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Involvement of Girls in Sports and Physical Activities: An Assessment of Initiatives from Government and Institutions

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ABSTRACT: The participation of girls in sports and physical activities is a critical aspect of promoting gender equality, fostering physical well-being, and empowering individuals. This paper aims to assess the effectiveness of initiatives launched by governments and institutions to encourage girls' involvement in sports and physical activities. It explores various strategies, policies, and programs implemented at the national, regional, and local levels, analyzing their impact on girls' participation rates and overall engagement in sports. Furthermore, the paper examines the challenges and barriers that hinder girls' involvement in sports, such as social norms, cultural biases, lack of access to facilities, and limited opportunities for skill development. By evaluating existing initiatives and identifying areas for improvement, this assessment seeks to provide insights for policymakers, educators, and stakeholders to enhance girls' access to sports and physical activities, thereby promoting gender equity and fostering healthier communities.

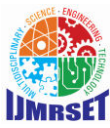
I. INTRODUCTION

The involvement of girls in sports and physical activities has been recognized as a fundamental aspect of promoting their overall well-being and empowerment. Engaging in sports not only enhances physical fitness but also instills valuable life skills such as teamwork, leadership, and resilience. Despite the numerous benefits associated with sports participation, girls often face barriers and challenges that limit their involvement in sporting activities. These challenges range from societal stereotypes to inadequate access to resources and opportunities.

In response to these challenges, governments and institutions have implemented various initiatives aimed at increasing girls' participation in sports and physical activities. These initiatives encompass policy interventions, funding allocations, grassroots programs, and awareness campaigns designed to address barriers and promote inclusivity. However, the effectiveness of these initiatives in achieving their intended goals remains subject to scrutiny.

Assessment of Government and Institutional Initiatives: This section examines the initiatives undertaken by governments and institutions to promote girls' involvement in sports and physical activities. It assesses the scope, implementation strategies, and outcomes of these initiatives, considering factors such as accessibility, inclusivity, and sustainability. Furthermore, it analyzes the extent to which these initiatives have succeeded in overcoming barriers and encouraging girls to participate in sports.

1. **Policy Interventions:** Government policies play a crucial role in shaping the landscape of girls' sports participation. This subsection evaluates the effectiveness of policy interventions aimed at promoting gender equity in sports, such as Title IX in the United States, which mandates equal opportunities for female athletes in educational institutions. Additionally, it examines policies related to sports infrastructure, funding allocation, and gender-sensitive programming.



2. **Grassroots Programs:** Grassroots initiatives implemented by institutions and non- governmental organizations (NGOs) are instrumental in engaging girls from a young age and fostering their interest in sports. This subsection assesses the impact of grassroots programs, including community sports clubs, after-school activities, and mentorship programs, in promoting girls' participation and retention in sports.
3. **Funding and Resource Allocation:** Financial support and resource allocation are essential for creating opportunities and removing barriers to girls' sports participation. This subsection evaluates the adequacy and effectiveness of funding mechanisms implemented by governments and institutions to support girls' sports programs, including grants, scholarships, and subsidies for equipment and facilities.
4. **Awareness Campaigns:** Raising awareness about the importance of girls' sports participation and challenging gender stereotypes is crucial for fostering a culture of inclusivity. This subsection examines the efficacy of awareness campaigns launched by governments, sports organizations, and advocacy groups in promoting girls' sports and challenging societal norms and biases.

Problem to be studied

The participation of girls in sports and physical activities is hindered by a combination of societal challenges. Firstly, pervasive gender stereotypes create a discouraging environment, as girls often face societal expectations and biases that dissuade them from engaging in sports perceived as more suitable for boys. This not only impacts their confidence but also diminishes their overall interest in sports. Additionally, limited access to sports facilities further exacerbates the issue, with girls encountering disparities compared to boys, resulting in a dearth of opportunities for them to participate in physical activities. Cultural and social barriers also play a significant role, as entrenched norms and attitudes may discourage girls from pursuing sports due to concerns about modesty, rigid gender roles, or fears of facing societal backlash for challenging traditional norms.

