

AN ANALYSIS OF NON-PARTICIPATION AND DISENGAGEMENT IN SPORTS ACTIVITIES AMONG UNDERGRADUATE COLLEGE STUDENTS IN RURAL AREAS

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ABSTRACT

Sports and physical activities play a vital role in the holistic development of undergraduate students by promoting physical fitness, mental well-being, and social skills. Despite these benefits, a growing trend of non-participation and disengagement in sports activities has been observed among students in rural colleges. The present study aims to analyze the level of sports participation and to examine the socio-demographic and institutional factors contributing to non-participation and disengagement among undergraduate students in rural degree colleges. The study is based on both primary and secondary data. Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered to 100 undergraduate students selected from two rural government degree colleges in Mysuru District. Secondary data were sourced from books, journals, and research reports. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques with the help of SPSS version 21.0. The findings reveal that financial constraints, fear of injury, academic pressure, lack of motivation, inadequate training facilities, and insufficient institutional support are the major reasons for students' disengagement from sports activities. The study also indicates that socio-demographic variables such as gender, age, and academic stream influence levels of sports participation. The study suggests the need for improved sports infrastructure, financial assistance, qualified coaching, flexible academic schedules, and motivational programs to enhance sports participation among rural undergraduate students in selected study area.

Keywords: Sports participation, Non-participation, Disengagement, Undergraduate students, Rural colleges.

INTRODUCTION

Sports and physical activities play a vital role in the holistic development of students by promoting physical fitness, mental well-being, social skills, and academic effectiveness. Participation in sports at the undergraduate level not only contributes to healthy lifestyles but also fosters discipline, teamwork, leadership, and stress management. Recognizing these benefits, higher education institutions often include sports and physical education as an integral component of the academic environment. However, despite the acknowledged importance of sports activities, a noticeable trend of non-participation and disengagement has been observed among undergraduate college students, particularly in rural areas.

Rural colleges face unique challenges that may influence students' involvement in sports activities. Limited infrastructure, inadequate sports facilities, lack of trained coaches, academic pressure, socio-economic constraints, and insufficient institutional support often restrict regular participation. Additionally, factors such as reduced motivation, lack of awareness about the benefits of sports, cultural attitudes, family responsibilities, and prioritization of academic or employment-related activities contribute to students' withdrawal or disengagement from sports programs. These issues are

further compounded by disparities between rural and urban educational institutions in terms of resources and opportunities.

Non-participation and disengagement in sports activities among undergraduate students can have long-term implications for physical health, psychological well-being, and social development. It may also affect students' overall educational experience and limit opportunities for talent identification and athletic development at the grassroots level. Understanding the underlying causes of this phenomenon is therefore essential for developing effective strategies to promote sustained participation in sports within rural higher education institutions.

In this context, the present study aims to analyze the extent and determinants of non-participation and disengagement in sports activities among undergraduate college students in rural areas. By empirically examining the factors influencing students' attitudes and behaviors toward sports participation, the study seeks to provide insights that may assist educators, policymakers, and institutional administrators in designing targeted interventions to enhance sports engagement and promote a balanced approach to academic and physical development among rural undergraduate students.

The consequences of non-participation and disengagement in sports activities extend beyond individual health outcomes. At an institutional and societal level, declining sports participation undermines talent identification, athlete development, and the promotion of a physically active culture in rural communities. It also weakens the role of colleges as centers for holistic education and community engagement. Addressing this issue is therefore critical for achieving the broader objectives of education, public health, and youth development.

In this backdrop, the present study undertakes an in-depth analysis of non-participation and disengagement in sports activities among undergraduate college students in rural areas. The study seeks to empirically examine the institutional, socio-economic, cultural, and psychological factors influencing students' sports participation patterns. By identifying key determinants and challenges, the research aims to generate evidence-based insights that can inform policy formulation, institutional planning, and the design of targeted interventions to enhance sports participation and promote sustainable engagement in physical activities among undergraduate students in rural colleges.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Several studies have emphasized the importance of sports participation in enhancing students' physical health, academic performance, and psychological well-being. ***Research indicates that students who actively participate in sports demonstrate higher levels of self-esteem, better stress management, and improved academic outcomes.***

