

## A STUDY ON BARRIERS TO WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN PROFESSIONAL SPORTS

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### ABSTRACT

Play-based learning is an sports approach that uses play as the foundation for meaningful learning experiences. Key findings highlight that societal expectations, inadequate support systems, and structural discrimination significantly deter women from pursuing careers in professional sports. Recommendations are offered to promote inclusivity, including grassroots engagement, increased funding, mentorship programs, and media representation. Despite increasing awareness and advocacy for gender equality in sports, female athletes continue to face significant challenges ranging from gender stereotypes, unequal access to resources, lack of media coverage, and limited sponsorship opportunities.

**Keywords:** Confidence, Sponsorship, Discourage, Barriers.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Sports play a vital role in promoting physical health, personal development, and social inclusion. Over the years, women's involvement in sports has grown significantly at the grassroots and amateur levels. Cultural norms, gender stereotypes, unequal resource distribution, lack of media coverage, and inadequate institutional support are some of the critical challenges women face. These barriers not only restrict access and opportunities but also impact performance, motivation, and career longevity. This study seeks to explore and analyze the various barriers that hinder women from participating and succeeding in professional sports. the research aims to provide valuable insights into the structural and societal challenges that persist. Moreover, issues such as safety concerns, gender pay gaps, and underrepresentation in leadership roles within sports organizations further deepen the divide.

### 2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study of primary data takes the surveys. by using google form by framing the questionnaire related to the study objectives. The secondary data by the published sources, books, and so more. The research is made by framing the questionnaire by using google form, with response of 51.

#### Limitation

- The information is confined to Tumkur city only.
- Focus on selected sports only, excluding others with different challenges
- Cultural and contextual factors limiting applicability to other regions.

#### Statement of the problem:

Despite progress in promoting gender equality, women remain significantly underrepresented in professional sports. These barriers include deeply rooted gender stereotypes, unequal access to training facilities and funding, limited media coverage, lack of role models, and inadequate institutional support. This study seeks to identify, analyze, and understand the key barriers affecting women's participation in professional sports and explore possible solutions to foster a more equitable sporting environment.

#### Objectives

- To identify the major barriers affecting women's participation in professional sports.
- To analyze the impact of societal and institutional factors on women athletes.
- To assess the availability of resources and support for female professionals in sports.
- To suggest measures for improving women's representation and success in professional sports.

#### Scope of the study:

- Focuses on barriers affecting women's participation in professional sports.
- Examines social, cultural, economic, and institutional factors.

- Covers both individual experiences and systemic challenges.
- May reference specific sports or regions for context, but findings aim to be broadly applicable.
- Aims to provide recommendations for improving women's access, support, and success in professional sports.

## Research design

**Sample size:** 54 respondents.

**Tools for data collection:** Primary data is used in the study. It is original data for the purpose of collection of primary data, e-questionnaire were filled by the respondents.

The e-questionnaire comprises of close ended. The secondary data was collected from various possible records like books, magazines, periodicals and Websites.

## 3. DATA ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND SUGGESTION

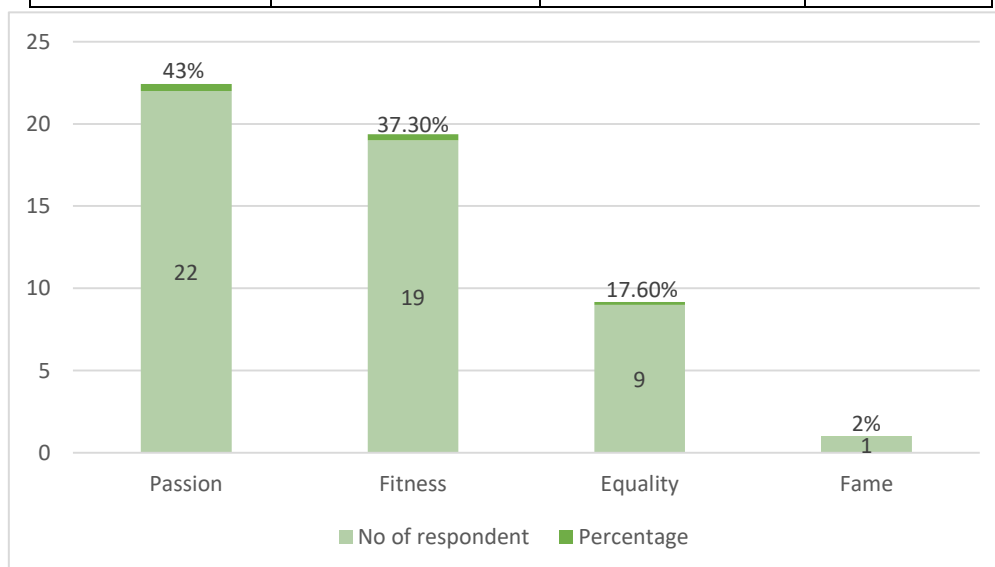
63% of respondents are the female and 37% are the male.

