

**SPORTS DROPOUTS AMONG YOUNG WOMEN: REASONS
AND CHALLENGES**

**A dissertation submitted to the University of Kerala in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the Master of Social Work Degree Examination**

Subject Code: SW 2.4.5

University Of Kerala

2021-2023

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS	i
LIST OF TABLES	iii
ABSTRACT.....	iv
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 INTRODUCTION	2
1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM.....	4
1.3 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY	7
1.4. RELEVANCE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY.....	9
1.5. CHAPTERIZATION	11
CHAPTER II: REVIEW LITERATURE	12
2.1. INTRODUCTION.....	13
2.1.1 History of sports.....	13
2.1.2 Benefits of sports and physical activities	14
2.1.3 Historical background of Women and Sports	15
2.1.4. Women participation in sports in India.....	17
2.1.5. Indian women and family	18
2.1.6. Women participation in sports	18
2.2. RESEARCH GAP ANALYSIS.....	23
CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY	25
3.1. INTRODUCTION.....	26
3.2. TITLE OF THE STUDY.....	26
3.3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS.....	26
3.4. THEORETICAL PREPOSITION.....	27
3.5. DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS	27
3.6. RESEARCH DESIGN	28
3.7. DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH SITE AND PARTICIPANTS	28
3.8. SAMPLING STRATEGY AND CRITERIA/SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS	28
3.9. DATA COLLECTION.....	29
3.10. PRETEST.....	29
3.11. DATA ANALYSIS	30
3.12. ETHICAL CONSIDERATION	30
3.13. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY.....	30
3.14. SCOPE.....	30

3.15. CONCLUSION.....	31
CHAPTER IV: CASE DESCRIPTION.....	32
Participants 1- ABC.....	33
Participants 2- B.....	36
Participants 3 – AN.....	41
Participants 4 – N.....	44
Participants 5 – K.....	46
CHAPTER V: THEMATIC ANALYSIS.....	50
5.1. INTRODUCTION.....	51
5.2. PROFILE OF THE PARTICIPANTS.....	51
5.3. THEMATIC ANALYSIS.....	52
5.3.1 RESEARCH QUESTION 1.....	52
5.3.2 RESEARCH QUESTION 2.....	54
5.3.3 RESEARCH QUESTION 3.....	61
CHAPTER VI: FINDINGS, SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION.....	66
6.1. INTRODUCTION.....	67
6.2. FINDINGS.....	67
6.3. SUGGESTIONS.....	70
6.4. SOCIAL WORK IMPLICATION.....	72
6.5. CONCLUSION.....	72
Bibliography.....	75
ANNEXURE.....	79

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page No
Table 1- Profile of the participants	51
Table 2 -Themes and subthemes	64

ABSTRACT

Sports play a significant role in our daily lives, contributing to our overall well-being by enhancing our physical health. Active involvement in physical activities and the engagement of young individuals in sports have a positive impact on their growth, benefiting them psychologically, socially, and physically. However, the level of female participation in sports remains relatively inadequate, particularly in countries like India. Therefore, this study centres on exploring the reasons behind the decline in sports participation among young women and the challenges they faced after the sports dropout.

This qualitative study examines the phenomenon of young women dropping out of sports by employing a Multiple Case Study research design. The primary objective is to gain an in-depth understanding of the reasons and challenges faced by these individuals, shedding light on their experiences. The research was conducted in Thiruvananthapuram, focusing on five young women sportspersons aged between 18 to 26 who have discontinued their involvement in sports. Data was collected through face-to-face unstructured interviews, utilizing an interview guide. The analysis was guided by specific research questions, centred around factors motivating sports participation, reasons for discontinuation, challenges encountered after leaving sports, and potential solutions to mitigate dropout rates. The study revealed that participants are drawn to sports due to passion, excitement, and admiration for accomplished athletes. Support from family, coaches, and peers greatly shapes their sports journey.

Significant barriers to continued sports participation include financial constraints, societal norms, health challenges, academic pressures, limited job opportunities, and biased selection processes. The study underscores the importance of fostering an inclusive and supportive sports environment, addressing gender biases, health concerns, and ensuring fairness in selection processes. The consequences of leaving sports are multifaceted. Physical health and fitness decline, affecting weight, stamina, and exacerbating existing health issues. On the other hand, sports contribute positively to academic performance, focus, stress relief, and mental clarity. Engaging in sports also facilitates strong social connections, and discontinuation can result in shifts in social circles and relationships. The study emphasizes the holistic impact of sports on physical, mental, academic, and social well-being. It emphasizes the need to strike a

balance between sports and other commitments for sustained well-being, as the effects of discontinuing sports can be long-lasting.

Key words: Sports, Dropouts, Young Women.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Sports can be defined as any form of physical activity that requires the coordination of a person's physical and mental abilities. Involvement in sports refers to how an individual perceives their engagement in such activities as a significant and meaningful aspect of their life, offering both pleasure and symbolic importance (Anthony A Beaton, 2011). Sportspersons play a vital role in a country's development, with both men and women representing their nation in diverse sporting events.

In comparison to other countries, the development of sports in India is not as advanced, evident from the relatively lower participation rates and fewer medals achieved by Indian athletes and players. Fortunately, outdated stereotypes regarding gender roles and capabilities in social activities have gradually improved in many societies, leading to a positive impact on sports culture as well. Over the past five decades, there has been a notable and steady increase in the number of female athletes participating in sports events. However, societal inequalities and biases towards women have persisted in various aspects of life, including political decision-making, religious ceremonies, and social engagements, though progress is being made to address these issues. In the context of sports events, historically, women were generally excluded from major competitions and predominantly confined to the role of spectators, with only a few rare exceptions (Sthathlon, 2022).

Women's involvement in competitive sports can encounter several obstacles, influenced by both physiological and social factors. Some girls, women, as well as their parents and guardians, may hold misconceptions that participating in competitive sports or undergoing rigorous training schedules could lead to negative structural and functional changes. However, there is no evidence supporting the notion that sports can masculinize women. Therefore, the researcher aims to investigate why young female athletes decided to leave sports and the challenges they encountered after discontinuing their participation.

Several factors act as motivators for athletes to maintain their regular sports practice. These factors include body proportions, the duration of physical workouts, skill training, and the support received from various sources such as family, educational institutions like schools and colleges, the community, and society as a whole.

Additionally, heritable factors may also play a role in promoting a person's dedication to sports. Having a family that understands the value of sports and encourages regular physical activity can greatly contribute to a person's success in sports. Moreover, if there is already a sports enthusiast within the family, they naturally provide inherent support to the aspiring athlete. Achieving excellence in sports often requires a high level of training in terms of both quality and quantity. Besides the training received, environmental factors also play a significant role in shaping the exceptional performance of an athlete. Access to essential resources like coaching and parental support can be crucial factors that enable athletes to achieve high-quality results (Baker, Horton, Robertson-Wilson, & Wall, 2003).

A coach can be an expertise in a particular sports event and, through effective coaching, enables sportspersons to achieve higher levels of success in their respective fields. Coaches also serve as highly motivational figures, encouraging individuals to engage in sports. Even in the absence of family support, a coach's encouragement can pave the way for sportspersons to build a career in sports. The factors mentioned above can empower any individual, regardless of gender, to become a successful sportsperson. Women sportspersons encompass any woman who actively participates in sports activities and competes at various levels, such as school, college, district, state, national, international, or zonal competitions. Physical activity, according to Hardman and Stensel (2021), refers to "any bodily movement generated by the contraction of skeletal muscle, resulting in a significant increase in energy expenditure." This term encompasses a wide range of activities related to physical exertion, including work, sports, exercise, recreation, play, training, workouts, physical education, athletics, and gymnastics (Astrand et al., 2003). Engaging in physical activity offers numerous advantages, encompassing physical, mental, emotional, and social aspects. The well-established health benefits of physical activity contribute to improved overall quality of life and longevity (Tansin Benn, 2010). Lack of physical activity can lead to the development of various diseases, including cardiovascular diseases, chronic conditions like diabetes mellitus and cancer, obesity, as well as bone and joint issues. Moreover, mental health disorders such as depression can also be linked to physical inactivity (Darren E R Warburton, 2006).

According to Augustine N J & N. Madhavan, (2020) study titled "Dropout reasons among ex junior track and field athletes of Kerala" was to investigate into the most

important reasons of dropout among Junior Track and Field athletes of Kerala. Participants were ex junior Track and Field athletes from Kerala (N = 300, 150 male and 150 female) who have won medals minimum at the state level Athletics Championship. For collection of required data, the investigators administered the self-made questionnaire of reasons for withdrawal from Track and Field. For the purpose of analysis and interpretation of data descriptive statistics were used. Frequency and percentage were computed for find out the major motives for dropout. In order to examine whether gender have any significant impact on dropout reasons, Chi square test was used. The result of the study shows that the most important reasons behind athletes' decision to curtail their Athletics career were performance stagnation, Injury or repeated injuries, financial constraints, academic priority and lack of motivation. The result of the Chi square test indicated that gender has no significant impact on the reasons of dropout.

The amount of Women's participation in sports is generally low in a country like India where the number of people is equal to the total of 12 largest countries which excludes India and China. This lack of participation has also affected not just on the field but the administrative, Coaches, technical officers, and various other fields in sports. (Murali & Bagchi, 2020).

Sports is very important in our day-to-day life. It helps to improve our health. Engaging in physical activity and participation of youth in sports helps in development and in improving the psychological, social, and physical health of young people. In India, Schools and parents, in general, believe that it is academic education that needs to take precedence over sport, as they believe that, it is academics that would help them pursue a "stable career" and a "good job". Having a career in sports is not considered to be lucrative, in many households. Consequently, the study's primary emphasis lies in investigating the factors that led young sportswomen to discontinue their participation in sports, as well as examining the challenges they encountered after quitting.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The engagement of women in sports is a prevalent occurrence in the contemporary world. Various factors drive women to become and remain athletes. However, the realm of physical education and sports-related careers doesn't receive significant attention

from many female athletes. The reasons behind this decline in women's involvement in the sports sector lack a clearly outlined explanation. The limited progress made by women in physical education and sports is disheartening. The history of women's engagement in sports is characterized by segregation and bias, but it's also marked by significant achievements by female athletes and notable strides toward gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. The involvement of women in sports stands as a challenge to gender stereotypes and discrimination. Discrepancies exist in the participation of female athletes across various sporting events, and such participation can be influenced by gender stereotypes (United Nations, 2007).

