



## Empowering rural young women through sports -steps to increase their participation in sports

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**Abstract:** Women empowerment through sporting activities can be a very thematic subject which can become very productive if considered as a medium for national progress. The participation of women in sporting activities can be enhanced & sporting activities can be made a medium of augmenting self confidence among rural women. Rural women are suffering from the burden of domestic work field work farm work & they find very less time to recreation & merriment. The rural family structure is highly patriarchal & women access to equality & individuality are very meager. Rural women empowerment through sporting activities can be very powerful tool to rejuvenate vanishing sporting activities which were once an ingredient of the rural life. Participation & total involvement in any sporting activities whether indoor or outdoor, boosts self-confidence & strengthens mind & tones up body & configures good inter personal relationship. This paper argues the imperative steps which can be incorporated into rural women empowerment policy making.

**Key words:** Rural Women empowerment, Sports participation needs, Initiatives For rural women sport, need for policy Interventions.

**Introduction:** As nelson Mandela often said, "Sport has the power to change the world...it has the power to inspire. It has the power to unite people in a way that little else does. It speaks to youth in a language they understand. Sport can create hope where once there was only despair. It is more powerful than government in breaking down racial barriers." In India, rural women toil in fields, tilling, seedling, dairying, domestic work etc & most of the time they find no time for leisure & recreation. Stimulating these women to take part in sporting activities can be considered as a medium of rural empowerment.

**Objectives of study:** This paper examines the issues relating to needs for making women empowerment challenges easier through involvement in supporting activities and considers need for

awareness creation about participation in rural sporting events

**Methodology -** This paper has been prepared using several secondary sources & journal references along with primary sources such as government reports.

**The concept:** Rural household chores & field led work almost take their whole day & rural women find no time to sport. Sports, both indoor & outdoor, being one of the important recreational activities can revitalize rural women & make them reinvest the time towards learning, guiding children in their homework, becoming aware of socio political issues, awareness about human rights, etc. Rural women who are totally unaware of the family welfare projects sponsored by government can be made to realize the benefits. Sports can



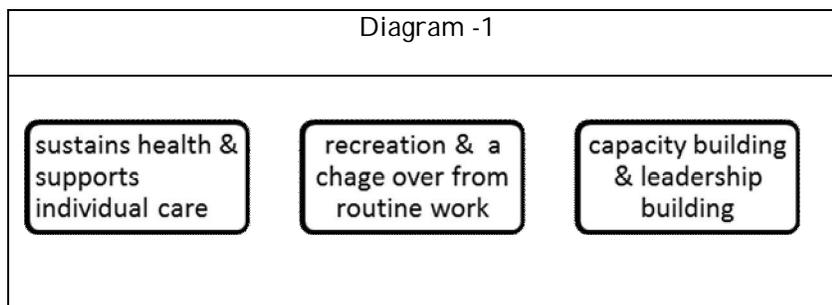
be more reinvigorating & refreshing as it boosts self-confidence, self-learning & leadership qualities (Sports - A Potential Game Changer Of Rural Youth - The Guardian Business Standard September 8th 2014).

**Rural sporting events** – India is a shelter for several sporting events since time immemorial. There have been sporting events connected to religion social gathering, folk customs, festivities, recreation, merriment etc. But most of these sporting activities were male dominated & male oriented. But some of these sporting activities can involve women.

1. Aiming
2. Band fencing
3. Basket throw
4. Boating
5. Chuakabara
6. Cross country running
7. Fast walking
8. Flower rolling
9. Hammer throw
10. Hide & seek
11. Kumbhala
12. Leg race
13. Lifting stones
14. Lifting rice bags
15. Mud race

16. Needling
17. Pagade
18. Potato race
19. Ring throw
20. Skipping
21. Slow cycle race
22. Threading flowers
23. Tree jumping
24. Tree mounting
25. Tricycle race
26. Wall jumping

**Benefits to rural women** ; Introducing rural women to different sports and varied opportunities for physical activity other than field work or related activities is a very challenging issue as India spends billions of money on rural women empowerment .Still women in India are considered as secondary citizens both in urban & rural society. Rural women are not involved in sports in India because their participation is considered as societal taboo (Sports - A Potential Game Changer of Rural Youth - The Guardian Business Standard September 8th 2014). Diagram -1 shows the support created involves sustained health & supportive individual care , spare time change over from routine work ,& capacity building & leadership building .



**Challenges faced** : Rural women do not necessarily respond to traditional training , tutoring and coaching , and are often discouraged by programs that



just focus on males' development & naturally lose interest in sporting activity. Rural women are a neglected lot because rural India still reflects patriarchal household structure. In rural India societal structure is modeled on male superiority & gender disparity is most rampant in rural societies.