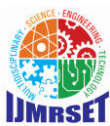
Moreover, the absence of female role models in the sporting realm contributes to a lack of inspiration and motivation for girls to actively pursue athletic activities. The study also delves into the realm of policies and programs, evaluating the effectiveness of existing initiatives by governments and institutions aimed at promoting girls' participation in sports. This entails a comprehensive examination of policies, resource allocation, and program implementation at various levels. Educational factors further compound the issue, with girls encountering barriers such as limited opportunities for physical education and disparities in the promotion of sports within educational institutions.

Lastly, the study takes into account the holistic impact of sports and physical activities on the health and well-being of girls. This involves assessing the physical, mental, and social benefits associated with sports participation, shedding light on the multifaceted advantages that extend beyond the immediate realm of athletics. In addressing these interconnected challenges, the study aims to provide insights and recommendations to foster a more inclusive and supportive environment for girls in sports.

Justification of the problem

The study on girls' participation in sports and physical activities is of paramount importance as it addresses a spectrum of societal challenges with profound implications. It tackles pervasive gender stereotypes that perpetuate inequality in sports engagement, contributing significantly to the broader goal of promoting gender equality. By identifying and challenging these stereotypes, the research strives to ensure that girls have equal opportunities to participate in sports and physical activities, fostering a more equitable society.

Moreover, the study recognizes that gender stereotypes not only curtail participation but also impact the confidence and interest levels of girls in sports. By understanding and mitigating these stereotypes, the research aims to create an empowering environment where girls feel confident and enthusiastic about engaging in various athletic pursuits.



The issue of limited access to sports facilities and infrastructure is also highlighted, emphasizing the resulting disparity in opportunities between boys and girls. Addressing this crucial matter becomes imperative to guarantee that girls have equal access to the myriad benefits of sports, including physical fitness, skill development, and the social aspects of team activities.

Cultural and social progress is another focal point, with the study aiming to dismantle entrenched norms and attitudes that act as barriers to girls' participation in sports. By challenging these societal barriers, the research endeavors to foster a more inclusive culture that values and encourages the active involvement of girls in sports, thereby contributing to broader social change.

The absence of female role models in the sporting realm is recognized as a significant barrier, and the study aims to understand and address this gap. By doing so, it aspires to inspire and motivate girls to actively pursue sports, nurturing a new generation of female athletes and leaders in the sporting world.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Numerous studies have highlighted the persistent gender disparities in sports participation, with girls often facing greater barriers and challenges compared to boys. Research by **Azzarito and Solmon (2016)** and **Hulteen et al. (2017)** underscores the influence of societal norms, stereotypes, and cultural expectations on girls' engagement in sports, pointing to the need for targeted interventions to promote inclusivity.

Policy interventions have been instrumental in promoting gender equity in sports participation. The implementation of Title IX in the United States, for instance, has been associated with significant increases in girls' participation rates in high school and collegiate sports (**Hogshead-Makar & Zimbalist, 2007**). Similarly, studies by **Sabo et al. (2015)** and **Madsen et al. (2015)** highlight the positive effects of gender-sensitive policy frameworks on reducing barriers and enhancing opportunities for female athletes.

Grassroots programs play a crucial role in engaging girls in sports from a young age and fostering their interest and skills. Research by **Coalter (2013)** and **Holt et al. (2017)** emphasizes the importance of community-based initiatives, such as sports clubs, recreational programs, and mentorship schemes, in providing supportive environments for girls to participate in sports and develop confidence and leadership skills.

The allocation of funding and resources is essential for creating equitable opportunities for girls in sports. Studies by **Scraton et al. (2016)** and **Hargreaves et al. (2015)** highlight the importance of adequate funding mechanisms, including grants, scholarships, and subsidies, in addressing socio-economic disparities and improving access to sports facilities, equipment, and coaching for girls from marginalized backgrounds.

Despite progress in promoting girls' sports participation, several challenges and barriers persist. Research by **Theberge (2008)** and **Lenskyj (2010)** identifies cultural norms, lack of role models, limited access to facilities, and gender biases in coaching and leadership positions as key obstacles hindering girls' involvement in sports. Addressing these challenges requires multifaceted approaches that prioritize inclusivity, empowerment, and structural changes within sports systems.