According to Enoksen E, (2011) study titled " Drop-out rate and drop-out reason among promising norwegia track and field athletes: A 25-year study was to identify the total drop-out rate and drop-out reasons for a group of promising track and field athletes. 202 males and 98 females, aged 16 #2 years, took part in this study. Questionnaires were administrated in 1975, 1983, and 1989. In-depth interviews were conducted in 1989 and in 2000. A chi-square test was administrated to test the difference between males and females dropping out and to test the most significant reasons influencing the athletes' decision to drop out of their competitive track and field activities. The drop-out rate was highest when the athletes were 17 years old. The results showed that females were clearly dropping out at a higher rate than males ($p < 0.05$). In contrast to the most common drop-out reasons mentioned in the research literature, this study showed that the frequency of injuries, stagnation in performance, educational demands, and a lack of motivation were highly notable reasons for why relatively many talented track and field athletes dropped out at an early age. The influence of social factors, participation in other sports, demanding work situations, military services, and marriage and family were also reasons for some athletes dropping out. Various drop-out reasons were important over the life of the study, and differed at the different stages. (Enoksen E, 2011).

Sandmeyer-Graves, the CEO of Canadian Women & Sport, stated that “many of the barriers to participation (boys and girls) face would be quite similar. But the fact that there is such a gender difference (in dropout rates) really underscores the fact that we need to pay particular attention to how we’re designing and delivering sports for girls and for young women” (The Canadian Press, 2020). Girls often experience bullying,

social isolation, negative performance evaluations, or loss of starting position (Women's Sports Foundation Staff, 2020).

Sport is a major, however largely neglected site of gender inequality today. Sport is something which includes physical activity through casual or trained participation which intent to improve physical ability and skills while providing enjoyment to participant and spectator. There is Inflation in the number of women's participation than previous decades. But gender discrimination still exists with other issues such as politics and racism in sports. The issue of women's participation in sports is important not only due to its benefits for individual participants, but also because of the significant social and political space that the phenomenon of sports occupies in a nation, transcending the lives of individual participants into greater relevance to society as a whole. (Akansha Rehani, Arti Thakur, 2021)

In spite of the meritorious achievements of women in sports in Kerala, women participation is often discouraged by parents and teachers, as they consider it to be immoral in certain contexts. The rise of women taking part in sports worldwide shows progress in gender equality and empowerment. Kerala, a state in India known for being forward-thinking, has strong women athletes in various sports. But there's a concerning issue: young women in Kerala are leaving sports. Even though the state has successful women athletes and potential for growth in women's sports, there's a worrying trend of fewer young female athletes staying in sports.

The main problem here is the big drop in young women playing sports in Kerala. This is puzzling because the state has produced impressive female athletes known nationally and globally. What makes it more complicated is how society sees it, how parents think, and how teachers influence – they sometimes believe women's sports can be wrong in certain situations. These ideas come from cultural norms, traditional values, and old-fashioned ideas about what women can do.

Thinking of women's sports as wrong really stops talented female athletes from growing. This idea holds back these athletes, stopping them from fully showing what they can do in sports. This way of thinking not only stops young women from getting chances, but also keeps them from trying out their skills, staying active, and getting the good things that sports offer, like better health and feeling more confident. Therefore, this study focuses on deeply analysing the reasons for dropouts, the challenges faced.

This research would study all the different things that make this happen, like what society thinks is normal, what parents want, and how teachers act. The study wants to understand various reasons and challenges faced by women in continuing sports after certain age.

1.3 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Sports have traditionally been seen as a male-dominated domain, often associated more with men than women. Involvement in sports differs between men and women based on the cultural norms of their society. In India, female participation in sports is relatively limited. Women are more likely to engage in sports if they had an early interest in them during their childhood. If a woman develops a passion for sports from a young age, there's a higher likelihood of her pursuing it beyond school years. Although some women might enter the world of sports after their school years, the opportunity to persist in this path is not as feasible compared to those who have been engaged in sports since childhood.

In addition to broader sociodemographic factors like gender, age, employment, and family circumstances, internal psychological factors such as motivation and behavioral control, which drive a person's engagement in sports, along with the objectives they hope to achieve through their sporting endeavors, have been identified as significant personal influences on sports participation. Recent research has demonstrated that these motivations and goals not only influence a person's decision to participate in sports but also play a role in shaping their preference for specific sporting environments. For instance, Borgers and his team discovered that unconventional sports settings (such as running, cycling, and gym activities) were often motivated by values associated with well-being and physical appearance, while individuals in sports clubs were more inclined to engage in sports due to social interaction or performance-related aims. Among individuals involved in fitness or outdoor activities under the guidance of a fitness instructor, the primary priorities were health management and skill improvement, followed by a desire for physical improvement and social connections (Deelan, Ettema, M, & Kamphuis, 2018).

The involvement of women in sports didn't achieve remarkably positive figures, given the prevailing societal disparities and prejudices that have affected women across

various aspects of life. While there is some change underway, women have historically faced exclusion from roles in political decision-making, religious ceremonies, and various communal engagements. This societal prejudice has also extended its influence to the realm of sports. Throughout history, women were often barred from taking part in prominent sports competitions, relegating their roles primarily to that of spectators. (Sthathlon, 2022)

Participation in sports and physical activities is widely acknowledged for its positive impact on individuals' physical health, mental well-being, and social development. These benefits extend across various age groups and genders, contributing to improved cardiovascular health, reduced stress, enhanced self-esteem, and the cultivation of teamwork and discipline. Despite these well-documented advantages, a concerning trend persists wherein a considerable number of young women discontinue their involvement in sports and physical activities. This phenomenon of sport dropouts among young women has emerged as a notable issue of concern, warranting investigation and understanding.

The research has identified multifaceted reasons for the discontinuation of sports participation among young women. Societal norms, gender stereotypes, and cultural perceptions often create barriers that limit young women's access to and engagement in sports. These factors contribute to an environment where young women may face discouragement, unequal opportunities, or limited resources to pursue sporting activities. Additionally, individual factors such as body image concerns, lack of self-confidence, and competing priorities further contribute to the decision to discontinue sports engagement.

In the specific context of Thiruvananthapuram, the capital city of Kerala, India, where sports and physical activities hold cultural significance and where gender disparities are relatively lower compared to other regions, the issue of sport dropouts among young women presents an intriguing area for exploration. Kerala has a rich history of valuing and participating in traditional sports and games, often integrated into local festivals and rituals. However, despite this historical backdrop, a noticeable gap exists between the initiation of sports participation among young women and their sustained involvement.

The cultural and social dynamics of Thiruvananthapuram, as well as broader trends within Kerala, may interact with global factors to influence young women's decisions to discontinue sports engagement. Understanding the interplay between cultural norms, societal expectations, personal aspirations, and systemic support is crucial for addressing the challenge of sport dropouts among young women in this region. Moreover, such insights can inform the development of targeted interventions and strategies to create an inclusive and supportive environment that encourages sustained sports participation among young women.

Therefore, this research aims to delve into the specific reasons and challenges experienced by young women who have dropped out from field of sports. By examining both societal and individual factors. By examining both societal and individual factors, the study intends to contribute valuable insights that can guide policymakers, educators, and stakeholders in designing effective measures to enhance sports engagement and retention among young women. Ultimately, this research strives to create a more comprehensive understanding of the complex dynamics surrounding sport dropouts among young women and to pave the way for a more equitable and empowered sporting landscape in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala.

1.4. RELEVANCE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The increased participation of women in sports is a significant societal advancement, promoting health, empowerment, and gender equality. Understanding the reasons behind the dropout of young women from sports is crucial for fostering an environment where female athletes can thrive. Kerala's case is particularly pertinent due to its progressive reputation, which contrasts with the reported discouragement of women's sports participation by parents and teachers on moral grounds.

This study holds immense significance in addressing a critical societal issue with far-reaching implications. The increased participation of women in sports is a vital advancement for promoting health, empowerment, and gender equality. However, the pronounced drop in sports participation among young women in Kerala, a region known for its progressive stance, indicates a concerning phenomenon that demands urgent attention. By meticulously unraveling the multifaceted reasons and challenges behind this concerning dropout trend, this research not only sheds light on an understudied

aspect but also contributes substantially to bridging an important gap in understanding the complex interplay of societal perceptions, parental attitudes, and educational influences that hinder young women's sustained engagement in sports within the unique context of Thiruvananthapuram, India.

The study's deliberate focus on Thiruvananthapuram enables the illumination of cultural and societal factors distinct to the region, which significantly contribute to this disturbing dropout pattern. Through in-depth qualitative interviews with the young women who have unfortunately dropped out from sports, the research is poised to uncover rich insights into the personal, social, and structural obstacles that have impeded their continued participation. This in turn not only enriches the existing knowledge base but also offers actionable insights of paramount practical value. By identifying and analyzing these challenges, the study not only raises awareness but also provides a foundation upon which effective strategies and interventions can be developed. These interventions could potentially dismantle the negative perceptions, rectify misconceptions, and encourage continued participation, thereby fostering an inclusive sports environment that empowers young women to not only rejoin but also thrive and excel in sports.

Furthermore, the study's implications extend beyond sports participation alone. In the broader pursuit of gender equality and holistic well-being, the findings and recommendations stemming from this research have the potential to catalyze transformative changes in societal attitudes and policies. By addressing the root causes behind the dropout phenomenon, the study contributes to a more nuanced understanding of the challenges young women face in pursuing sports, potentially sparking a shift in the prevailing discourse. Ultimately, the envisioned impact of this research is the cultivation of a more equitable and supportive societal landscape, one that champions women's participation in sports and empowers them to shatter barriers, achieve their full potential, and thereby contribute to a more inclusive and progressive society.

1.5. CHAPTERIZATION

The coming chapters will be dealing about:

Chapter II: Literature Review – The chapter deals with pointing out the literatures related to the study, and research gap analysis

Chapter III: Methodology - Title of the Study, objectives/Research Question, Theoretical Proposition, Definition of Concept, Research Design, Description of research site and participants, Sampling Strategy & Criteria/Selection of Respondents, Data Collection, Pre-test, Data Analysis, Ethical Consideration, Limitations, Scope and conclusion.

Chapter IV: Case Description/ Narratives

Chapter V: (Thematic Analysis) and its deals with Introduction, profile of the participants, Question-wise analysis

Chapter VI: Findings, Suggestions and Conclusions: The chapter deals with Major Findings, Suggestions and Conclusions

CHAPTER II: REVIEW LITERATURE

2.1. INTRODUCTION

The chapter consists of major literatures of different authors associated with the research topic and also it points out major findings from studies. The chapter also give an in-depth explanation about the study. Literature review covers history of sports, benefits of sports and physical activities, historical background of women and sports, participation of women in sports, women participation of sports in India, Indian women and family and women participation in sports. And also, analysis the research gap of this study.

