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Issues Faced By Muslim Women in the Field Of Recreation

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ABSTRACT

In the hectic routine of everyday life recreations play vital role in release of stress and cause relief and freshness in one's life. The recreational activities keep human beings fit and healthy physically, emotionally and mentally. Islam is a comprehensive religion and a complete code of life. Islam has set criteria for good and healthy recreations and all recreational activities compatible with this criteria are lawful and favorable. In Pakistani society women are not encouraged to participate in recreational activities due to many reasons. This study aims at exploring issues faced by women in the field of recreation. Quantitative methodology has been adopted as a tool for this research study. Objective of this research study is to explore socio-cultural constraints and economic status effecting participation ratio of women in recreations. The target population comprises of undergraduate and post graduate students. Students are selected on the basis of their enrolment in Pakistani Institutes. Findings of the study showed that lack of knowledge and companion, long distances to activity areas, high registration fees, lack of facility, fear of assault, orthodox thought of society, gender discrimination, household responsibilities and dress codes are significant recreational constraints for participation of women in this field. It was recommended that the government should establish standard sport infrastructure exclusively for females with insurance of security and low registration charges in every division of the country with conveyance facility.



Key words: recreational activities, recreational constraints, sport infrastructure, socio-cultural constraints, economic status, Pakistani society.

Introduction

In the hectic routine of everyday life recreations play vital role in release of stress and cause relief and freshness in one's life. The recreational activities keep human beings fit and healthy physically, emotionally and mentally. In Pakistani society women are not encouraged to participate in recreational activities due to many reasons. The purpose of the study was to explore socio-cultural constraints and economic status effecting participation ratio of Pakistani women in recreations. The study was intended to be carried out keeping in view the following objectives:

1- To explore socio-cultural constraints which influences participation ratio of women in recreations.

2- To explore effect of economic status on participation ratio of women in recreations.

Research Questions for this study were:

1- Do socio-cultural constraints influences participation ratio of women in recreations?

2- Does economic status effect participation ratio of women in recreations?

This study will be useful for teachers, parents, administrators, policy makers and curriculum designers.

Literature Review

Recreation

The word "recreation" has been derived from Latin word *recreatio*, which means revitalization, recreation (Ozankaya, 1980). Recreation can be defined as replenishing and volunteer activities which are performed in leisure time after compulsory duties and activities (Kraus, 1985). Recreation is referred to activity voluntarily chosen by participant for pleasure and satisfaction, during leisure time. (Pigram, 1983) Recreation is an activity or experience chosen by participants either to seek pleasure and satisfaction or he/she wants to achieve some personal or social values, this activity is carried out in leisure time. (Kraus, 1966) .So recreation is a volunteer participation of individuals in activities primarily with an intention of entertainment and satisfaction (Leitner, 2012).

Recreational activities enhance physical strength and enrich mental capacity. (Kozak, 2016) These activities may be planned or unplanned and these may be performed individually or in groups and can be carried in all outdoor or indoor spaces in all seasons. (Karakucuk, 2008)

Recreational activities when performed in groups contribute to the process of socialization in individuals. Thus such experiences add to personal and social characteristics (Kozak, 2016).

Recreation can be categorized differently as the concept of recreation is differently perceived in different cultures. It can be categorized as physical, social, intellectual. Cultural and commercial. The selection of a specific activity is based on the interest, availability, purpose, space, function and time. Most of the time these are categorized as indoor and outdoor activities with a variety of experiences available.

Concept of recreational activities in Islam

Islam gives complete code of life and provides guidelines in every domain of life. Islam encourages good health and a healthy Muslim is considered to be better than weaker one. As is stated by the prophet (PBUH):

“A strong believer is better and more beloved to Allah than the weak believer” (Sahih Muslim)

Similarly one of the invocations of the prophet (PBUH) was:

“O Allah grant well-being to my body, O Allah grant well-being to my hearing, O Allah grant well-being to my sight. There is no true deity except you”.

So the invocation of *Aqfiat* is appreciated in Islam. Islam emphasizes taking care of one's health. The prophet (PBUH) stated:

“Taking proper care of one's health is the right of the body” (Bukhari).