78% of the respondents belongs to age group of 20-25 years 22% of the respondents belongs to age group of 25-30.

And 63% are students, 35% are employee, and 2% are professionals.

1. What motivates women to participate in sports?

SL. No	Factors	No of respondent	Percentage
1	Passion	24	44.4%
2	Fitness	19	37.3%
3	Equality	10	18.5%
4	Fame	1	2%
Total		54	100%

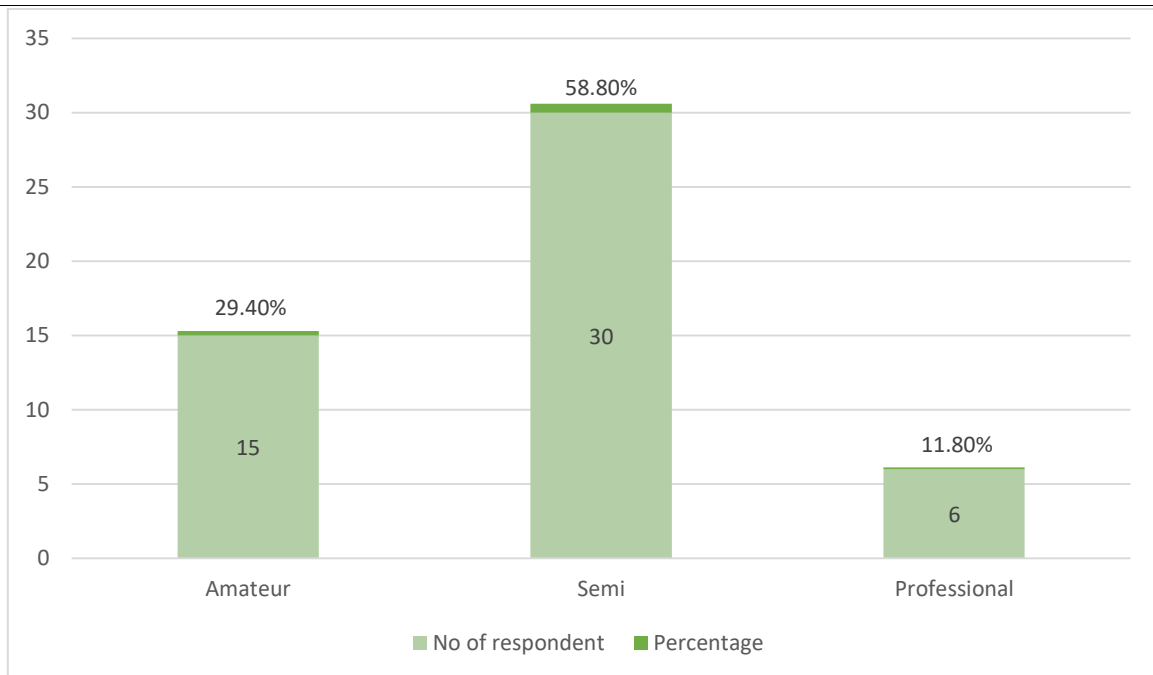


## Analysis And Interpretation

The data indicates that the primary motivation for women participating in sports is passion, cited by 44.4% of respondents, followed by fitness at 37.3%. A smaller proportion, 18.5%, are driven by a desire for gender equality, while only 2% participate for fame. This suggests that intrinsic motivations like passion and personal well-being outweigh external or societal factors among women in sports.