2.1.1 History of sports

Sport is huge and primordial. It may be used for correct or bad. Hitler glorified his imaginative and prescient of the Nazi elite athlete on the 1936 Olympics (though he was stymied by the African American track star Jesse Owens). Nelson Mandela (a hero to many of us), on the opposite hand, who confused that “game has the energy to alternate the world,” used the 1995 Rugby World Cup to unite a racially divided South Africa. Sport is going some distance past prevailing or dropping a selected event. It is a precis of the human condition. Sport is huge and primordial. It may be used for correct or bad. Hitler glorified his imaginative and prescient of the Nazi elite athlete on the 1936 Olympics (though he was stymied by the African American track star Jesse Owens). Nelson Mandela (a hero to many of us), on the opposite hand, who confused that “game has the energy to alternate the world,” used the 1995 Rugby World Cup to unite a racially divided South Africa. Sport is going some distance past prevailing or dropping a selected event. It is a precis of the human condition. Sport traverses each a part of the infant, varying, of course, with the way of life that infant is a part of. The improvement of shape and characteristic is critical to game, and it's far received through exercise and play. These are vital additives withinside the everyday improvement of one's talents and private experience of competence and excellence. Finally, there's an experience of fulfilment and discovery related to participation in sports. Sport evolved, in part, to facilitate our socialization and our experience of belonging to a specific group. It is likewise an historical exercise. Several distinct cultures (for example, China and northern Europe) can independently trace skiing as an exercise for greater than two thousand years. Sport is culturally historical and is all-pervasive withinside the modern era (Skulkin, 2016, p. 11).

The significance of the physical education subject in the context of sports history lies in its role as the primary institution responsible for promoting physical activities among young individuals. School physical education possesses the potential to effectively combat sedentary lifestyles due to its ability to reach a vast majority of children. The Primary/Elementary phase of schooling is particularly crucial, as it offers advantages such as high engagement in physical education classes and students who are curious about their bodies and open to health-related information. Although the level of physical activity during many physical education lessons may not be sufficient for achieving health outcomes, physical education has the opportunity to foster the development of fundamental movement skills and positive attitudes towards recreational physical activities. These factors are likely to contribute positively to overall health (R. Bailey, p. 5).

2.1.2 Benefits of sports and physical activities

Regular physical activity has well-established benefits for overall physical health. Engaging in such activities regularly is associated with a longer and better quality of life, as well as a reduced risk of various diseases. It also offers numerous psychological and emotional benefits. Inactivity, on the other hand, is a significant contributor to mortality, disability, and a lower quality of life in developed countries. Physical activity can impact the health of girls in two ways. Firstly, it can influence the factors causing diseases during childhood and adolescence. Research suggests a positive link between physical activity and various aspects of girls' physical health, including diabetes, blood pressure, and the body's ability to use fat as an energy source. Secondly, regular physical activity during youth can lower the risk of chronic diseases in later life. Many conditions typically seen in adults, such as cancer, diabetes, and coronary heart disease, have their roots in childhood and can be partially mitigated by consistent physical activity during early years. Moreover, starting regular physical activity during childhood improves bone health and helps prevent osteoporosis, which predominantly affects females. Physical activity also plays a role in enhancing girls' mental health, as regular activity has a positive impact on their psychological well-being. Some studies even suggest that girls may experience greater short-term benefits compared to boys. Additionally, physical activity can contribute to reducing high levels of anxiety and depression. Participation in sports also aids girls in their educational and intellectual

development, promotes reproductive health, and facilitates social inclusion (R. Bailey, pp. 1, 2).

The growing participation of female athletes in sports events plays a crucial role in addressing gender biases. Through their involvement in athletics, women not only enhance their societal engagement but also contribute to advancing gender equality and dismantling long-standing gender stereotypes. Additionally, engaging in sports and participating in athletic events has been shown to benefit women beyond their physical health, as it helps them overcome biases, gain empowerment, and develop leadership skills. Moreover, the accomplishments and recognition of renowned female athletes serve as inspirational role models, encouraging more young girls to pursue sports and ensuring the ongoing progress towards gender equality (Stathlon, 2022).

Until now, a significant portion of the research exploring the connections between sports participation and health outcomes has primarily focused on the United States and other Western nations. Scientific studies have provided evidence of the positive impact of sports on both physical and mental well-being. Notably, these studies have highlighted the correlation between sports and physical fitness, the role of sports in preventing chronic diseases, the potential for sports to improve mental health by reducing stress and depression symptoms, and the overall association between sports and the development of self-confidence and self-efficacy (PCPFS 1997) (Brady, 2005).

2.1.3 Historical background of Women and Sports

According to Banerjee (2009), the participation of women in physical education and sports is heavily influenced by their societal status and the significance given to women's physical education and health. Historical evidence shows that women engaged in games and sports for the purpose of health, fitness, and recreation, particularly among the higher and military classes. Dancing, on the other hand, was a recreational activity observed among various social classes, either as part of folk traditions or performed by professional dancers. During the period of epics like Mahabharata and Ramayana, playing with a ball was a popular outdoor physical exercise. Girls from ruling classes received military training as part of their official activities. The upper-class and ruling-class women enjoyed outdoor games such as Chaugan (now known as polo), Shikar (hunting), animal fights, Hindola, Jalakrida, Chormachichani, Ankh-michayath, and

more. Chaugan, in particular, was an aristocratic game commonly played by Mughal princesses, begums, and women from privileged Hindu and Muslim families. Hunting was exclusive to women from the Mughal royal family during the medieval period. In Bengal, women would pass their leisure time by playing card games and engaging in dice games with their husbands or other family members.

During the early 20th century, Indian women achieved remarkable success and held significant positions of authority in various fields. However, when it came to sports, it was primarily the westernized communities, such as Anglo-Indians and Parsis, who initially emerged as leaders. These women, being more progressive and athletic compared to others, naturally dominated the titles and trophies in sports like lawn tennis, badminton, swimming, and track and field events. Over time, women from all communities gradually began to participate in different sports, expanding the diversity of female athletes (Banerjee, 2009, pp. 260, 261).

The advancement of women's physical education and sports has been hindered by various factors, including the societal role assigned to physical education, the position of women within society, and the prevailing beliefs regarding women's physical limitations. The twentieth century witnessed a significant social movement known as women's liberation, challenging traditional views and norms. In earlier societies, it was erroneously believed that women lacked the intellectual capacity to benefit from higher forms of education. Consequently, girls and women were often denied intellectual pursuits, with their primary role limited to childbirth, childcare, and household management. However, this perception has undergone substantial transformation over time. Plato, for instance, advocated for women to receive an education similar to men, including the highest level of liberal education and preparation for warfare (Singh, 1990, p. 18).

Acknowledging the importance of girls' early encounters with physical activity is crucial, particularly within the framework of school physical education classes, as it is in these settings that their understanding of personal sporting identity begins to take shape. Interestingly, aspects that were initially considered minor concerns by school governing bodies, such as specific uniforms for physical education classes and the quality of shower facilities, were discovered to have a significant impact on girls' actual enjoyment of school sports. Unfortunately, the recognition of individual experiences

related to the body has often been neglected in favor of broader policy-driven issues pertaining to health and educational provisions (R. Bailey, p. 14).

Singh's study also provides an overview of the historical background of women in sports across different countries. In ancient Egyptian civilization, there is pictorial evidence indicating women's involvement in simple ball games, swimming, archery, and dancing. In ancient China, physical labour constituted the primary form of exercise for most people, and recreational time was limited. Intellectual training was also inadequate, and physical activity did not typically form part of education for girls, except for a few privileged families. In pre-foreign rule India, there was significant emphasis on health and recreation, and various sports and games were practiced. Dancing enjoyed popularity, but overall, there was a societal disregard for women's physical activity, as they were confined to a subordinate social position. In Iranian civilization, there is no mention of physical education for women, whereas in Hebrew civilization, women held a significant role, particularly in early times. Dancing was a part of religious worship, and women engaged in physical labour for routine tasks in hillside communities. As social life expanded, women became increasingly confined to the home and were not expected to possess intellectual abilities. Nonetheless, many women participated in simple games, music, and dancing. In the Cretan civilization, which predates the Greeks by several thousand years, women assumed a relatively important role and were known to participate in numerous games and sports, including hunting, chariot driving, and even the dangerous sport of bull-grappling (Singh, 1990, pp. 18, 19, 20).

The reasons given for opposing women's participation in sports were rooted in the belief that women should be confined to domestic roles and the care of children. Even though women often engaged in strenuous labour in fields or factories, objections were raised against their involvement in sports. It was argued that sports could have negative effects on women's physical well-being, potentially jeopardizing their ability to bear children. Additionally, it was believed that engaging in sports would result in a loss of femininity in women's appearance (Singh, 1990, p. 35).

2.1.4. Women participation in sports in India

Women athletes from India play an important role in women's participation and contribution to sports. As we have observed and realized that the total standard of

performance in track and field events are gradually and notably deteriorating at various levels of competitions that is, University, Colleges, Schools, and also at age group competitions of Ameture Nationals, it is the essential need of the hour to conduct in-depth and extensive studies, focusing on the salient features of Kerala and its unique background in track and field discipline for more than 4 or 5 decades of unparalleled glamour and distinct glory of which we are proud while others envy on us. (Rajesh C. B, Hussain Sakeer, Cherappurath Nafih, 2021).

2.1.5. Indian women and family

Love to Indian woman means self-denial and sacrifice for her husband and children. She seldom reflects on her own needs or interests. She merges herself so completely in her dual roles as extensions of her husband and children that exists as a body without a soul, without a being aspect. The Indian culture has propagated this unselfish deal. There are several questions such as whether they enjoy self-denial or whether the Indian culture really desire that woman should be simply mothers with no individuality or only suited for the two roles as wife and mother. The response to all the questions may be yes as may come so because of centuries of socialization, which has controlled the fabric of women's lives. But in case we take the outlook of the modern women into consideration the answer to all these questions would be a clear-cut no. (Sharma, 2004, pp. 53,54).

2.1.6. Women participation in sports

Some people believe that girls are taught to act in ways that are considered suitable for their gender. This process can have either positive or sometimes negative impacts. For instance, Coakley (1990) suggests that how society teaches girls about gender roles can lead to unfairness between boys and girls and discrimination against women. However, the idea of socialization doesn't fully examine how much people might resist following these gender patterns. Also, it doesn't properly analyse and question the traditional and modern ideas about what it means to be feminine in sports (Hargreaves, 1994, p. 9).