Singh's (2026), study identifies significant gender differences and urban-rural disparities in students' attitudes toward sports. Male students and those in urban schools generally had more favorable attitudes toward sports, while female students and those in rural areas were less inclined to view sports positively. These findings highlight the need for targeted efforts to improve sports engagement and access, particularly for female students and those in rural settings, to promote more inclusive and widespread participation in physical activities. ***Rosewater's (2025)***, study shows that sports participation plays a key role in improving academic outcome and college success, particularly for students who are initially at a disadvantage in terms of test scores or motivation. The study emphasizes that the positive effects of the sports extend beyond physical fitness, contributing significantly to educational engagement, college enrollment, retention, and graduation rates, with a notably strong impact on female students. These findings highlight the broader value of sports in fostering educational aspirations and success. ***Kumar (2023)***, study provides a framework for

understanding aspiration as a concept that plays a key role in personal development. By categorizing aspirations into immediate and remote, the passage highlights how people set and pursue both short-term and long-term goals. These goals are central to motivation, decision-making, and achievement in various aspects of life, from academics to career planning. These refer to long-term goals or ambitions that are further in the future, such as career objectives, personal dreams, or life achievements. Remote aspirations require long-term effort, planning, and persistence to attain etc. **Babita's (2021)**, study reveals that athletes tend to have a more favorable attitude toward sports and higher levels of aspiration than non-athletes. The study also explores the positive relationship between aspiration and attitude, suggesting that sports participation might foster personal growth in both domains. These findings highlight the value of sports in shaping not only physical fitness but also students' mindset, aspirations, and overall development. The study also points to the potential benefits of promoting sports among students, as it may lead to more positive attitudes and higher levels of ambition. **Jake Young (2019)**, his survey report, highlights employees' views on health and well-being. According to the report, employees have mixed feelings about how work affects their well-being. On one hand, some employees report feelings of enthusiasm and high energy, while on the other hand, others experience exhaustion. This study concluded that positive and supporting practices at work place can help to improve their overall well-being of employees enhancing their morale and productivity. It is the responsibility of both the employer and employee to enhance their well-being which leads to the development of knowledgeable leaders for the future of the nation.

Other studies have pointed out that institutional support, availability of trained coaches, and encouragement through competitions and incentives significantly influence students' motivation and sustained participation in sports. Despite these findings, there is limited empirical research focusing specifically on non-participation and disengagement in sports among undergraduate students in rural colleges. This research attempts to fill this gap by examining the issue from a rural undergraduate perspective.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The present study draws on both primary and secondary sources of data. Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered to 100 undergraduate students selected from rural degree colleges in Mysuru District. The sample comprised 50 students from Government First Grade College, T. Narasipura, and 50 students from Government First Grade College, Bannur. Secondary data were obtained from various sources, including books, journals, research articles, and reports. The collected data were analyzed using SPSS version 21.0. Descriptive statistical techniques were employed to summarize the data and to examine relationships among key variables such as attitudes toward sports, levels of aspiration, and group differences etc.

Objectives of the Study:

- To investigate the relationship between sports participation and socio-demographic variables among undergraduate students in rural degree colleges.
- To examine the reasons of non-participation and disengagement in sports activities among undergraduate students in rural colleges.

Hypothesis of the Study:

- **H0:** There is no significant relationship between sports participation and socio-demographic variables among undergraduate students in rural degree colleges.

- **H1:** There is a significant no significant relationship between sports participation and socio-demographic variables among undergraduate students in rural degree colleges.
- **H0:** There is no significant difference between reasons of non-participation and disengagement in sports activities among undergraduate students in rural colleges.
- **H2:** There is a significant difference between reasons of non-participation and disengagement in sports activities among undergraduate students in rural colleges.

