operating.

No one denies the major physiological differences between men and women. There are certain anatomical differences, although they have began to change and may tend to decrease in near future.

These old-fashioned ideas have changed in the light of present knowledge. Now-a-days, scientific training methods and medicines enable women to engage in sports and physical activity normally and without risks.
Women in India have little freedom and outdoor life due to long social usages and more arising out of marital, physical, psychological, economic and domestic circumstances and this is the main reason why the Indian women are much behind their counterparts in the west.

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These factors are still handicaps to our women in general and even more students, who have greater freedom of movements and thoughts are also affected by the bias to a great extent.

In India, sporting world is still men's world. Women constitute almost 50 percent of total population, but in no sense do equal the male athlete in numbers inspite of the fact that facilities being available are equal for every one either male or female. Thus, the purpose of this study has been to find out those constraints which are obstructing our women form participating in games and sports.

1.8 Statement of the Problem

The problem under investigation was a study on the psycho-social constraints of women participation in sports in India. The constraints referred to in the problem stated above will be confined to the study of parental, community, tradition, religion, college and personal constraints of women participation in sports in India.
1.9 Hypothesis

It was hypothesised that:

1. Parents have negative attitude towards their daughters’ participation in sports and games.
2. Community does not provide needed support for women’s participation in games and sports.
3. Customs and conventions never encourage women to take part in sports and games.
4. The college does not provide a conducive sporting climate for women.
5. Women have low self-concept in sports and games.
6. Biographical variables, such as, the type of the college, locality of the college, religion, community, socio-economic status and the geographical location of students influence women’s non-participation in games and sports.
7. Women’s participation in games and sports is affected by certain psycho-socio constraints.

1.10 Significance of the Study

This study has brought to light some new facts regarding women’s non-participation in games and sports. There are many prejudices in our tradition-bound society regarding women players and sports-women. The results may go a long way in removing some of these prejudices, thus, some hidden talents of women will be helpful to improve the level of participation and achievement at the national and international levels.
1.11 Delimitations

1. This study will be limited to women students of junior, degree, professional and training colleges only, who do not participate in the competitions. A randomly selected number of students and colleges will be chosen for the study.

3. Total number of women students from each State will be limited to sixty.

LIMITATIONS

1. This study is confined to the women students of the Arts and Science Colleges of both co-education, women and professional colleges.

2. Due to time and financial limitations, only ten out of 25 States in India were chosen to collect data.

3. The investigator confined himself to Alagappa University college of physical Education, Department of Physical Education, Department of Education, Department of Women's Studies, Karaikudi, Maruthi college of Physical Education, Coimbatore, L.N.C.P.E., Gwalior, Department of physical Education, S.K.University Anantapur and Andhra Loyola College, Vijayawada to utilize library books for collecting literature pertaining to the problem.

1.13 Definition and Explanation of Terms

Constraints: The term 'constraint' has been derived from the verb 'constrain' which means, "to compel by physical or moral means of some action or negatively
to restrain or to compel to inaction"\(^{17}\).

In the present study, `constraint has been used in the sense of psychological and sociological aspect of women from participation in games and sports.

**Games and Sports**: An activity involving challenge with some amount of risk, some pleasure and a deep involvement irrespective of success or failure at the time.

**Opinion Questionnaire**: The information from the questionnaire attempts to measure the attitude or belief of an individual is known as 'opinion questionnaire' or 'attitude scale'.

Through the use of questions or by getting an individual’s expressed reaction to statements, a sample of his opinion is obtained. From this statement of opinion may be inferred or estimated his attitude what he really believes\(^{18}\).

**Inventory**: This is similar to the questionnaire. It has been defined as "a structured test or check-list used to determine the examiners’ attitude, opinions or feelings"\(^{19}\).

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Survey: The Survey method gathers data from a relatively large number of cases at a particular time. It is not concerned with the characteristics of individuals as individuals. It is concerned with the generalised statistics that result when the data are abstracted\(^{20}\).