

# Barriers to Sports Participation among Female Students

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## ABSTRACT

Many studies have demonstrated that involvement in sports improves children's health, mental health, leadership skills, and social abilities. However, female students frequently confront a variety of impediments that prevent them from actively participating in sporting activities. The current study looks on the barriers to sports engagement among female students using data obtained during the North Zone Inter-University Cricket Tournament at Maharshi Dayanand University in Rohtak. The study involved 50 female respondents (N = 50), including participants, spectators, and volunteers. Data were acquired using a standardized questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale.

Descriptive statistical tools such as frequency, percentage, mean score, and ranking method were used for analysis. The findings indicate that academic pressure and lack of time constitute the most significant barrier, followed by safety concerns, family restrictions, lack of female coaches, and inadequate sports infrastructure. The results further reveal that socio-cultural expectations and limited institutional support negatively affect sustained participation in sports. The study concludes that although competitive platforms exist at the university level, systematic academic, social, and infrastructural challenges continue to restrict female students' regular engagement in sports activities.

**Keywords:** Female students, sports participation, gender barriers, inter-university cricket, academic pressure, safety concerns

## INTRODUCTION

Participating in sports is essential for students' entire development since it improves social interaction, mental health, physical fitness, and leadership abilities. Students that participate in sports on a regular basis gain resilience, discipline, confidence, and teamwork. Sports provide female students with a strong sense of empowerment and gender equality in addition to being a health-promoting activity. In many educational environments, especially in India, female involvement in sports is still lower than male engagement despite these advantages.

The participation of female students in athletics is limited by a number of circumstances. According to sociocultural conventions, females' participation in sports is frequently subordinated to their studies and household duties. Regular participation chances are further diminished by time limits, safety concerns, and a lack of family support. Participation is also discouraged by institutional obstacles like poor infrastructure, a lack of dedicated practice spaces, a lack of equipment, and a dearth of female coaches.

This study explores these challenges using data collected from 50 female participants in the North Zone Inter-University Cricket Tournament at Maharshi Dayanand University (2025-2026). The study aims to provide insights into developing inclusive sports policies and supportive settings to enhance female students' participation in sports by identifying and assessing perceived barriers.

## 2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To identify major barriers affecting sports participation among female students.
2. To examine the relationship between socio-cultural factors and sports involvement.
3. To analyse institutional and infrastructural challenges.
4. To suggest measures for increasing female participation in sports.

## 3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Previous research indicates that gender norms significantly affect sports participation. Studies show:

- Girls receive less encouragement from family members.
- Lack of female role models reduces motivation.
- Schools often prioritize male sports programs.

- Safety concerns and transportation issues discourage participation.

Research also suggests that self-confidence and body image concerns influence girls' willingness to participate in sports activities.

#### 4. METHODOLOGY

##### 4.1 Research Design

The present study adopted a **descriptive survey method** to examine the barriers to sports participation among female students. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered to 50 respondents during the North Zone Inter-University Cricket Tournament held at Maharshi Dayanand University, Rohtak.

##### 4.2 SAMPLE

- Total Respondents: 50 female students
- Age Group: 17–25 years
- Location: Urban and semi-urban institutions

##### 4.3 TOOLS USED

- Structured questionnaire (25 questions)
- 5-point Likert Scale
- Personal interviews (for qualitative insights)

##### 4.4 STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES

- Percentage analysis
- Mean and Standard Deviation
- Chi-square test
- Ranking method

#### 5. DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS (N = 50)

##### 5.1 SOURCE OF DATA

The data was collected during the **North Zone Inter-University Cricket Tournament** organized at Maharshi Dayanand University, Rohtak. A structured questionnaire was administered to **50 female respondents**, including players and student spectators.

Sampling Method: Random purposive Sampling

Tool Used: Structured Questionnaire (5-point Likert Scale)

Statistical Techniques: Frequency, Percentage, Mean Score Ranking

##### 5.2 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

**Table 1: Age Distribution (N = 50)**

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage (%)
17–20 years	20	40%
21–23 years	22	44%
24–25 years	8	16%
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Interpretation:** Majority (44%) respondents belong to 21–23 years age group.