Mary Jo Kane and Helen J Lenskyj (1997) did a study on media treatment of female athletes. Issues of gender and sexuality. They reported that over the last two decades, sports sociologists have convincingly demonstrated media representation of women's identities in sport link their athleticism to deeply held values regarding femininity and sexuality (Duncan, 1990; **Harjreaves (1994); Kane (1996);**

Kane and Greendorfer (1994) Lenskyj (1986,1992,1994) I both print and broadcast journalism these representations create the prevalent world view that female athletes are by definition, a less authentic version of their male counterparts.

Knoppers (1989) pointed out that few investigations have considered the under representation of women coaching male teams and that this underrepresentation is problematic. It is assumed that because sport has historically been defined as a male preserve and because men are also assumed to be more competent and thus superior to women, men can (and should) fill leadership positions in women sport (**Stangl and Kane, 1991**).

Lopiano (1991) also urged people in sport organization to use the following strategies to promote gender equity.



Research methodology :- Objectives:

1. To evaluate the current level of girls' involvement in sports and physical activities.
2. To assess the effectiveness of government and institutional initiatives in promoting girls' participation.
3. To identify barriers and challenges faced by girls in sports and physical activities.

Research Design:

• **Quantitative and Qualitative Methods:**

- Conduct a mixed-methods study incorporating both quantitative surveys and qualitative focus groups.

Sampling:

- The quantitative approach will provide numerical data on participation rates, while qualitative methods will offer deeper insights into experiences and perceptions.

Population:

- Girls aged between [10 to 28].

Data Collection:

• **Primary Data:**

- Surveys/questionnaires assessing participation rates, attitudes, and awareness of initiatives.
- Use Likert scales to measure attitudes and perceptions.

• **Secondary Data:**

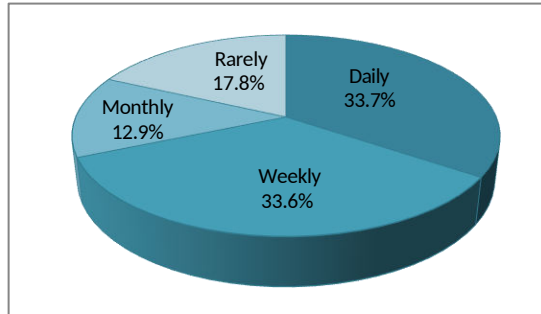
- Conduct interviews and focus group discussions with girls, parents, teachers, and sports organizers.

Tools used for research:

- Surveys and Questionnaires
- Focus Group Discussions (Color Coat Holder Girls)
- Observation
- Literature Review

Data Interpretation and Analysis: -

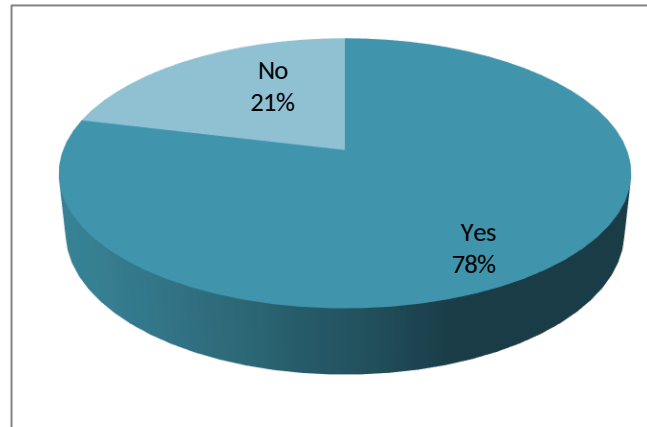
- 1) How often do you participate in sports or physical activities?



Based on the response collected for research paper, it seems that a significant portion of the participants engage in sports or physical activities on a weekly basis, with 33.6%. Following closely behind, 33.7% participate in such activities daily. A smaller percentage, 12.9%, engages in them on a monthly basis, while 17.8% do so rarely. These findings suggest that a considerable number of individuals prioritize regular physical activity in their lives.