2. Your level of participation in sports?

SL. No	Factors	No of respondent	Percentage
1	Amateur	16	29.6%
2	Semi	32	59.3%
3	Professional	6	11.11%
Total		54	100%

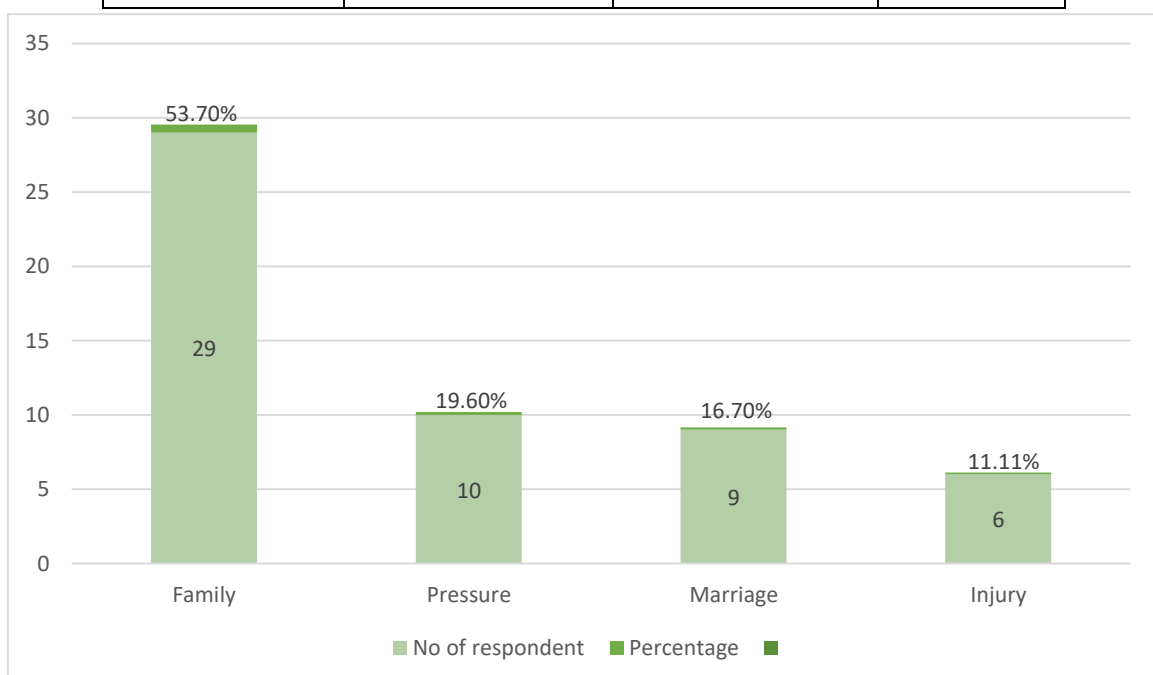


### Analysis And Interpretation

The majority of respondents (59.3%) identify as semi-professional participants in sports, indicating a significant level of commitment and involvement beyond casual play. Amateur participants make up 29.6%, while only 11.1% have reached the professional level. This suggests that while many women are actively engaged in sports, fewer have the opportunities or support to transition into professional athletics.

### 3. What is the Primary Reason women dropout from sports?

SL. No	Factors	No of respondent	Percentage
1	Family	29	53.7%
2	Pressure	10	19.6%
3	Marriage	9	16.7%
4	Injury	6	11.11%
Total		54	100%