1. Rural India is still reeling under patriarchal system of society where women are considered a shadow of male counterparts.
2. In rural India societal barriers ban women from taking part in sporting activities.
3. In rural India some tribal & aboriginal tribes even make their women not to watch a sporting event.
4. In rural India Social practices bar women from taking part in religious ceremonies
5. In rural India Economic barriers such as poverty , poor economic status hinder women from participating
6. In rural India Women's access to economic resources is very weak in rural India Women do not enjoy financial individuality as such they cannot think of giving a individual participation outside the family. (How football moved the girl's lives in rural India - The guardian, July 29<sup>th</sup> 2014).
7. In rural India even though women would like to take part in sporting activities , there are several hindrances to their participation because of unsafe sporting environment , caste based inequality , lack of infrastructural facility adequate clothing , good food , water , sanitation ,
8. Most important barrier to rural women sporting activities is that they

lack awareness about the importance of participation in rural India.

9. Several social taboos such as myths that sporting involvement would hamper their fertility are still present in rural India. (Sports - A Potential Game Changer Of Rural Youth - The Guardian Business Standard September 8th 2014).
10. Teenage rural girls are still hidden inside the house & are barred from even watching any sporting activities even on Television.

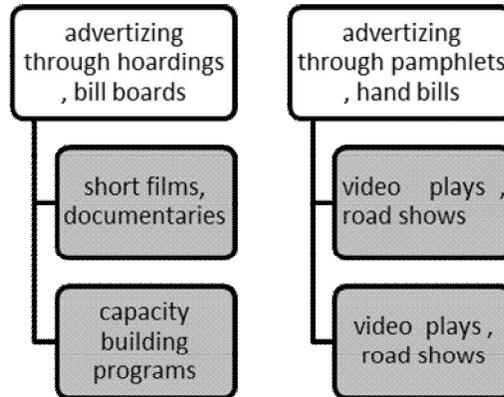
**Considerations:**

1. Introduction of new games, game rule modifications to suit uneducated rural women , and creative play ideas to keep rural adolescents girls interested in sports can be considered.
  2. Games & sporting activities should be framed as not to emphasize on winning but stimulating participation
  3. In rural India, women should be made to read their weights on weighing machines, read pulse rates, read blood pressures levels etc. This can become a very important move towards creation of awareness on health.
  4. Ready to read health charts can be displayed during a sporting event & safe drinking water level reading
  5. Motivating young girls to involve in play activities making their mothers as referees can help the mothers to learn leadership & decision making.
  6. Athletic activities should be made an integral a part of rural women
  7. elder girls can be made as coaches , mentors trainers marks scorers ,
- Creation of mass awareness programs-** A mass awareness that both men & women have access to sporting activity should be driven home through hoardings ,



billboards , pamphlets , hand bills , short films, documentaries ,video plays , road shows, etc. Diagram -2 reflects the tools for mass awareness creation.

Diagram -2: Tools for mass awareness creation



1. Government has to frame rules to establish rural sporting associations specially for rural women
2. Community leaders should frame policies to include rural women in all rural sports events.
3. NGOs should stimulate rural women to participate in sporting activities. The support form NGOs can be very a handy tool.
4. Private sector can join hands to facilitate change
5. Role of media is also very imperative. Rural women should be taken to through media coverage, community radio broadcasting, newspaper coverage etc. This strengthens the objectives of the rural women empowerment
6. Rural schools can play an important role in creating awareness in sports in urban schools parents are activity involved in sporting activities along with their children on special occasions such as parents day , children's day teachers day mother's day , annual day etc But in Rural schools such

- activities are absent in Rural Indian schools. Schools can think of involving rural mothers as a part of school activity.
7. Community can create an infrastructure facility to promote rural women involvement. such as creating a swimming pool , or a Kho Kho ground , or a basketball ground , or a with the support of the local laborers , This can provide support to local earning as well as local infrastructure building at low cost.
8. Community stake holders should support governmental agencies & NGOs to view rural women participation in sports & physical activity as a health provider rather than as a recreational event.
9. Rural women sporting activities should be held locally this will support local market
10. The support to invest in schemes for boosting participation of rural women and girls there by addressing the prospective challenges of



women empowerment can be a consideration.

11. Commercial sponsorship of rural women sporting events can be a sports marketing strategy

12. Rural women empowerment strategies of the government can become more powerful through enhancing budgetary funding to rural women sporting activities.

13. Priorities of funding can popularize the sporting activities & this also enhances greater participation of rural women.

14. Women's access to economic resources in rural India have to be augmented. Women should be made to enjoy financial individuality as such they cannot think of giving a individual participation outside the family. (Sports - A Potential Game Changer Of Rural Youth - The Guardian Business Standard September 8th 2014).

**Analysis:** Besides all these move most important is the self-empowerment. Women should become empowered to rethink about her potentialities. These events can enhance her individualities as well as her leadership qualities. When women begin to think about her imperative role in national building she will push herself towards participation in sporting & will demand for more channels of entry in to sporting activity.

**Conclusion;** Thus conducive programs are to be designed to disallow the barriers to rural women sporting activities. A mass awareness on the concept that both men & women have access to sporting activity should be made clear to rural women. A self-realization about her contribution to building a healthier community lies in the hands of women herself. This way she

can add to becoming a local power house. But it is very important to think in terms of self-empowerment. Women should become empowered to rethink about her potentialities. These events can enhance her individualities as well as her leadership qualities. Besides community stake holders should support governmental agencies & NGOs to view rural women participation in sports & physical activity as a health provider & empowerment mechanism rather than as a recreational / commercial event.

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