Brettschneider and Hein (1997) argued that self-concept allows females to assess themselves by acknowledging their weaknesses and strengths. Often females compare their performance to that of other participants and with time, if their performance improves, then their self-concept also improves and the female sport participant feels

competent in what they are involved in (Brettschneider and Hein, 1997). Being competent in a particular sporting code enables the girls to be self-motivated and builds self-confidence. Can (as cited in Buffer, 1996), also argues that the socialising process at home for both sexes is different. Boys usually get more support and encouragement to get involved in activities, which offer sporting opportunities. They are furthermore provided with role models who encourage and support participation in physical activities.

Digest (1997) states that one and a half black girls compared to one-quarter of white girls said that they cannot consider taking part in competitive sports when their families could not finance their transportation needs. According to Hargreaves (1997), lack of parental support has been indicated as one of the factors, which discourage female sport participation. Higher education can play a significant role in the development of sport by familiarizing students with various sports and development of them in university, and holding competitions in different and various competitive and recreational sport matches and awarding the winners (Eftekary, 2000).

According to Bhargava Deepti, 2017 study titled "Barriers to Women Participation in Sports and Physical Activity in Southern Rajasthan" investigates the factors influencing women's engagement in sports within Southern Rajasthan. The study aims to identify and rank the obstacles that hinder women's participation and to understand women's attitudes towards sports. A self-designed questionnaire was used, covering personal information and factors affecting participation. Out of 110 distributed questionnaires, 92 were analysed. Most participants had up to graduate-level education and moderate income. The study reveals key barriers to women's sports involvement, including gender-based family and societal responsibilities, lack of family and social support, economic limitations, and limited access to facilities. Overall, the research sheds light on the complex reasons behind women's non- participation in sports in this region. (Bhargava Deepti, 2017)

According to Sáez, Iker, Josu Solabarrieta, and Isabel Rubio, (2021) study titled "Reasons for sports-based physical activity dropouts in university students" despite extensive evidence reporting the numerous health benefits of physical activity, recent studies show that many people (60%) do not follow the recommendations to meet the accepted minimums of physical activity. Some of the main problems in today's society

are the high dropout rates (35%) and low adherence to the conditions for achieving the physical activity recommendations. The objective of this study is to analyse the reasons that led a sample of university students to dropout of sports that they particularly liked, to design a new scale of reasons as to why they dropped out based on several previously existing scales, and to study the dropout differences based on gender, age in which dropout occurred, the type of sports, and the differences between people who continue to participate in sports and those who stopped. The aim of the study is to analyse the reasons for dropout from sports that the participants particularly liked, to design a new scale of reasons as to why they dropped out based on several previously existing scales, and to study the dropout differences based on different variables. The sample consisted of 813 Vizcaya university students (61.6% women and 38.4% men), aged between 18 and 29 ($M = 20.5$; $SD = 1.8$). Frequency distributions, univariate descriptive analyses, and bivariate statistical analyses, such as t-test, analysis of variance, and correlations, were analysed. The construct validity of the dropout reasons questionnaire was analysed by combining an Exploratory Factor Analysis ($n = 406$) and a Confirmatory Factor Analysis ($n = 407$). The five-factor measurement model was appropriate and allowed to identify the factor rankings and its relation to some key variables. Lack of time (or dedication to other activities unrelated to physical activity) and fatigue seem to be the main factors for dropping out. The life changes produced at the time of entry and during university life seem to guide students to value other activities. This article finds that Lack of time and tiredness seems to be the main dropout factors. Changes in people's vital priorities at the age at which they enter university seem to be aimed at a greater assessment of other activities. (Sáez, Iker, Josu Solabarrieta, and Isabel Rubio, 2021)

According to Iker S., et al. (2021) conducted a study titled "Reasons for sports-based physical activity dropouts in university students." Despite the well-documented health benefits of physical activity, recent research indicates that a substantial portion of individuals (60%) fail to meet recommended activity levels. High dropout rates (35%) and low adherence to activity recommendations are prevalent issues in society. This study aims to explore why university students stop participating in sports they initially enjoyed, create a new dropout reasons scale based on existing ones, and investigate dropout variances based on gender, age of dropout, sports type, and differences between those who continued versus ceased participation. The sample included 813 university

students from Vizcaya, with 61.6% women and 38.4% men, aged 18 to 29 (average 20.5; standard deviation 1.8). The study employed frequency distributions, descriptive analyses, and statistical tests like t-tests, analysis of variance, and correlations. Construct validity of the dropout reasons questionnaire was verified through Exploratory Factor Analysis (n = 406) and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (n = 407). A five-factor measurement model was appropriate, revealing key factor rankings and their associations with variables. Predominant factors for dropout were found to be lack of time (or engagement in non-physical activity pursuits) and fatigue. Changes in life priorities upon entering and during university appear to steer students towards valuing alternative activities. In conclusion, the study identifies lack of time and fatigue as primary reasons for sports-based activity dropout among university students, influenced by shifting life priorities during their academic journey. (Iker S., et al. 2021)

In a 2019 study titled "Analysis of Gender Differences in Dropouts in Sports Centres Located on School Campuses" by Lorenzo et al., (2019), the objective was the factors contributing to the discontinuation of physical activity among clients of a private sports and fitness centre situated within a school campus, with a focus on gender differences. The study encompassed a sample size of 2251 individuals, comprising 46.9% men and 53.1% women. The reasons behind individuals ceasing their physical activity were documented by recording either spoken or written explanations provided by the clients. These responses were subjected to content analysis using an inductive thematic approach. An expert panel validated the categories into which the reasons were classified, resulting in a compilation of 11 distinct factors. The study revealed a higher percentage of women discontinuing sports activities compared to men. The primary reasons cited by women were health-related concerns and the challenge of reconciling their schedules. In contrast, men attributed their dropouts to work-related or academic commitments. Women who stopped participating leaned towards instructor-led activities, while men exhibited a preference for utilizing sports facilities freely. (Lorenzo et al.,2019).

In a study titled "Withdrawal from Competitive Youth Sport: A Retrospective Ten-year Study" conducted by Butcher Janice, Lindner Koenraad J, and Johns David P (2002), a journal was conducted to understand the patterns, circumstances, and timing of young individuals discontinuing participation in competitive youth sports. The research aimed to address the question of whether the withdrawals were sport-specific or permanent.

The study involved 1387 Grade 10 students who provided retrospective information about their sports engagement from Grade 1 onwards, along with completing a withdrawal questionnaire for every sport they left. The findings indicated that a substantial 94% had discontinued at least one sport during their youth. The likelihood of withdrawals increased as students progressed through higher grade levels. Among those who withdrew, 70% remained engaged in one or more other sports. Notably, among Grade 7-8 participants, 55% initiated participation in new sports following their withdrawal (referred to as transfers). The primary reason cited for quitting was a "lack of enjoyment," followed by involvement in "other non-sport activities" and engagement in "other sports." The study identified notable distinctions in the reasons for withdrawals based on the type of dropout, program category, grade level, and gender differences. (Butcher Janice, Lindner Koenraad J, and Johns David P, 2002)

According to Swain (1991), withdrawal from competitive sports can only be understood as a complex and multifactor process—a process that begins soon after the athletes become engaged in their athletic careers. (Swain D A, 1991). Sjogord (1993) also claims that the early drop-out rate in competitive youth sports has to be considered as a natural trial-and-error process. (Sjogord M K, 1993). Klint K and Weis M R, (1986) have classified three different groups of competitive sports dropouts: (1) the reluctant dropouts, who are forced to quit competitive sports because of serious illness/injury or an overwhelming athletic program; (2) the voluntary dropouts, who want to engage in other interests and activities; and (3) the resistant dropouts, who consider the costs of participation in competitive sport to be greater than the benefits of being involved. (Klint K and Weis M R, 1986)

The study conducted by Craike Melinda J. et al., (2011), titled "Why do young women drop out of sport and physical activity? A social ecological approach," delves into the complex factors influencing the participation of adolescent young women in physical activity. The research employs a social ecological framework to explore individual, social, and environmental elements and how they interact to impact physical activity engagement during two critical life transitions: from primary to secondary school and from middle to upper secondary school. Through ten focus groups involving young women and ten teacher interviews, the study unveils interconnected themes. The findings underscore the potential strategies to boost young women's participation in physical activity, such as fostering intrinsic motivation, catering to their need for social

interaction through informal activities, educating parents about the benefits of physical activity, challenging gender stereotypes that limit acceptable behaviors, enhancing educators' understanding of gender dynamics, motivating less active students, providing accessible facilities and programs in schools, and prioritizing physical activity in the curriculum. These strategies necessitate a comprehensive community approach and, in certain instances, a shift in societal values. The study further investigates the factors leading to reduced physical activity among young women, including shifts from intrinsic to extrinsic motivation, competing commitments from school, part-time work, and other leisure pursuits, insufficient emphasis on physical activity by parents and the educational curriculum, gender-based stereotypes restricting activity choices, and limited access to sports facilities in schools. To increase physical activity levels among adolescent females, addressing each of these issues is essential. The suggested strategies demand a holistic community response and, at times, a re-evaluation of societal norms. (Craike Melinda J. et al.,2011)

2.2. RESEARCH GAP ANALYSIS

There are studies related with the participation of women in sports and also related with the involvement of women in different sport events. The history of sports suggests that it is a male dominated area from the early times itself. The historical background of women also portrays that there is lack of participation of women in sports and also there are barriers that block women from participating in sports. The provided data presents a comprehensive overview of various studies related to women's participation in sports and the factors contributing to dropouts among young women in the sports field. The existing literature acknowledges the historical underrepresentation of women in sports and identifies barriers that hinder their participation. Several studies explore the reasons for discontinuing sports engagement among young women, emphasizing factors like lack of time, fatigue, health concerns, conflicting commitments, and societal norms. Furthermore, these studies highlight the need for addressing gender stereotypes, enhancing intrinsic motivation, providing accessible facilities, and involving the community to promote sustained participation. However, while these studies offer valuable insights, there appears to be a research gap related to the specific context of Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, India, in examining the unique challenges and factors that contribute to young women's dropouts from sports. Further research in the

Thiruvananthapuram region could delve deeper into the cultural, societal, and environmental factors that specifically influence young women's decisions to discontinue their participation in sports. Therefore, the researcher couldn't find any studies relate to the reasons and challenges of sports dropouts among young women within the age of 18 to 26. Also, couldn't find the studies which are being conducted in Thiruvananthapuram district. This analysis would help in designing targeted interventions and strategies to address the identified challenges and promote long-term engagement of young women in sports within the Thiruvananthapuram area. The interview guide was prepared based on the different aspects related with a sportswoman and thereby the respondents to easily describe their challenges and the reason for their quitting from the sports.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

3.1. INTRODUCTION

The chapter includes the title of the study and also of general research question as well as the specific research questions about the study and the scientific methods adopted to do the study. The chapter also emphasize about the definitions of the main concepts of the title. The research design is qualitative with data collection tool as interview guide. The data collected from five young women sportspersons who are at age between 18 to 26 and residing at Thiruvananthapuram in Kerala. The chapter also includes sampling strategy as well as the inclusion and exclusion criteria for data collection. The chapter also gives an overview about the method of data collection, data analysis, ethical considerations, assumptions, limitations and scopes of the research.

