CHAPTER-V

DISCUSSION

Sports Sociology has emerged as one of the important Inter-disciplinary area for research in Physical Education. In America and European countries considerable research work has been done in sports sociology. It is seen from the review of the literature that comparatively very limited studies have been completed in India. In this chapter, the findings of the present study have been critically discussed in the background of earlier studies to explore the new findings of the investigation. The studies in sports Sociology in India are more in Socio-Economic class background of the players. The researcher did not come across any study related with social mobility of the women players. As the available literature was very limited on social mobility in India, the socio-economic stratification has also been considered for discussion purpose.

1. SPORTS AND SOCIAL STRATIFICATION:

   It was believed that sports and sports participation were open and democratic, that inequalities existing in other parts of social life did not spill over into organized games. However, the studies indicated that this was not true. Participation in different sports was found to be affected by socio-economic status of the participants. Number of studies have been made in India to explore the differences in the socio-economic background of the players in different sports. It was found that

The studies by Bunia, 1981; Uppalwar, 1990, Singh, 1990; and Wakode, 1994 concluded that the Inter-collegiate players of Table-Tennis, Badminton and Cricket were found to be from Higher Middle and Higher Classes.

The findings of the present study agreed with the above findings. The parents of the veteran women University Volleyball, Kho-Kho and Kabaddi players were found to be of Middle and Lower Middle class, whereas the parents of the veteran women University players of Table-Tennis and Badminton were with Middle and Higher Middle strata. These findings confirmed that there was relation of sports with social stratification in India. In America also such relationship of socio-economic background and sports recruitment was explored. Weinberg and Arond (1952) found that most of the boxers were recruited from Lower Socio-Economic strata.

McIntyre (1959), Loy (1969, 1972), Webb (1969), McPherson (1968), Petrie (1973) and Berryman and Loy (1976) have stated that those involved in Inter-Collegiate boxing and Wrestling appeared to be primarily from Lower
strata of the society while those involved in Tennis, Skiing and Golf were from the Upper strata, although the Middle class tend to be over represented in all sports.

Stone (1957) found that Upper strata preferred Ice-Hockey, Golf, Tennis; Middle strata preferred Football, Baseball and Bowling and Lower strata preferred combative sports such as Boxing and Wrestling. The similar trend was also observed in Federal Republic of Germany by Ulrich (1976), where Lower class people which constituted half of the population did not participate, in high level of sports like Tennis, Golf and Skiing.

In Belgium also Renson (1976) found that higher strata involved in Skiing, Golf, Tennis and Fencing; whereas Lower strata population involved in Gymnastic, Calisthenics, Judo, Boxing, Soccer and Handball. Starosta (1967) and Nowaka (1969) indicated that Figure skaters were with well to do family background and 70% of the elite Boxers were from working class family environment.

On the basis of the study of British male Athletes at Mexico Olympic games Collins (1972) found that the Boxing, Weight Lifting and Wrestling, the participants were from working class background and Track and Field, Rowing, Fencing, Field Hockey and Equestrian sports the Olympians were from middle class families. In similar study Pavia and Jaquea (1976) analyzed the social class background of the 1972 Australian Olympic team and noted that as a group they were overrepresented by upper class and that great number of
families were from Upper class origin. This latter finding of
greater number of females from Upper class origin in Olympic Team was agreed with the findings of Luschen (1969) and Gruneau (1975) who suggested that there might be greater social obstacles for Lower class females than lower class males.

These findings might not be applicable in present Indian conditions as it was found that significant percentage of veteran women university players were from Middle and Lower Middle Socio-Economic class. Yet, it was certain that the sports requiring high amount of financial support like Badminton, the veteran women university players were of Upper Social Strata.

In Yugoslavia, Petrovic (1976) observed that among 283 top male and female athletes only 5% were the children of farmers. He further found that children of parents with higher Social position were more active.

Famaey-Lamon et al. (1979) stated that in Belgium, the manual workers preferred team sports for their children while self-employed and intellectual parents preferred individual sports.

The above findings indicated that almost all the studies were in relation with male athletes and the sports were also totally different than the present study. Yet, there was found to be close relationship between Economic condition and preference for the sports. Upper strata preferred more expensive and individual sports; whereas lower strata preferred less
expensive, contact and team sports. This was found to be agreeable in the present investigation also.