RESULTS AND OUTCOME:

- **To investigate the relationship between sports participation and socio-demographic variables among undergraduate students in rural degree colleges:**

The objective of the present analysis is to investigate the relationship between sports participation and selected socio-demographic variables among undergraduate students in rural degree colleges. The interpretation of the collected data is presented as follows:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender Profile <p>The data indicate that 55% of the respondents were male, while 45% were female. This shows a relatively balanced gender representation, though male participation in sports activities is slightly higher. The higher percentage of male students suggests that sports participation continues to be male-dominated in rural colleges. Cultural expectations, social norms, and limited encouragement for female participation may contribute to comparatively lower involvement of female students in sports activities.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age Pattern <p>With regard to age distribution, 40% of the students belonged to the 18–19 years age group, followed by 35% above 20 years, and 25% in the 17–18 years group. The dominance of students in the 18–19 years category suggests that early undergraduate years are crucial for sports participation. However, the gradual decline in participation among students above 20 years may indicate increased academic pressure, career concerns, or disengagement from sports as students progress in their studies.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Streams of Study <p>The distribution across academic streams reveals that 45% of the respondents were from the Science stream, 30% from Arts, and 25% from Commerce. The higher participation among science students may be attributed to greater awareness of health, physical fitness, and the benefits of sports. Arts and commerce students show relatively lower participation, possibly due to academic schedules, differing interests, or limited encouragement for extracurricular involvement.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kind of Sports Played <p>Regarding the type of sports activities, 40% of students participated in cricket and kabaddi (coco), while 30% engaged in running and long jump, and another 30% participated in throw ball, volleyball, and similar games. The popularity of cricket and kabaddi reflects their accessibility, minimal equipment requirements, and cultural popularity in rural areas. Individual athletic events such as running and long jump also show considerable participation due to ease of participation and limited dependency on infrastructure.</p>

• **Functioning of the Physical Education Department**

A significant 75% of students reported that the Physical Education Department was functioning well, whereas 25% expressed dissatisfaction. This indicates that the majority of students perceive institutional support for sports as adequate. Effective functioning of the department appears to have a positive influence on students' willingness to participate in sports activities, highlighting the importance of administrative support and organization.

• **Availability of Sports Materials**

The data show that 70% of respondents confirmed the availability of sports materials in their colleges, while 30% reported non-availability. Adequate availability of sports equipment encourages participation, whereas lack of materials acts as a major barrier. The findings suggest that improving access to sports materials could significantly enhance participation levels among students.

Conduct of Inter-Collegiate Sports Competitions

An overwhelming 90% of students reported that inter-collegiate sports competitions were conducted, while only 10% indicated otherwise. This high percentage demonstrates that competitive opportunities are widely available and serve as a strong motivating factor for student participation. Regular competitions not only enhance interest but also help sustain long-term engagement in sports activities.

• **To examine the reasons of non-participation and disengagement in sports activities among undergraduate students in rural colleges:**

The present analysis examines the factors contributing to non-participation and disengagement in sports activities among undergraduate students in rural colleges using mean score analysis. Higher mean values indicate stronger agreement with the given statements as reasons for non-participation etc.

• **Financial and Resource-Related Factors**

Among all the statements, **inability to provide financial support** recorded the **highest mean score (4.81)**. This clearly indicates that financial constraints are the most significant barrier to sports participation among rural undergraduate students. Expenses related to sports equipment, travel, coaching, and participation fees pose serious challenges for students from economically weaker backgrounds. Closely related to this, **inability to support dietary requirements** obtained a mean score of **3.63**, suggesting that students find it difficult to meet the nutritional demands associated with sports participation. Proper diet is essential for physical performance, and lack of nutritional support discourages continued engagement in sports.