3.2. TITLE OF THE STUDY

The title of the study is “SPORTS DROPOUTS AMONG YOUNG WOMEN: REASONS AND CHALLENGES”

3.3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

GENERAL RESEARCH QUESTION

What are the reasons and challenges experienced by young women who have dropout from sports?

SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

- What are the motivating factors that influence individuals to participate in sports?
- What are the reasons that lead individuals to discontinue their participation in sports?
- What are the specific challenges faced by young women after dropping out of sports?
- What are the potential solutions and recommendations for reducing the sports dropouts?

3.4. THEORETICAL PREPOSITION

Sports

The suggested sport must encompass a competitive aspect and should not incorporate any reliance on luck. It should be designed in a manner that eliminates any potential for undue hazards to the well-being and safety of participants. Additionally, the proposed sport must avoid causing harm to any living beings and should not be reliant on equipment sourced exclusively from a single supplier. (Global Association of International Sports Federation, GAISF).

This human activity should possess the capability to yield a specific outcome through physical exertion and/or the application of physical skills. Furthermore, its inherent structure and organization should be centred around competition, and it should hold widespread recognition as a legitimate sport. (Australian Sports Commission, ASC).

Sports Dropout

Sports dropout: The term 'dropout' can be explained as a phenomenon in which an athlete stops competing or put an end to active participation from a sport permanently before he or she attained elite level performance. (Augustine N J & Dr. Madhavan N, 2020).

Woman Sportsperson

A woman sportsperson is a person trained to compete or interested in a sport involving physical strength, speed or endurance (Bertil, 1997)

3.5. DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

Sports

Sports is physical activities or games that involve skill, physical exertion, and competition. They are typically organized and governed by rules and regulations, and they often involve individuals or teams competing against each other to achieve specific goals or objectives. Participating in sports can offer numerous benefits, including improved physical health, enhanced mental well-being, opportunities for social interaction, skill acquisition, and personal development. Sports can differ greatly in

relation to the equipment utilized, the venue or playing field, the number of participants, and the objectives of the game.

Sports Dropout

Sports dropouts is a young women aged 18 to 26 who were previously involved in two or more sports events but have since stopped participating and are no longer actively engaged in competitive or organized sports.

Women Sportsperson

Women who are engaged in sports activities and being a competitor and competes in any of the district, state, university, interuniversity, national or international level championships.

3.6. RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design provides the backbone structure of the study. It determines how the study will be organized. The research design adopted for the study was Multiple Case Study. The aim for selecting this design was get an in-depth knowledge about the reason and challenges faced by the young women dropouts.

3.7. DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH SITE AND PARTICIPANTS

The research had been conducted by choosing participants from Thiruvananthapuram and all the participants are young women sportspersons who had dropout from the sports field and within the age of 18 to 26. Young women sportspersons also leaving from the sports field after a certain age.

3.8. SAMPLING STRATEGY AND CRITERIA/SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

Sample and sample size

The data collected from five young women sportspersons using interview guide, from different area of Thiruvananthapuram.

Sampling method

The researcher adopted multiple case study which is a type of non-probability sampling as sampling method.

Inclusion criteria

The participants who were included in the research was young women sportsperson in Thiruvananthapuram of age between 18 to 26.

Exclusion criteria

The participants who are excluded from the study include women sportspersons outside Thiruvananthapuram, the women below age 18 and the woman above age 26.

3.9. DATA COLLECTION

The researcher had chosen a face-to-face unstructured interview with the help of an interview guide and collected data from five participants. The researcher had firstly contacted the participants through telephone and conducted face-to-face interview. The interview guide had been modified after each interview from the insights got from the participants that helped the researcher in getting new information.

The researcher used the in-depth interview method to gather data regarding the participant's experience, attitude, and perspectives. Researchers and interviews were free to explore other ideas and alter the course of the conversation as necessary during the interview. Also, consent from the participants had been taken and the interview had been recorded and the data collected from the participants are confidential.

3.10. PRETEST

The researcher conducted pre-test among the young women sportspersons which are excluded from the sample for data collection. The researcher collected the data from the young women sportspersons using interview guide. The researcher also showed the interview guide to the research guide and thereby the researcher conducted the pre-test of the tool.

3.11. DATA ANALYSIS

Qualitative data is rich, and made up of in-depth information that is typically expressed verbally. In order to analyse qualitative data, reading of a lot of transcripts is necessary and then compare or contrast them before identifying themes and creating categories. The researcher transcribes the data and identify phrases and developed codes which are being classified and themes are developed. Then the information collected from participants is categorized under definite subthemes which are under main themes coming under each research question.

3.12. ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

- The data was collected after taking consent from the participants and also been recorded with the consent of participants in research
- The right of the participants to withdraw from the study whenever are informed at the beginning of each interview.
- The confidentiality of information and the participant details to be maintained by the researcher.
- Participants were given alternate names, and all information was anonymized.
- The collected data will be used for only academic purposes.

3.13. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- Limited number of participants.
- The major limitation faced by the researcher was that of time.
- Lack of previous experience in research.

3.14. SCOPE

The study highlights on identifying the factors that lead young women to drop out of sports. There are many women who are talented in sports but they quitting from the sports field after their certain age. Through the values and abilities acquired, such as teamwork, negotiation, leadership, communication, and respect for others, sport can be a significant tool for social empowerment. Given that many females, especially throughout adolescence, have less possibilities than boys have for social connection outside of the house and outside of family structures, the social benefits of participating

in sport are regarded to be especially significant for girls. Therefore, this study is going to reveal the reason and challenges the reasons behind the decline in sports participation among young women and the challenges they faced after the sports dropout.

3.15. CONCLUSION

The methodology provides an overall idea regarding the methods use in the study. The methodology guided the researcher to complete the study in a systematic and scientific manner.

CHAPTER IV: CASE DESCRIPTION

Participants 1- ABC

23-year-old ABC, a young woman, has been an athlete since she was young. She lives in Kattakada in Thiruvananthapuram district. She belongs to a nuclear family consisting of father, mother and two brothers. Her father is a farmer and mother is a house wife. Born as an only daughter, she was more interested in sports than studies. Now she is a social work student in Loyola College of Social Science, Thiruvananthapuram district for PG. She started her sports career from the first grade. She was an enthusiastic participant in the school's annual sports meet right from the first grade. She spent all her childhood in St. Mary's Girls High School.

She had actively participated in sports meets both in upper primary school and lower primary school. However, the teachers themselves showed no interest in involving students in district-level sports competitions. The focus of the teachers was more on nurturing the students' academic abilities, giving more priority to their studies. Therefore, Ms. ABC had not participated in any of the athletic events at the district and state level. Despite her dedication to running and her importance given to both practice and competitions, Ms. ABC never had the opportunity to represent her school in sports. However, during school vacations, she utilized her time to train for team games like basketball, which resembled her love for sprinting. In the tenth grade, Ms. ABC joined the Net Ball team to gain proficiency in the sport. As a result, she was selected for the District Net Ball Championship, which brought her immense joy. However, despite her parents' consent and her enthusiasm, she faced opposition from her household to continue playing Net Ball before completing her tenth-grade studies. Therefore, she had to give up Net Ball and focus on her academics. Ms. ABC sought the help of her class teacher and spoke to her parents about the matter, hoping for their understanding and support. Unfortunately, the class teacher informed that if she continued with sports, it might jeopardize her chances of success in the SSLC examination. Consequently, Ms. ABC lost the opportunity. Later, when the school principal, who had provided sports training, also approached Ms. ABC's parents requesting permission to let her participate in the Net Ball competition, they refused. Frustrated by these circumstances, Ms. ABC had to compromise and adjust with her life at home. However, she set a goal for herself to excel in academics and secure a pass with 80% marks, similar to her performance in the +2 level, while still nurturing her passion for sports. Deva Matha College provided admission to B.A Economics for her Postgraduate studies. Upon joining the 10th class,

she underwent coaching in netball under the guidance of Mr. Satheesh, who was the Head of the College's Physical Education Department. Under his guidance, Ms. ABC improved her skills in netball and started training in another sport, roll ball. Alongside, she actively participated in Roll Ball, a dynamic sport, which became an additional avenue for her athletic growth. ("Roll ball is a game played between two teams and is a unique combination of roller skates, basketball, handball, and throw ball. It is played on "roller shoes" with each team consisting of twelve players, six on the field and six in reserve"). She says; *"At first, I had a strong desire to participate in practice sessions. After two days of continuous practice, my entire body started experiencing pain. Gradually, the pain intensified, making it difficult for me to continue with the practice. However, my passion for sports pushed me forward, despite the minor setbacks. Nevertheless, it was the same passion that eventually motivated me to continue practicing and not give up"*.