It is narrated by Abdullah ibn Amr that the Prophet (PBUH) said:

“Fast for a few days and then break fasting, pray and sleep at night, for the body has a right on you,”

Similarly the prophet (PBUH) stated:

“Our bodies have rights upon us, our eyes have rights upon us, so give everyone his due right”

Islam recommends sound physique and good health and the prophet (PBUH) was in best state of health. Tabrani and Tirmidhi report, “His (PBUH) stomach and chest were in line.” In the Holy Quran chapter 2 verse number 247 it is stated that Taloot was appointed as a king due to two qualities: knowledge and strong body or physique. So this proves that vitality of good health is admitted in Islam and in a Hadith it is narrated that the prophet (PBUH) said: *"Take benefit of five before five: your youth before your old age, your health before your sickness, your wealth before your poverty, your free-time before your preoccupation, and your life before your death"* (al-Hakim, al-Bayhaquee).

Islam recommends recreational activities for pleasure, relief and entertainment but it should be within prescribed limits. While being engaged in such activities one

must not neglect obligatory prayers such as *Salah* and fasting in *Ramadhan* and need to observe rules and regulations of *Halal* (lawful) and *Haram* (unlawful acts). According to Islam these recreational activities should be purposeful, creative and beneficial thus sports like Swimming, shooting, archery, wrestling, horse racing, riding, foot racing are highly recommended in Islam. It is reported that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said, “*Practice archery and horse riding,*” (Muslim). It is reported that Umar said, “*Teach your children swimming and archery and tell them to jump on horses,*” (Bukhari & Muslim)

So taking care of one’s health is of grave concern in Islam and recreational activities and sports provide with good opportunity to relief the stress and get pleasure and entertainment. Islam presents a balanced way of life in which we find fulfilling one’s duties and at the same time spending leisure time engaged in recreational activities. Islam gives equal rights to male and female regarding being engaged in recreational activities. Once the Prophet (PBUH) had a race with his wife Aishah (RA) and she narrates, “I raced with the prophet (SAW) and beat him in the race. Later, when I had put on some weight, we again had a race and this time the prophet (PBUH) won and he said this is revenge of the first race now they are level” (Bukhari, Muslim & Abu Dawood).

The holy Prophet (PBUH) said, “Every game a person plays is futile except for archery, training one’s horse and playing with one’s wife” (*Sunan* Tirmidhi, Musnad Ahmad, and Sunan Ibn Majah). So Islam endorses participation of female in recreational activities but there are a few principles which need to be observed. In Islam women have high status of respect and dignity. They need to observe Hijab in routine outdoor activities and this is for their protection.

Moreover proper dress code is to be followed and free interaction of males and females is to be avoided. Similarly recreational activities should not include gambling. Islam supports recreational activities only when these are performed in segregation. It is not lawful in Islam to have joint sessions of sports, as free mixing and interaction of males and females is not allowed. Moreover prescribed dress code, even in separate gatherings needs to be observed. Obligatory rituals need not to be neglected and these activities are not based on HARAM acts. Such as it is mentioned in the Holy Quran:

“O you who believe, truly intoxicants and gambling and divination by arrows are an abomination of Satan’s doing; avoid them in order that you may be successful...will you not desist?” (Qur’an 2: 219, 5: 91-92).

Though there is theological background which supports adoption of recreational activities within prescribed limits in Islam but practically scenario is different. In

Pakistan female participation ratio in recreational activities is low. The purpose of this study was to explore socio-cultural constraints and economic status effecting participation ratio of Pakistani women in recreations.

Procedure and Methodology

This was a quantitative research which was conducted to explore socio-cultural constraints and economic status effecting participation ratio of Pakistani women in recreations. Population of the study was undergraduate and post graduate students of female post graduate institutions and sample consisted of randomly selected 45 undergraduate and graduate female students. Instrument used for data collection was questionnaire based upon 5 point Likert Scale.