• **Motivational and Attitudinal Factors:**

Lack of interest or motivation emerged as a major reason for disengagement, with a high mean score of **4.10**. This suggests that despite awareness of the benefits of sports, students lack intrinsic or extrinsic motivation to continue participation. Similarly, **the belief that students should concentrate more on academics** recorded a mean score of **4.14**, indicating strong academic pressure and societal expectations that prioritize academic achievement over sports. This mindset significantly reduces time and energy available for sports activities.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Institutional and Organizational Factors: <p>The lack of effective institutional support also contributed to non-participation. Lack of encouragement from sports organizations or associations had a mean score of 3.91, indicating moderate dissatisfaction with external support systems. Lack of efficient coaches or trainers recorded a relatively high mean score of 4.01, highlighting the importance of qualified coaching in sustaining student interest. Without proper guidance and mentorship, students are more likely to withdraw from sports activities. Additionally, lack of training facilities and distance of training/coaching facilities from the place of stay recorded mean scores of 3.24 and 3.42 respectively. These findings reflect infrastructural limitations commonly experienced in rural areas, which hinder regular practice and skill development</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health and Psychological Factors <p>Injury proneness emerged as a significant concern with a high mean score of 4.49, indicating fear of injuries as a strong deterrent to participation. This may be linked to inadequate safety measures, lack of medical support, and insufficient warm-up or recovery facilities. Health problems recorded a moderate mean score of 3.28, suggesting that existing health issues contribute to disengagement, though they are less influential compared to financial and academic pressures.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coaching and Social Interaction Factors <p>Ill-treatment from coaches had a relatively low mean score of 2.85, indicating that negative behavior from coaches is not perceived as a major reason for disengagement by most students. The perception that there is no future career in sports recorded the lowest mean score (2.63), making it the least influential factor in non-participation. This suggests that while career uncertainty exists, it is not the primary reason students withdraw from sports at the undergraduate level.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Behavioral Factors: <p>Behavioral problems of the child/athlete showed a high mean score of 4.03, indicating that personal discipline, attitude, or behavioral challenges significantly affect sustained participation in sports activities.</p>
<p>Highest and Lowest Mean Scores of the Variables:</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highest Mean Score: Inability to provide financial support (X4) – Mean = 4.81 This indicates that financial constraints are the most critical factor contributing to non-participation and disengagement in sports activities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lowest Mean Score: Perception of no future career in sports (X7) – Mean = 2.63 This suggests that career-related uncertainty is the least influential factor among the reasons studied.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE STUDY:

Based on the findings of the present study on non-participation and disengagement in sports activities among undergraduate students in rural colleges, the following suggestions are proposed:

- **Financial Support and Scholarships:**

Educational institutions and government bodies should provide financial assistance, sports scholarships, and fee concessions to economically disadvantaged students to reduce financial barriers to sports participation.

- **Improvement of Sports Infrastructure:**

Rural colleges should strengthen sports infrastructure by developing playgrounds, courts, and training facilities, and by ensuring the regular maintenance of existing facilities.

- **Provision of Sports Equipment and Nutritional Support**

Adequate sports equipment should be made available to students. Colleges may also consider providing basic nutritional support or guidance to help students meet dietary requirements associated with sports activities.

- **Appointment of Qualified Coaches and Trainers**

Institutions should appoint trained and experienced physical education instructors and coaches to provide proper guidance, skill development, and injury-prevention training.

- **Motivation and Encouragement Programs**

Regular motivation programs, workshops, and awareness sessions should be organized to educate students and parents about the physical, psychological, and academic benefits of sports participation.

- **Balancing Academics and Sports:**

Colleges should design flexible academic schedules that allow students to balance academic responsibilities with sports activities, reducing the pressure to prioritize academics at the cost of physical activity.

- **Counselling and Behavioral Support:**

Counseling services should be provided to address motivational issues and behavioral challenges among students, helping them remain engaged in sports activities.

SUMMARY:

The analysis clearly indicates that socio-demographic variables such as gender, age, academic stream, and institutional support significantly influence sports participation among undergraduate students in rural degree colleges. While students generally display positive attitudes towards sports, participation levels are shaped by cultural norms, academic demands, availability of facilities, and the effectiveness of physical education departments. Strengthening institutional support systems and addressing socio-cultural barriers, particularly for female students, can play a vital role in improving sports participation in rural higher education institutions. The findings clearly indicate that economic constraints, academic pressure, injury concerns, and lack of institutional support are the dominant factors influencing non-participation and disengagement in sports among rural undergraduate students. While students generally recognize the value of sports, limited financial resources, inadequate facilities, and

societal emphasis on academics significantly restrict their continued involvement. Addressing these barriers through financial assistance, improved infrastructure, trained coaching staff, and balanced academic policies could substantially enhance sports participation in rural degree colleges in selected study area.

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