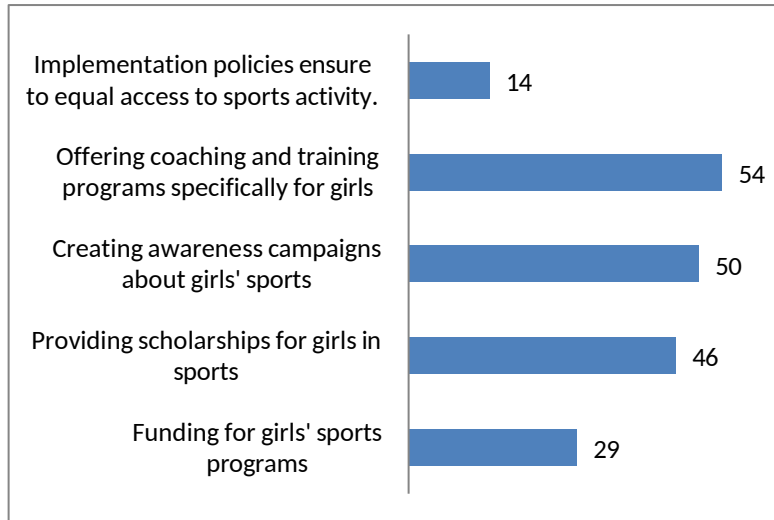
2) Are you currently involved in sports or physical activities?

This research found, there are 21% Girls are not currently involved in sports or physical activities and 78% Girls are currently engaged in sports and physical activity.



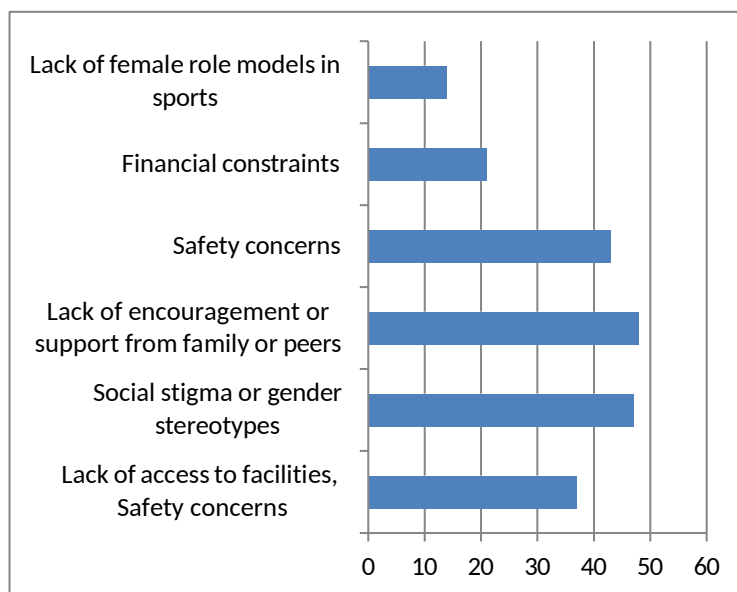


3) What specific institutions, government initiatives do you believe have been most effective in promoting girls' participation in sports?



According to the responses collected for research paper, coaching and training programs specifically designed for girls are seen as the most effective initiative for promoting their participation in sports, with 54% agreement. Scholarships for girls in sports follow closely behind, deemed effective by 46% of respondents. Creating awareness campaigns about girls' sports also received significant support, with 50% agreement. However, funding for girls' sports programs garnered only 29% agreement, and implementation policies ensuring equal access to sports activities received the least support, with only 14% agreement.