2. SPORTS AND SOCIAL MOBILITY:

Although no definitive study of Social Mobility in sports context had been conducted, numerous social scientists have commented on the role of sport as mechanism of mobility for lower class youths. Hodges (1964) stated in his text on Social Stratification that college Football had functioned as highly effective status elevator for thousands of boys from Blue Collar ethnic backgrounds. Surprisingly Hodges did not provide a single evidence to support his striking statement. But Weinberg and Arond’s (1952) study of professional boxers was based on empirical data. They stated that almost all the boxers were recruited from lower Socio-Economic background. They also found that although a number of successful boxers experienced rather quick economic ascent at young age. There punitive sports career typically resulted in an equally swift economic descent. In other American studies, Loy (1969), noted that on one hand large scale of surveys have been made which illustrated the occupational success patterns of former college athletes in several sports but they failed to report when the athletes began their social ascent.

One of the most substantial studies reported in literature regarding social mobility amongst sportsmen is that of Luschen (1963). In his investigation on sample of 1,880 youths in German sports clubs, he found that 14% upwardly mobile and 7% were downwardly mobile.
Lever (1969) studied Brazilian soccer and stated that soccer Mania was kept going by five thousand professional players, playing for about hundred teams. 80% were from the Lowest social class. The boys from the age of four or five practise the whole day with only tightly rolled stocking for a ball hoping eventually to attract the scouts of the city teams. Many poor uneducated boys rise fast to the big city teams but a number fall back down as fast as they rose. Around the age of thirty, they found themselves with no work skills, no money and only memories of their brief career. Because they neither studied nor worked during their brief career, Lower class retiring players had no choice but to accept a menial, unskilled job. Lever stated that the ladder of mobility such as professional sport took on a much greater significance in a traditional, rigidly stratified society than in a relatively open social system such as in the United States.

The only study in India on Social Mobility was done by Sohi (1981), a sociologist from Nigeria, who conducted his study on Indian sportsmen and stated that they were predominantly from Lower Middle Class and they were higher in social class and educational level than their fathers. He found that 15% of the fathers of the sportsmen were just literate and 17% had not more than primary education. According to him one reason for Upward Mobility amongst Indian sportsmen was due to weightage given to sports performance at the time of employment. He also stated that facilities for higher prestige sports were more available to the youths of Higher Social Status.
The above studies indicated that negligible studies attempted to explore the Social mobility amongst the women players and athletes. Further the Social Mobility studies were more related with the sportsmen from Boxing, American Football, Soccer and Gymnastic. In the present study the investigator attempted to explore the social mobility amongst the women university players of Volleyball, Kho-Kho, Kabaddi, Table-Tennis and Badminton. In view of the earlier studies the type of activities and the type of subjects selected for the present study on Social Mobility were totally different. Volleyball, Kho-Kho and Kabaddi were the less expensive games, whereas the Table-Tennis and Badminton were comparatively more expensive. The findings in this study indicated that the Socio-Economic background of the parents of veteran women university players of Volleyball, Kho-Kho, Kabaddi and Table-Tennis was with Middle status. Whereas the parents of Veteran Women Badminton Players were from Higher Middle Class. While studying the Social Mobility of the daughters who were the veteran university players, it was found that there was upward social mobility amongst the veteran players of Volleyball, Kho-Kho, Kabaddi and Table-Tennis. Upward social mobility was not found to be existing amongst the Badminton players. This Upward Social Mobility amongst Volleyball, Kho-Kho, Kabaddi and Table-Tennis might not be solely because of sports achievements. The education of the women players might have contributed for this Upward mobility because majority of these Veteran players were found to be in service and they got the job due to their education and because of sports achievements. The veteran women players were found to be highly qualified like Graduation and Post-graduation qualification than their parents.
Therefore, it may not be only sports achievements of the University women players of Volleyball, Kho-Kho and Kabaddi that resulted into Upward Mobility. But education can be another important cause for Upward Social Mobility amongst Inter University Players. The Upward Social Mobility could not be observed amongst women Badminton players because initially these players had Higher Socio-Economic family background and they remained in the same Socio-economic strata.

For the first time in India such study had been undertaken to explore the Social-Mobility amongst University Women players of Volley-ball, Kho-Kho, Kabaddi, Table-Tennis and Badminton. The findings of the study have opened a new vista for further investigation.