Ms. ABC had acquired expertise in both netball and roll ball through training. She excelled in playing netball as well as roll ball. In netball, she won accolades at the college and district levels. She also received recognition and awards in roll ball, participating in numerous district-level competitions and even representing her nation at the national level. She says; *"When I was pursuing my degree, both the students and the professors provided excellent support. If any assignment-related matters were given in class, the students would inform us and help us complete them. During exams, the students would share notes and discuss important topics. However, during my postgraduate studies, balancing academics and sports together was quite challenging. Often, I couldn't attend classes, which resulted in pending work and added pressure. The main reason for quitting sports was the academic pressure, financial constraints, and the need for a job. Despite achieving success in South Asian International Roll ball, opportunities in sports-related careers, such as Roll Ball, were limited. Most sports quotas in job opportunities were restricted to sports like basketball, volleyball, athletics, etc. other sports events have less opportunity in sports quotas government job opportunity. Hence, the dream of pursuing a career in sports had fewer possibilities."*

Furthermore, Ms. ABC skills in roll ball extended beyond local competitions. She actively took part in inter-district tournaments and competed at the national level, securing a place in the finals. In Sri Lanka, she achieved remarkable success in the South Asian International Roll Ball Championship, finishing in second place. Ms. ABC

says that; *“Throughout my participation in various competitions, my family has always supported me by contributing funds for team registration fees, individual registration fees, and traveling expenses. It has consistently been a financial challenge for my family to gather the necessary funds for these events. Given our middle-class background, I couldn't afford to allocate significant amounts to sports expenses.”*

She says; *“My coach and family played a crucial role in providing me with strong support. Despite initial opposition from my family, they eventually embraced my decision and supported me wholeheartedly during my graduation. The support from my family was evident as they expressed their happiness through Prize. Attending competitions allowed me to continually meet new individuals, forming lasting friendships. I also developed positive relationships with my fellow players and coaches”*. And also, she says that; *“Through sports, I have gained several benefits that have had a positive impact on my physical and mental well-being, just like the achievements I've obtained through sports. It has transformed my body into a healthy and fit one, full of energy.”*

Ms. ABC says that; *“When participating in sports, during various competitions, we get to know a lot of people and develop good relationships with them. There is a bunch of individuals whom we come across and establish a solid connection with while competing in different matches. These relationships and connections used to be maintained even after the competition, just like before. However, once the drop-out happens, maintaining that same level of connection becomes challenging. The dropout affects not only the relationship but also the academic pressure, making it difficult to sustain the same level of interaction and commitment.”*

Ms. ABC achievements in both netball and roll ball highlight her dedication and hard work. Her talent and determination propelled her to compete and succeed at various levels, making her a deserving recipient of numerous awards and accolades. The rewards of rigorous training in the morning and evening have paid off for Ms. ABC. However, in order to participate in each championship, she needed a considerable amount of money. Despite her achievements, Ms. ABC faced a challenge in obtaining the necessary registration fees, travel expenses, and other costs for every competition. The burden of finding a solution for each tournament's registration fees and travel expenses weighed heavily on Ms. ABC's mind. Moreover, she came across a

government job opportunity that required an international certification. Coaches and well-wishers advised her to pursue the job as it promised stability and financial security. However, Ms. ABC had to invest a significant amount of money for the certification, which she unfortunately couldn't afford due to her previous financial strain. Later, the support from her family also began to dwindle. Her family members started telling her to focus on her studies and get a good job. So, after three years of degree studies, she gave up on her passion for sports. After that, Ms. ABC decided to pursue a professional course for her post-graduation and thus studied Master of Social Work and obtained a post-graduation degree in it. Meanwhile, she participated in intercollegiate competitions for the college where she did her PG and got selected to the All-India University level. Sometime Ms. ABC's can't maintain the balance between academics and passion. *she says that; She frequently skipped classes due to her commitment to sports practice. Consequently, when I attended class, I struggled to comprehend the subject matter and found myself overwhelmed with assignments and reports. As a result, my academic performance began to suffer, and even the college teachers expressed concerns about juggling sports and social work simultaneously. They suggested it would be easier to focus on one of them. My family also voiced their objections, stating that I neglected my studies in favour of sports. Eventually, I made the difficult decision to quit sports since I couldn't handle the academic pressure along with my athletic pursuits. And she says; "To be honest, when I decided to stop playing sports and concentrate on my studies, I didn't think about physical problems." About a month after I stopped, my body started to lose fitness, and my stomach started to gain weight, and my legs and arms started to gain weight. After doing all the practice, when the body became healthy, suddenly there were no illnesses. But when I stopped playing sports, I suddenly started getting sick. In the same way, when we are traveling now, when we see the ground, when we saw that the children were practice there, we feel sad inside. Similarly, we feel like we have no interest in anything. A fresh mind that was there during the practice time was not there after the dropout".*

Participants 2- B

Ms. B is a young women sports person of age 22 and the native place in NEMAM which belongs to a Trivandrum district and She belonged to a middle-class family and completed her graduation in BSC Chemistry. Now she is doing her post-graduation in

Master of social work. Her family consist of her father, mother and her elder brother. Her brother is also a sports person.

During her childhood, everyone around her was involved in dancing and singing, but Ms. B had a greater affinity for games. Unfortunately, her parents discouraged her from pursuing sports, claiming it was more suitable for boys rather than girls. She says that; *“my parents and my relatives had no interest of me doing sports. They said to me, sports are for boys and not for girls. If u want to do any extracurricular activities, u join for a dance class or other.”* However, Ms. B was more interested in games and sports. She began to prove herself and started playing sports. Undeterred by societal expectations, she took it as a challenge and started engaging in sports. But later, when she started focusing on sports, the support from her family gradually diminished. She says; *“My family members had no interest in my involvement in sports. I faced discouragement and had to overcome obstacles to continue with sports.”* This incident motivated her to prove to her family that she was determined to pursue sports. The absence of familial support served as a catalyst, pushing her to prove that sports could transcend gender stereotypes.

She achieved success in various games, receiving prizes at different levels. Initially, Ms. B participated in handball and competed at the state level in both junior and senior categories for three consecutive years. Later, she took up skating and won a national-level medal. This marked the beginning of her participation in multiple sports events. Eventually, Ms. B secured a gold medal in karate and boxing at the inter-university level. Additionally, she earned a prize in karate at the national level.

Initially, Ms. B lacked support from her family, and they encouraged her to quit sports. However, when she won the prize at the Nationals, the situation started to change in her favour. Her family realized that she was determined to continue pursuing sports, and this made her realize that she wouldn't give up on her athletic endeavours. Ms. B says; *“Students and teachers were very supportive while studying for the degree. If there was any assignment given in the class, the children would call us and help us to complete it. When the exams came, when I asked the teachers about my doubts, the teachers would tell me everything that I had doubts about, no matter how busy they were. When the exam was about to take place, the children would give notes and other things to*

study. I did not get good support from home. Sir who teaches physical education, my coach and some friends supported me in doing sports”.

She received valuable assistance from her coaches in terms of both training and participating in sports competitions. However, her performance was hindered by health problems that overwhelmed her. Likewise, she encountered challenges when it came to managing situations that triggered stage fright. It took her three years to conquer her fear of performing on stage. Compared to her other teammates, she had good skills and was a talented kid. But in competitions, she couldn't showcase her skills and talent properly. Stage fright was the main reason behind this. However, she overcame it eventually.

She mentioned that she managed to conquer her stage fright through a particular incident. During her school days, she formed closer relationships with her sports teachers compared to other teachers and friends. Their support played a crucial role in her active participation in various sports events throughout her school years. As she consistently performed well, the sports teachers began selecting her for state and national level competitions. However, when she didn't receive the same level of support during one event, it had a negative impact on her performance and disappointed her sports teachers. They expressed their frustration and offered advice, motivating her to overcome her fear and play to her full potential. This experience saddened her, but it also served as a turning point. She realized there was nothing to be afraid of, considering her successful performance at the school level. This realization sparked self-motivation, leading her to excel in her sports endeavours. Over a period of three years, she gradually overcame her stage fright.

During her high school years, she encountered health problems that caused her to take a break from sports for a certain period. Despite this setback, she persisted in pursuing sports. However, when she enrolled in college, the authorities raised concerns about her fitness level, ultimately preventing her from participating in sports events. She says that; *“since my childhood I faced Dust allergy, breathing difficulty, after some years, I studied in 7th standard I had Thyroid, Double vision, Sensitive body texture and Extra born growth in the Rib of my body, so these health problems sometimes affected during my sporting career.”*

She faced various health problems which made her body weak and prone to dizziness if injured. During her time in college, she was dedicated to inter-collegiate competition. However, the college authorities and coaches refused to let her participate without a fitness certificate. Consequently, she was excluded from the Games for a year due to her other health issues, such as breathing problems and thyroid complications, which prevented the doctors from issuing the certificate. Her weak health condition raised concerns about potential liability for the coaches, and the college authorities unanimously decided that she could not continue sports without the certificate. Furthermore, her family was unsupportive, further isolating her from the world of sports. Thus, she was kept away from sports for a year, fearing that if she were to get injured and participate in the Fitness Island competition, she would blame her family and college. However, the following year, a new Head of the Department took charge of the physical education department. He had tremendous belief in her talent, surpassing her health issues, and allowed her to participate in sports once again. She was encouraged and motivated to compete without a fitness certificate. With the unwavering support of her coach, she achieved the title of the best karate player of the year in the Interuniversity competition and also secured a spot in the national level selection.

She got inter university overall best point in that year. During her school days, she had few friends and was nurtured by the sports teachers. She had a good relationship with her teammates during practice time. But there was not a deep relationship between them, but a causal relationship that inspired each other.

However, she strongly disagreed with the societal stigmas that existed between cosplayers and coaches. Specifically, she was opposed to the belief that girls should not play certain roles or exhibit certain styles when participating in mixed-gender practices for kabaddi and handball. She firmly believed that girls should not be restricted in their playing style or position simply based on their gender.

Engaging in sports brought her a heightened sense of positivity and mental relaxation. She found that participating in sports had a positive impact on her academic performance, allowing her to excel academically. Sports served as a means for her to maintain focus on her studies, and she received valuable support from teachers and friends during exams and when completing assignments. Furthermore, her involvement in sports contributed to her physical well-being and overall fitness. But Ms. B says

that; *“After stopping sports, my health issues worsened. The breathing problem that I had before, the thyroid problem, when I stopped doing sports, I became physically weak. Earlier, I used to be able to control my health issues by exercising. But now that is not possible. Likewise, mentally I am quite disturbed. There is nothing to concentrate on studies. I was able to juggle my academics and sports while practicing sports. But now it is not possible”*.

After enrolling in post-graduation, the primary reason for quitting sports is the emphasis on academic studies at the current college. The institution does not encourage sports, making it challenging to balance the demands of the coursework with sports activities. And also, she says that; *I was able to successfully balance my academic studies with my sports practice. However, since I stopped participating in sports, I have been struggling to maintain my academic performance. It feels like I'm regressing in my studies. The abrupt discontinuation of my long-term involvement in sports has had a significant impact on my mindset, making it difficult for me to focus on my academics. This single thought is greatly affecting my ability to concentrate and retain information”*.