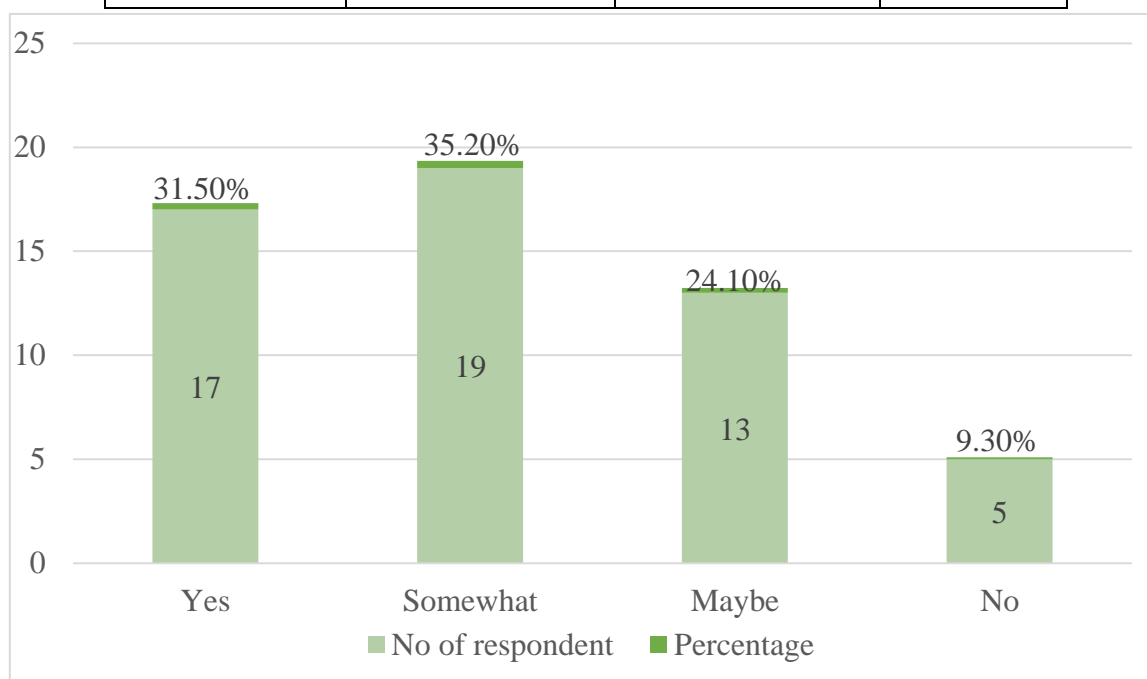


### Analysis And Interpretation

The data reveals that family responsibilities are the leading cause of sports dropout among women, cited by 53.7% of respondents. Other contributing factors include pressure (19.6%), marriage (16.7%), and injuries (11.11%). This indicates that social and familial obligations play a more significant role than physical or psychological challenges in limiting women's long-term participation in sports.

4. Do you think that sponsorship is a barrier to women's participation in sports?

SL. No	Factors	No of respondent	Percentage
1	Yes	17	31.5%
2	Somewhat	19	35.2%
3	Maybe	13	24.1%
4	No	5	9.3%
Total		54	100%



### Analysis And Interpretation

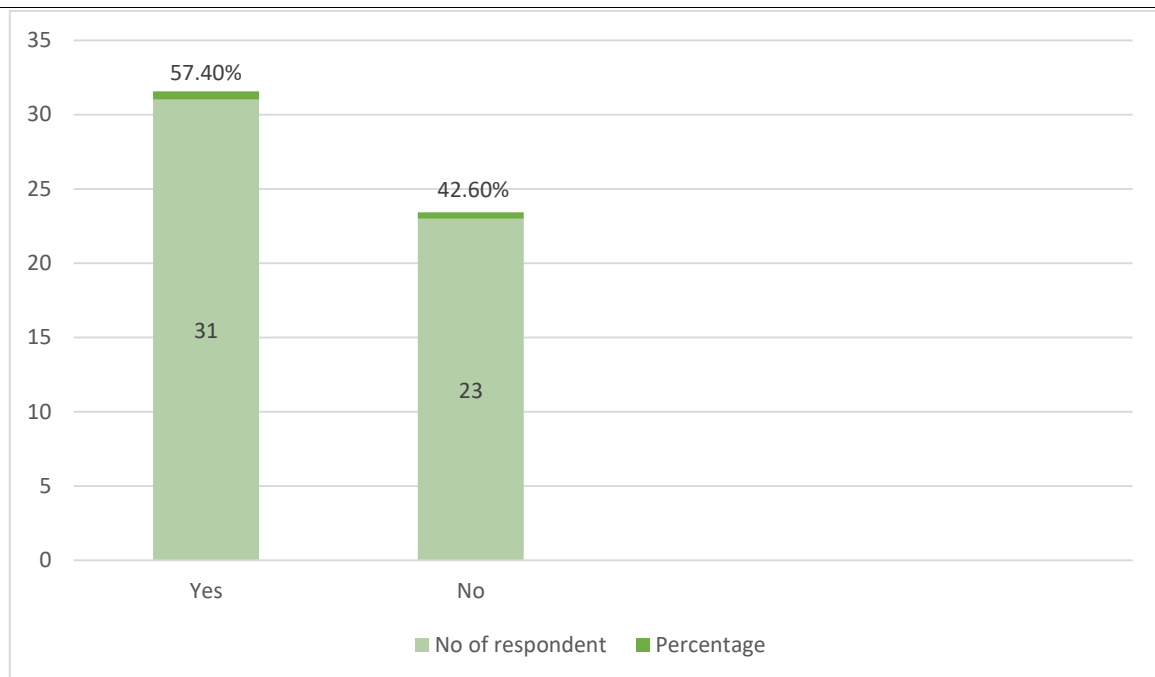
The findings show that 31.5% of respondents believe sponsorship is a clear barrier to women's participation in sports, while 35.2% feel it is somewhat of a barrier. Additionally, 24.1% are uncertain, and only 9.3% believe it is not a barrier at all. This suggests that a majority of women perceive limited sponsorship as a significant or potential challenge, highlighting the need for increased financial support to promote gender equity in sports.