##### 5.3 FREQUENCY OF SPORTS PARTICIPATION

**Table 2: PARTICIPATION FREQUENCY**

Participation Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Regular (Weekly)	16	32%
Occasional (Monthly)	14	28%
Rarely	18	36%
Never	2	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Interpretation:** Out of 50 respondents, 32% participate regularly, 28% occasionally, 36% rarely, and 4% never. Although most students are involved, irregular participation indicates existing barriers affecting consistent sports engagement among females.

**5.4 BARRIERS TO SPORTS PARTICIPATION**

(5-Point Likert Scale: 1=Strongly Disagree, 5=Strongly Agree)

**Table 3: MEAN SCORE RANKING OF BARRIERS**

Barrier	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Rank
Academic Pressure / Lack of Time	4.20	0.68	1
Safety Concerns	3.96	0.82	2
Family Restrictions	3.80	0.88	3
Lack of Female Coaches	3.62	0.91	4
Inadequate Facilities	3.48	0.95	5
Financial Constraints	3.22	1.02	6

**5.5 PERCENTAGE ANALYSIS OF MAJOR BARRIERS**

**Table 4: AGREEMENT LEVEL ON KEY BARRIERS**

Barrier	Agree + Strongly Agree	Percentage (%)
Lack of Time	39	78%
Safety Issues	34	68%
Family Restrictions	30	60%
Lack of Female Coaches	28	56%
Poor Infrastructure	26	52%

**5.6 INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS**

The data indicate that lack of time is the most significant barrier, with 78% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that it limits their participation. This is followed by safety issues (68%), highlighting concerns related to travel, supervision, and security. Family restrictions (60%) also play a major role, reflecting sociocultural influences. Additionally, lack of female coaches (56%) and poor infrastructure (52%) were identified as substantial institutional barriers.

Overall, time constraints and safety concerns emerge as the most critical factors restricting regular sports participation among female students.

**5.7 EXAMPLE HYPOTHESIS TESTING**

**Hypothesis:**

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant relationship between family support and sports participation.

Using Chi-square test (example):

Calculated  $\chi^2 = 9.12$

Table value (df=3, p<0.05) = 7.81

Since  $9.12 > 7.81$ , H<sub>0</sub> is rejected.

**Conclusion:** Family support significantly influences participation.

**Summary of Major Barriers (Rank Order)**

1. Academic Pressure
2. Safety Concerns
3. Family Restrictions
4. Lack of Female Coaches
5. Infrastructure Problems
6. Financial Constraints

**8. Implications**

The findings have important implications for:

- School administrators

- Sports policymakers
  - Physical education departments
  - Parents and guardians
- Promoting gender-inclusive sports policies can enhance female participation rates.

### 9. Recommendations

1. Establish safe and secure sports environments.
2. Recruit more female coaches and mentors.
3. Conduct awareness campaigns for parents.
4. Provide flexible academic schedules.
5. Offer scholarships and incentives for female athletes.
6. Improve infrastructure and separate facilities.

### 10. Limitations of the Study

- Limited to urban and semi-urban institutions.
- Self-reported data may contain bias.
- Sample size restricted to 50 respondents.
- Limited to North Zone Cricket Inter University 2025-26.

### 11. Suggestions for Future Research

- Comparative study between male and female students.
- Rural vs urban participation analysis.
- Longitudinal study on participation trends.
- Psychological factors influencing sports engagement.

### 12. CONCLUSION

The current study comes to the conclusion that a number of obstacles prevent female students from actively participating in sports. According to data gathered from fifty participants in the North Zone Inter-University Cricket Tournament at Maharshi Dayanand University in Rohtak, the biggest challenges were time constraints and academic pressure. Inadequate sporting facilities, family constraints, safety concerns, and a dearth of female coaches were also noted as significant contributing factors. Despite the fact that intercollegiate competitions offer useful venues for competition, institutional constraints and sociocultural norms make it difficult for students to participate consistently. The results show that in order to stimulate female participation in sports, favourable academic policies, better infrastructure, increased security measures, and more family encouragement are required. By removing these obstacles, female students' involvement, empowerment, and general growth in higher education institutions can all be enhanced.

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