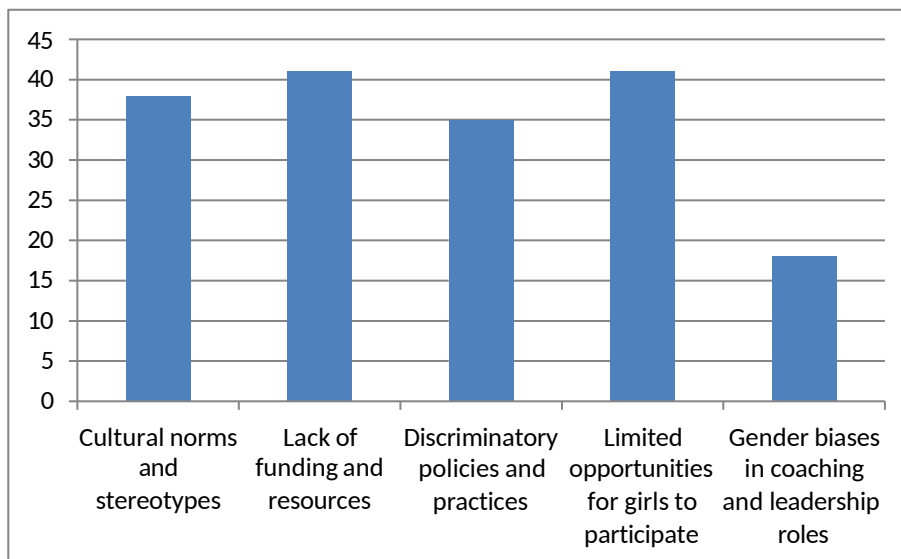
4) What do you perceive as the main barriers or challenges for girls in participating in sports and physical activities?





Based on the responses collected for research paper, the main barriers or challenges perceived for girls in participating in sports and physical activities include: Lack of access to facilities, Safety concerns 37%, Social stigma or gender stereotypes 47%, Lack of encouragement or support from family or peers 48%, Safety concerns 43%, Financial constraints 21%, Lack of female role models in sports 14%.

5) What do you believe are the root causes of gender inequality in sports and physical activity?



This research found, the root causes of gender inequality in sports and physical activity mostly come from Lack of funding and resources, Limited opportunities for girls to participate, Cultural norms and stereotypes and other issues are come from gender biases in coaching, leadership roles.

III. CONCLUSION

The research findings highlight the effectiveness of certain initiatives in promoting girls' participation in sports. Specifically, coaching and training programs tailored for girls, along with scholarships for female athletes, are perceived as highly impactful. Additionally, awareness campaigns about girls' sports play a significant role in increasing visibility and interest. However, there is a need for improvement in the implementation of policies ensuring equal access to sports activities for girls. These findings underscore the importance of targeted interventions and investment in initiatives that address the specific needs and barriers faced by girls in sports participation. This research found, there are 21% Girls are not currently involved in sports or physical activities and 78% Girls are currently engaged in sports and physical activity. Maximum girls are passionate and interested for playing sports and physical activity.

In focus group decision, I was talked to girls who are university color coat holders in football (Amravti University) and I observed their issue and challenges they faced in field but they all girls are enjoy the game and happy with their filed. I was talk to university girls team coach of football Mr. Dinesh Mhala sir and Physiotherapist Ms. Pramod Solio sir they both are contributed more for promoting girls involvement in sports. Ms. Pramod Solio established Sport ground for girls and Mr. Mhala sir contributed their time after duty of Maharashtra Police to gave coaching for gilrs.

Firstly, while there's a notable interest in regular physical activity, with a considerable portion engaging on a weekly or daily basis. Secondly, initiatives such as offering coaching and training programs tailored for girls, providing scholarships for female athletes, and creating awareness campaigns have been perceived as the most effective in promoting girls' participation in sports. However, there's room for improvement in implementing policies ensuring equal access to sports activities for girls. Overall, this assessment underscores the importance of continued investment, advocacy, and collaboration to overcome barriers and create inclusive opportunities for girls in sports and physical activities. By prioritizing effective initiatives and addressing



persistent challenges, governments and institutions can contribute significantly to empowering girls and fostering their active participation in sports, ultimately promoting their health, well-being, and gender equity.

Suggestions:

1. Suggestion for government to allocate funds for the construction and maintenance of sports facilities, particularly in underserved communities, to improve access for girls.
2. Institutions should establish mentorship programs where female athletes can serve as role models and mentors for younger girls, fostering a sense of belonging and inspiration.
3. Institutions arranged programs to make sports and physical activities fun and enjoyable for girls. Offer engaging and age-appropriate activities, games, and challenges that cater to their interests and preferences.
4. Girls should participate in sports to build confidence, resilience, and leadership skills that can benefit them both on and off the field.

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