5. Have you ever experienced or witnessed gender discrimination in sports settings?

SL. No	Factors	No of respondent	Percentage
1	Yes	31	57.4%
2	No	23	42.6%
Total		54	100%

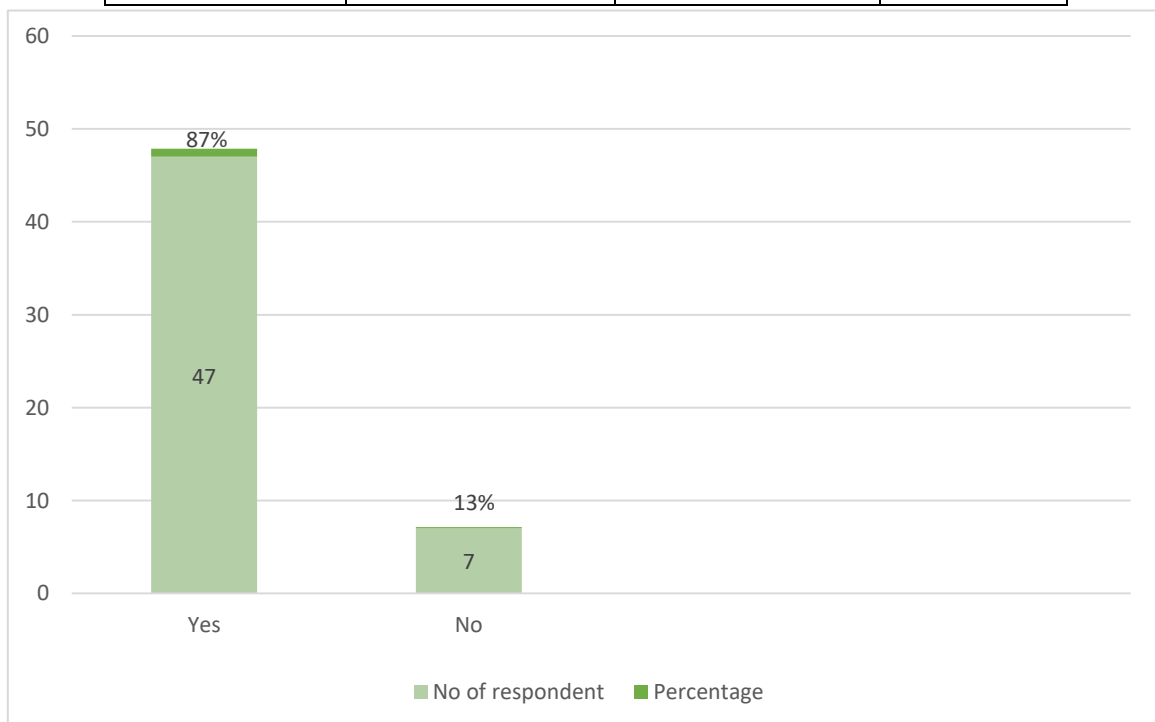
### Analysis And Interpretation

The data shows that 57.4% of respondents have either experienced or witnessed gender discrimination in sports settings, while 42.6% have not. This indicates that gender discrimination remains a prevalent issue for women in sports environments. The findings underscore the need for stronger policies and awareness to create a more inclusive and equitable sports culture.