Additionally, due to physical health issues, the individual can no longer maintain both academics and sports. Stopping sports abruptly has led to a worsening of health problems, causing more pain than before, particularly from excessive bone growth. Previously, she endures the pain during training but found it manageable with regular exercise. However, now the pain has become intolerable. Although the health problems are progressively worsening, and there is no support system available for sports. Ms. B says; *I quit sports because I couldn't combine sports and the course that I'm pursuing and the college I was studying in didn't encourage me. Also, because there is no support from home. Due to my health problems and my family's belief that sports are for boys and not girls, I decided to stop playing”*. Similarly, she also said that *“despite the support for sports in Kerala, there is a lack of opportunities for talented children to excel and move forward. Whether it's financial or otherwise, there is no support available. Moreover, being a girl herself, she finds it even more challenging to face struggles compared to a boy in the sports field”*.

Ms. B mentioned that despite my accomplishments in sports, my achievements often go unacknowledged by society. For instance, *“when I was in 8th grade, even though I*

secured the 1st position in state-level badminton, preference was given to other children during the selection process. The coach, influenced by personal biases, selected kids with lower scores. Similarly, last year, the karate coach intentionally degraded my performance, ensuring their own children gained an advantage. To overcome these challenges, I needed strong support, be it from politics or my family, along with a competent coach and their assistance. Without such backing, it became difficult for me to continue pursuing sports. The lack of a solid support system made it challenging to sustain my involvement in the sports field. Ultimately, these circumstances led to my decision to discontinue my sports journey". And also, she says that; "Talented individuals in sports are often overlooked, leaving only a privileged few selected. Frequently, deserving individuals are left behind due to biased favouritism from coaches and the intense competition they face. This exclusion denies them the rightful opportunities they deserve, hindering their progress and potential in the field. It is disheartening to witness the potential of deserving athletes being undermined by such unfair practices".

Despite the challenges she faced, she mentioned that she still maintains a positive relationship with her coaches, teachers, and fellow players. She revealed that they are urging her to return to sports. However, she finds it difficult to take a break from the course she wishes to pursue due to its importance, and her physical weakness resulting from health issues makes it challenging for her to resume sports.

Ms. B holds a strong aspiration to re-enter the world of sports and strive for an impressive position. However, she remains uncertain about the level of success she will be able to achieve upon her return. Despite her eagerness and determination, she recognizes the unpredictable nature of sports and understands that the outcome of her endeavours cannot be guaranteed.

Participants 3 – AN

Ms. AN, a 25-year-old young sports woman, had a passion for sports from a very young age, particularly in basketball. She started engaging in sports when she was just 10 years old, even though her semi-urban community and joint family emphasized academic pursuits over sports. Ms. AN says about her motivation to join sports; *my motivation to join sports came from the thrill of the game, the escape from daily life stress, and the inspiration she drew from watching professional athletes excel on*

television." Now she is doing Bachelor's degree in Commerce, currently working as an accountant in a private firm.

During her school and college days, Ms. AN excelled in basketball, winning several accolades and championships. Despite the lack of proper sports facilities in her neighbourhood, she practiced on the streets and school playgrounds, with her coach's dedicated support.

Ms. AN says about her motivating factor to join in sports; *"I always loved the thrill of sports, especially basketball. It made me feel alive and helped me escape the stress of daily life. Additionally, watching professional athletes excel on television inspired me to dream big."*

Anjali's father was her biggest supporter in her sports journey. He encouraged her to pursue her passion despite societal pressure and always reminded her to stay determined and never give up on her dreams. Ms. AN says; *"My father was my biggest support. He understood my passion for sports and encouraged me to pursue it despite societal pressure. He always reminded me to stay determined and never give up on my dreams."*

The benefits Ms. AN gained from participating in sports were immense. *she says; "Sports taught me valuable life skills like discipline, teamwork, and perseverance. It boosted my confidence and helped me manage stress effectively. Moreover, participating in sports enhanced my physical fitness and overall well-being."*

She says that about her achievements; *"During my school and college days, I participated in numerous basketball tournaments and secured several accolades. I was part of the school's basketball team that won the district championship, and I also represented my college in various inter-college competitions."*

Ms. AN says about the academic and sports; *"Balancing academics and sports was indeed challenging. I had to manage my time efficiently, dedicating equal attention to studies and practice. I ensured that my academic performance did not suffer, and I maintained a good balance throughout."*

However, as Ms. AN grew older, financial issues arose, and her family couldn't afford to support her sports expenses, including training and travel costs. Additionally, societal expectations of getting married started pressurizing her to prioritize her family's expectations over her passion for sports. One significant incident that influenced her

decision to drop out was when her father fell seriously ill, and the family faced financial difficulties due to medical expenses.

She says; *"There were multiple reasons that influenced my decision to stop participating in sports. Firstly, financial issues arose as my family couldn't afford to support my sports expenses, including training and travel costs. Secondly, the societal expectation of getting married started pressurizing me to prioritize my family's expectations over my passion for sports."*

Before sports, she felt confined and lacked self-confidence. Engaging in sports made she feel liberated and brought out the best in her. However, after dropping out, she felt a void in her life and struggled to find a replacement for the passion she once had. Ms. AN didn't face negative interactions within the sports environment, but some relatives and neighbours criticized her involvement in sports, deeming it unsuitable for a woman. Moreover, the lack of proper sports infrastructure and facilities in her semi-urban community, as well as the challenge of balancing academics and sports, made it difficult for her to continue.

External factors, such as family and societal expectations, significantly influenced her decision to drop out of sports. The financial burden and the pressure to focus on marriage and family duties overwhelmed her, leading her to give up her passion for sports. Ms. AN says about the incident that influenced her decision to drop out from the sports field; *"One significant incident was when my father fell seriously ill, and our financial situation worsened. It became difficult for me to focus on sports amidst family responsibilities and the burden of medical expenses."*

Life without sports became monotonous for Ms. AN, and she often missed the excitement and joy that sports had brought to her life. She admitted to wanting to turn back to the sports field if financial constraints were not an issue, and her family was more supportive of her passion.

The impact of dropping out of sports had noticeable changes in Ms. AN's physical health and fitness. Her lack of regular workouts and practices affected her stamina and overall health. She also felt that without sports, she sometimes felt overwhelmed and less mentally resilient, as sports used to provide an outlet for stress. Furthermore, Ms. AN experienced changes in her social interactions and relationships after leaving

sports. She lost touch with some of her teammates, and the camaraderie they shared on the court was no longer present in her life.

Dropping out of sports took its toll on her physical health as well. The lack of regular workouts and practices affected her stamina and overall well-being. She confessed, *"Yes, I noticed a decline in my physical fitness after dropping out of sports. The lack of regular workouts and practices affected my stamina and overall health."*

Furthermore, Ms. AN acknowledged that sports had been her outlet for stress, and without it, she sometimes felt overwhelmed and less mentally resilient. *"Yes, to some extent. Sports provided an outlet for stress, and without it, I sometimes feel overwhelmed."*

Moreover, Ms. AN's social interactions underwent a transformation. The camaraderie and bonding she shared with her teammates were an integral part of her sports journey, and losing touch with some of them left her feeling disconnected. She says that; *"Yes, my social circle changed after leaving sports. I lost touch with some of my teammates, and the camaraderie we shared on the court was no longer present in my life."*

As our conversation neared its end, Ms. AN left us with a poignant thought: *"Life is a journey of choices, and sometimes, we must make tough decisions based on the circumstances we face. I'll forever cherish my time in sports, and if I could turn back time, I would rekindle that passion without hesitation."*

Looking back, Ms. AN felt a sense of regret about giving up something she loved so dearly, but she understood the practicality of the decision considering the circumstances. While she now has a stable job and a family, she still feels unfulfilled when thinking about her lost passion for sports and wonders what could have been if circumstances were different.

Participants 4 – N

Ms. N is 24 years old young sports women and now she completed her graduation in BA. English Literature from Deva Matha College at kuravilangad in Kottayam and started to migrate to Germany. Her native place in Kazhakuttam, Thiruvananthapuram. Ms. N's venture into the world of sports commenced at the tender age of 10, ignited by an unwavering passion that burned brightly within her. Growing up in a semi-urban community, Ms. N's attraction to sports was magnetic, drawing her in like a moth to a

flame. Among the various sports that held her captivation, boxing, basketball, and netball emerged as her favourites. Her recollections are steeped in nostalgia as she fondly recalls, *"When I wear sports dress, I feel myself confident. Sports are my passion. At the age of 10, I began my journey in sports, driven by my father's unwavering encouragement. When I am on the court, wearing my shoes, I feel truly complete."* Ms. N is also a national level participant and she got prize in several times.

Central to Ms. N's sports journey was her father, an unswerving pillar of support and strength. He not only served as her anchor but extended his unwavering encouragement to her siblings as well. Ms. N warmly reflects, *"My father was my back support in sports. Not only mine, but also my brothers and sisters' backbone are our father. He always supported, encouraged, and provided facilities."* This highlights the crucial role her father played in nurturing the familial unity that sports brought into their lives.

As the years unfolded, Ms. N's unwavering dedication and steely determination translated into impressive accomplishments within the realm of sports. Her persistent efforts and fervour led to a tapestry of achievements, which she now regards with immense pride. But beneath this veneer of triumphs lay a stark reality that would ultimately shape the course of her sports odyssey.

The limited opportunities and the prevailing belief that sports held an uncertain future in her home state of Kerala cast a long shadow. Ms. N's own experiences stood as a living testament to the far-reaching impact of this conviction. She admits, *"Yes, I think that the belief that there is no future in sports is the reason why people stay away from the sport. I take myself as an example. Even though I worked hard and my family supported me in sports, I left the sports field because of my future. In sports field, government jobs are limited. Thats why, I left from the sports field."*

With a tinge of regret, Ms. N recounts her personal journey as a glaring embodiment of this phenomenon. Despite her achievements as an international, national, and inter-university player, the harsh truth of limited opportunities for athletes in Kerala prevailed. *"In Kerala, there are so many sports players who achieved pride for the nation but are jobless. We give our full heart to sports, we work hard, our family supports us, we overcome financial crises to win, but in the end, we fail in our future."*

When Ms. N turned 21, she faced a critical decision – whether to leave competitive sports. This choice had consequences for her physical health and mental resilience. The

absence of regular training and workouts took a toll on her stamina and overall health. She openly admits, *"Yes, I noticed a decline in my physical fitness after dropping out of sports. The lack of regular workouts and practices affected my stamina and overall health."*

Besides the physical aspect, saying farewell to her beloved sport also took an emotional toll. The bond with her teammates and the thrill of competition faded away, leaving behind memories. Ms. N reveals, *"After dropout, the main problem is mental stress, psychological issues, and depression. Yes, to some extent. Sports provided an outlet for stress, and without it, I sometimes feel overwhelmed."* Her acknowledgment underscores the mental challenges that accompanied her transition.