Analysis and interpretation of data

Data were scored and means were calculated. The data were collected on a five point Likert type scale. The numerical values were assigned to each response and the scoring of the scale was done according to the following criteria : Strongly Agreed 5, Agreed 4, Undecided 3, Disagree 2, and Strongly Disagree 1. After carefully scoring the instrument the data were transferred to data sheets and mean scores were calculated. The data analyzed is presented in the form of 5 tables given below:

Table No. 1:

Mean scores on different indicators of socio-cultural constraints:

N	No Awareness	Dress Code	Gender Discrimination	Household Tasks	Security Concerns	Travelling Alone	Long distances to activity areas	Mean
45	22	31	32	24	28	28	29	27

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Table No. 2:

Mean scores on different indicators of economic constraints:

N	High registration fees	Transportation	High Fares	Low budget for availability of recreation activities	Mean
45	36	39	38	38	37

Table No. 3:

Percentages of scores on different indicators of socio-cultural constraints:

N	No Awareness	Dress Code	Gender Discrimination	Household Tasks	Security Concerns	Travelling Alone	Long distances to activity areas	%age
45	48%	68%	71%	53%	62%	62%	64%	60%

Table No. 4:

Percentages of scores on different indicators of economic constraints:

N	High registration fees	Transportation	High Fares	Low budget for availability of recreation activities	Percentage
45	80%	86%	84%	84%	82%

Table No.5

Sr.No.	Factors	Percentage
1-	Socio-cultural constraints	60%
2-	Economic constraints	82%

Table .5 is showing percentages of effect of socio-cultural constraints and Economic constraints in participation of women in recreational activities.

Results and Discussion

Mean scores on different indicators of socio-cultural constraints were calculated which were : no awareness 22, dress code 31, gender discrimination 32 , household tasks 24 , security concerns 28 , travelling alone 28, long distances to activity areas 29 and mean score of socio-cultural constraints was 27.

Mean scores on different indicators of economic constraints were calculated which were: high registration fees 36, transportation 39, high fares 38, low budget for availability of recreation activities 38. Mean score of economic constraints was 37. Percentages of scores on different indicators of socio-cultural constraints were calculated which showed that 48% respondents agreed with no awareness ,68% with dress code ,71% with gender discrimination ,53% with household tasks ,62% with security concerns ,62% with travelling alone and 64% with long distances to activity areas as elements which reduce participation ratio of Pakistani women in recreational activities.

Percentages of scores on different indicators of economic constraints were calculated which showed that 80% respondents agreed with high registration fees ,86% with transportation , 84% with high fares and 84% with low budget for availability of recreation activities as elements which reduce participation ratio of Pakistani women in recreational activities. Moreover Percentages of scores on socio-cultural constraints showed that 60% respondents were of view that socio-cultural factors cause low participation ratio in females and percentages of scores on economic constraints showed that 82% respondents were of opinion that economic factors contribute in low participation ratio of Pakistani women in recreational activities.

Conclusion

From above discussion it was concluded that socio-cultural constraints and economic status influence participation ratio of women in recreations. In this study it was found that the factors raising socio-cultural constraints were dress code, gender discrimination and security concerns which hinder participation ratio of women. Interesting figure revealed in this study was that no awareness of parents and society regarding recreations of women was low which a positive sign of change is in Pakistani society. This shows that people are getting aware of significance and importance of recreational activities for wellbeing and better health of women. But a few socio-cultural factors, which have been discussed above, and economic issues such as high registration fees of recreational areas, issue of transportation and high fare to activity areas are hurdles which discourage participation of women in recreation activities.

Recommendations

At the end it is recommended that to enhance and encourage participation of women in recreational activities following measures may be taken:

- 1- There may be no restriction of dress code in different sports and they may be allowed to wear head scarf and loose dress for their comfort and ease.
- 2- Government may give provision of activity areas or gymnasiums exclusively for ladies and ladies parks equipped with all necessary facilities such as jogging tracks, fitness rooms and refreshment corners and security measures should be ensured. At the same time entry charges and registration charges should be as low that are affordable for everyone.
- 3- Such infrastructures may be available in every city of the country as this is the need of the hour.
- 4- To solve the issue of travelling government may arrange bus service specified with these recreational areas with low fares.
- 5- Lady Instructors and coaches may be appointed in all female gymnasiums and different events and competitions should be organized by government to promote females sports .Such events may be conducted by women only.
- 6-Sports complex for women should be established in at least capitals of all 4 provinces of Pakistan.
- 7- Gymnasiums may be constructed in educational institutes to increase participation level of females in recreational activities.

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