6. Do you feel confident in competing in sports at a professional level?

SL. No	Factors	No of respondent	Percentage
1	Yes	47	87%
2	No	7	13%
Total		54	100%

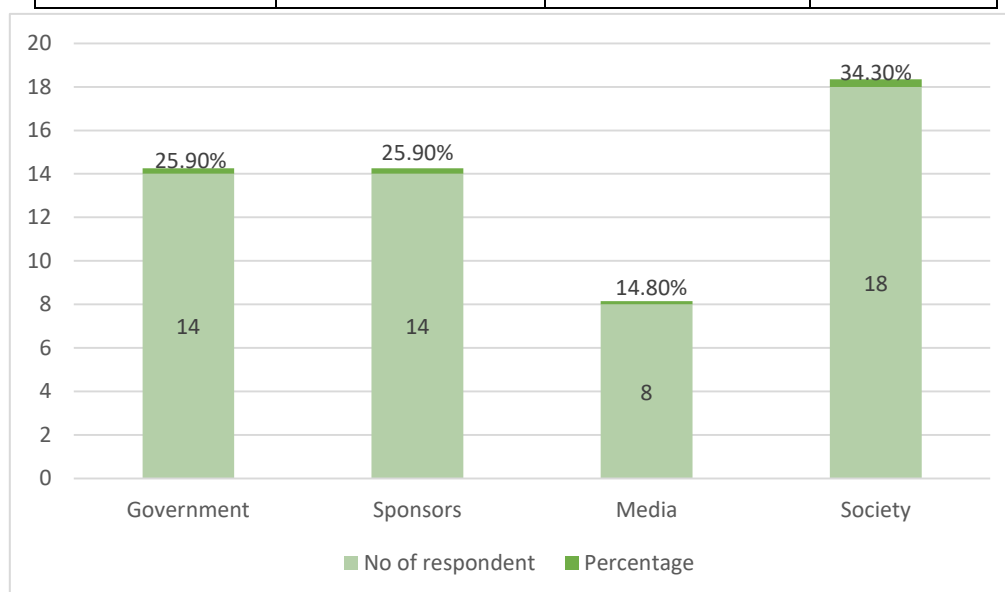


#### Analysis And Interpretation

An overwhelming majority of respondents (87%) expressed confidence in competing at a professional level, while only 13% reported a lack of confidence. This indicates that most women feel capable and prepared to perform professionally in sports when given the opportunity. The result reflects a strong sense of self-belief among female athletes, highlighting the importance of creating pathways that support their professional growth.

7. Which sector fails women athletes the most?

SL. No	Factors	No of respondent	Percentage
1	Government	14	25.9%
2	Sponsors	14	25.9%
3	Media	8	14.8%
4	Society	18	34.3%
Total		54	100%

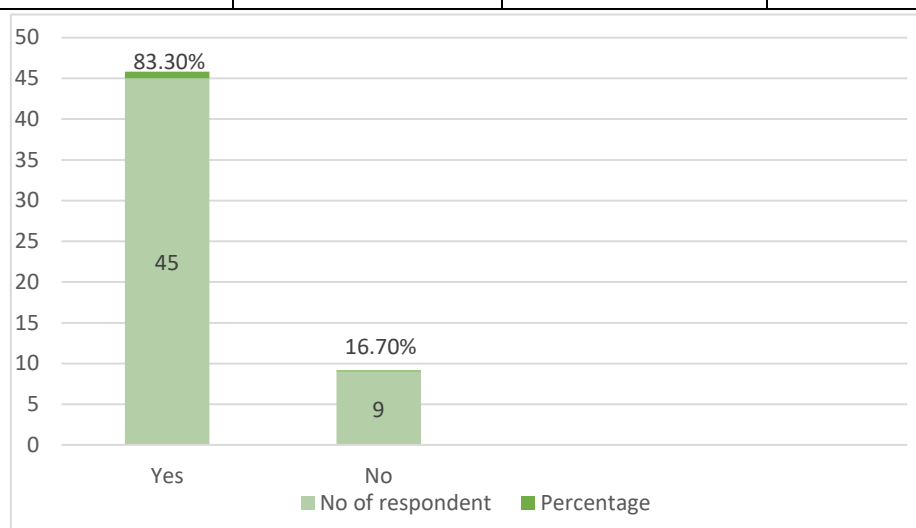


### Analysis And Interpretation

The data shows that 34.3% of respondents believe society fails women athletes the most, followed equally by government and sponsors at 25.9% each, and media at 14.8%. This indicates that societal attitudes and norms are perceived as the biggest obstacle to women's success in sports. The results highlight the need for cultural change alongside institutional support to better uplift and empower female athletes.

8. Do you think cultural and religious beliefs discourage women from participation in sports?

SL. No	Factors	No of respondent	Percentage
1	Yes	45	83.3%
2	No	9	16.7%
Total		54	100%

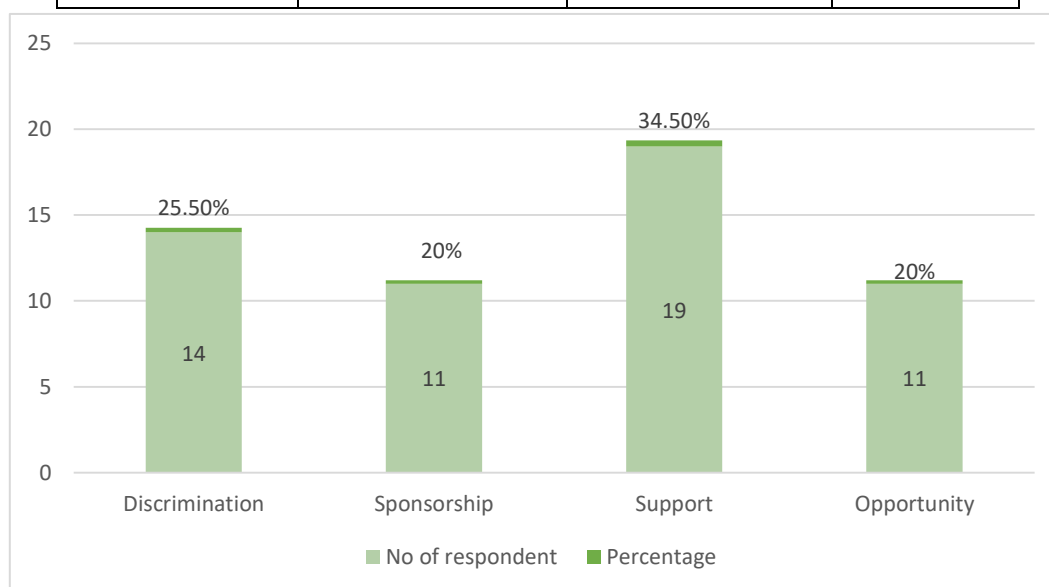


### Analysis And Interpretation

A significant majority of respondents (83.3%) believe that cultural and religious beliefs discourage women from participating in sports, while only 16.7% disagree. This suggests that traditional norms and values continue to act as strong barriers to female participation in athletics. The findings emphasize the need for more inclusive and progressive cultural dialogues to support women's involvement in sports.

9. What do you think are the biggest barriers for women in professional sports?

SL. No	Factors	No of respondent	Percentage
1	Discrimination	14	25.5%
2	Sponsorship	11	20%
3	Support	19	34.5%
4	Opportunity	11	20%
Total		54	100%



### Analysis And Interpretation

According to the data, the biggest barrier for women in professional sports is lack of support, cited by 34.5% of respondents, followed by discrimination (25.5%), and both sponsorship and opportunity at 20% each. This indicates that while financial and access-related challenges are significant, emotional, institutional, and structural support is perceived as the most critical missing element. The findings highlight the urgent need to build supportive environments that encourage and sustain women's careers in professional sports.

## 4. CONCLUSION

The study highlights that women face significant barriers to participation in sports, including lack of support, cultural and religious restrictions, limited sponsorship, and discrimination. To overcome these challenges, it is essential to strengthen support systems through mentorship programs and create more equitable funding opportunities for women athletes. Additionally, media should play a proactive role in promoting female sports to challenge stereotypes, while community-based efforts must address cultural biases that discourage women's involvement. Enforcing gender equality policies within sports organizations and engaging families can also foster a more inclusive environment. Despite the obstacles, the strong passion and confidence expressed by many women athletes indicate great potential for progress. Therefore, a collaborative approach involving governments, sponsors, media, and society is crucial to breaking down barriers and ensuring equal opportunities for women in sports.

## 5. REFERENCES

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