In pursuit of a new path, Ms. N chose to move abroad and study the German language with the intention of eventually migrating to Germany. Yet, her sports experiences remained an integral part of her. She reflects, *"Life is full of choices, and tough times force us to make decisions. I will always treasure the moments I had in sports. If I could, I would dive back into that passion without any hesitation."* This sentiment truly captures Ms. N's journey – marked by unwavering dedication, necessary sacrifices, and the realization that the choices we make profoundly shape our paths.

Participants 5 – K

Ms. K is a remarkable young woman with a fervent passion for sports, particularly handball. Hailing from a rural village, she has shown unwavering determination in pursuing her dreams despite facing numerous challenges along the way. At the age of 23, Ms. K has already experienced a journey marked by dedication, achievements, sacrifices, and a struggle to balance her aspirations with her family's financial constraints.

Ms. K says; *From a young age, I found a deep passion for sports, especially handball. Growing up in a rural village, I was fortunate to have my family's encouragement to join local handball practices and competitions. It was during those childhood years that my love for the game truly ignited. I cherished the thrill of competition and the camaraderie it brought among teammates.*

From an early age, Ms. K exhibited a keen interest in sports, with handball capturing her heart. Encouraged by her family, she joined local handball practices and

competitions during her childhood. Her natural talent and hard work paved the way for her to excel, earning her a spot at the state and national levels.

Ms. K says; *As I continued my education, I was determined to excel in both academics and sports. Despite facing financial obstacles, I pushed myself to participate in state and national-level competitions. These experiences not only honed my skills but also taught me valuable life lessons about discipline, hard work, and perseverance. The support from my family played a crucial role in keeping my dreams alive.*

As Ms. K reached higher levels of competition, she continued her education and successfully completed her graduation in Malayalam. However, her pursuit of excellence in sports often faced hurdles due to her family's financial limitations. Despite these obstacles, she showcased remarkable dedication, participating in numerous state and national-level competitions and consistently securing prizes.

Ms. K says; *The journey was never easy. The financial strains my family faced intensified during my college years. The costs associated with transportation, registration fees, and jerseys for competitions added pressure. Despite my family's encouragement, I began to feel the weight of these constraints. The thought of leaving behind my passion was heart-wrenching, and it led to many moments of contemplation.*

During her college years, Ms. K's family's financial struggles became more pronounced. The expenses associated with transportation, registration fees, and jerseys for sports competitions presented a significant challenge. Despite her family's best intentions, the strain caused some opposition to her sports participation. The financial constraints led to moments of contemplation, and eventually, she reluctantly made the heart-wrenching decision to step away from her beloved sport.

Ms. K says; *The decision to leave sports was one of the toughest moments of my life. It was emotionally draining because it meant giving up on something that had been an integral part of my identity. The realization that I had to prioritize financial stability for my family's sake was a bitter pill to swallow. I had to learn to navigate life without the adrenaline rush and sense of accomplishment that sports provided.*

After leaving the world of sports, Ms. K's life took a noticeable turn. She began working at a local supermarket, a job that offered stability and income, yet lacked the same physical and emotional fulfilment she had experienced on the sports field. Within just

a few months, the absence of her active lifestyle became apparent, as she noticed weight gain and a lack of interest in daily activities that once brought her joy.

Ms. K says; *Joining the workforce was a necessary step to provide for my family. While the stability and income were reassuring, I felt a void that I couldn't ignore. The physical inactivity and lack of the excitement I experienced during sports began to take a toll on me. I noticed weight gain and a decreased interest in daily activities that once brought me joy, making me realize how deeply sports had been ingrained in my life.*

Completing her graduation in Malayalam, Ms. K embarked on a new chapter of her life in the working world. The supermarket job provided her family with a much-needed financial boost and stability, but the void left by her departure from sports lingered. Despite adapting to her new routine, Ms. K longed for the adrenaline, camaraderie, and sense of purpose that sports had provided her.

Ms. K says; *The internal struggle was profound. I battled feelings of regret, wondering if I had made the right choice. While the stability my family gained was essential, the emotional and psychological impact of leaving behind something so integral to my identity was substantial. It made me understand the delicate balance between dreams and practicality and the profound effects that societal and family pressures can have on one's journey.*

Ms. K's story underscores the challenges faced by young individuals pursuing their passions in the face of financial constraints. Her case serves as an important narrative for research purposes, highlighting the psychological, emotional, and physical impact of sacrificing one's dreams due to external pressures. Understanding Ms. K's journey can shed light on the significance of access to sports and the potential long-term effects of sidelining passions in the pursuit of financial stability.

Ms. K believe his story is a window into the lives of many young individuals who face similar challenges. Research can illuminate the psychological, emotional, and physical toll that sacrificing passions due to external pressures can have over time. It's a reminder of the importance of fostering an environment where individuals can pursue their dreams without sacrificing their well-being or familial responsibilities.

Ms. K says; *My journey reflects the universal struggle to balance aspirations and responsibilities. It's a reminder that dreams don't always follow a straight path and that*

sacrifices are often made for the greater good. I hope my story inspires others to find ways to hold onto their passions, even amid challenges. It's a tribute to the intricate dance between personal ambitions, family dynamics, and societal influences that shape the trajectories of young individuals.

In conclusion, Ms. K's case history narrates a journey marked by determination, family support, financial struggles, sacrifices, and the undeniable impact of her decisions on her physical and emotional well-being. Her story resonates with anyone who has navigated the intricate balance between dreams and practicality, and it stands as a testament to the complex interplay of passion, family dynamics, and societal constraints in shaping the trajectories of young individuals.

CHAPTER V: THEMATIC ANALYSIS

5.1. INTRODUCTION

The research was focused on the reasons for leaving from the sports and challenges experienced by young women sportspersons after quitting from the sports field. The data was analysed based on specific research questions which included the motivating factors that influence individuals to participate in sports, the reasons that lead individuals to discontinue from sports, challenges faced by young women after dropping out of sports and the potential solutions and recommendations for reducing the sports dropouts. The analysis part consist of the profile of participants and all the participants were young women sportspersons of age between 18 to 26. There were 5 participants who had shared their life experiences and therefore the researcher was able to analysis their challenges and motivating factors for leaving from the sports field by finding out the different themes in their life history and also depicting the sub themes associated with the different main themes.

5.2. PROFILE OF THE PARTICIPANTS

Table 1- Profile of the participants

Particulars	Ms. ABC	Ms. B	Ms. AN	Ms. N	Ms. K
Age	23	22	25	24	23
Religion	Christian	Christian	Hindu	Christian	Hindu
Education Qualification/Job	Post graduation	Post graduation	Bachelor's degree in Commerce, currently working as an accountant in a private firm.	BA. English literature.	BA. Malayalam
Type of family	Nuclear family	Nuclear family	Joint Family	Nuclear family	Nuclear family
Type of community	Rural	Rural	Semi-urban	Semi- urban	Rural

Year of start doing sports	6 years old	10 years old	10 years old	10 years old	11 years old
----------------------------	-------------	--------------	--------------	--------------	--------------

5.3. THEMATIC ANALYSIS

5.3.1 RESEARCH QUESTION 1

- ❖ What are the Motivating factors that influence individuals to participate in sports?

Theme - Motivating Factors to Participate in Sports.

Sub theme-1 - Passion and Love for the Sport

Ms. AN says about her motivation to join sports; *“my motivation to join sports came from the thrill of the game, the escape from daily life stress, and the inspiration she drew from watching professional athletes excel on television.”*

Ms. N says that; *"When I wear sports dress, I feel myself confident. Sports are my passion. At the age of 10, I began my journey in sports, driven by my father's unwavering encouragement. When I am on the court, wearing my shoes, I feel truly complete."*

Ms. K says; *From a young age, I found a deep passion for sports, especially handball. Growing up in a rural village, I was fortunate to have my family's encouragement to join local handball practices and competitions. It was during those childhood years that my love for the game truly ignited. I cherished the thrill of competition and the camaraderie it brought among teammates.*

Ms. AN's motivation to join sports is driven by her passion and love for the game. She finds great thrill and excitement in sports, which serves as an escape from the stresses of daily life. Additionally, watching professional athletes excel on television inspires her and sets higher aspirations for her own athletic journey. This statement emphasizes the significance of passion and emotional connections in shaping individuals' desire to participate in sports and highlights their positive impact on motivation and well-being.

Sub theme-2 – Support from Family and Coaches

Ms. B says; *"My family members had no interest in my involvement in sports. I faced discouragement and had to overcome obstacles to continue with sports."*

Ms. B says; *"Students and teachers were very supportive while studying for the degree. If there was any assignment given in the class, the children would call us and help us to complete it. When the exams came, when I asked the teachers about my doubts, the teachers would tell me everything that I had doubts about, no matter how busy they were. When the exam was about to take place, the children would give notes and other things to study. I did not get good support from home. Sir who teaches physical education, my coach and some friends supported me in doing sports".*

Ms. AN says; *"My father was my biggest support. He understood my passion for sports and encouraged me to pursue it despite societal pressure. He always reminded me to stay determined and never give up on my dreams."*

MS. ABC says; *"My coach and family played a crucial role in providing me with strong support. Despite initial opposition from my family, they eventually embraced my decision and supported me wholeheartedly during my graduation. The support from my family was evident as they expressed their happiness through Prize. Attending competitions allowed me to continually meet new individuals, forming lasting friendships. I also developed positive relationships with my fellow players and coaches".*

Ms. N reflects, *"My father was my back support in sports. Not only mine, but also my brothers and sisters' backbone are our father. He always supported, encouraged, and provided facilities."*

Ms. K says; *As I continued my education, I was determined to excel in both academics and sports. Despite facing financial obstacles, I pushed myself to participate in state and national-level competitions. These experiences not only honed my skills but also taught me valuable life lessons about discipline, hard work, and perseverance. The support from my family played a crucial role in keeping my dreams alive.*

The sub theme of "Support from Family and Coaches" is evident in the experiences shared by Ms. B, Ms. AN, and MS. ABC. Ms. B faced challenges and lack of interest from her family regarding her involvement in sports, but she found support from her physical education teacher, coach, and some friends, who stood by her side during her sports journey. On the other hand, while pursuing her degree, she received immense support from fellow students and teachers, who helped her with assignments and clarified her doubts. In contrast, Ms. AN's father played a crucial role as her biggest support, understanding her passion for sports and encouraging her to persevere despite societal pressure. For MS. ABC, the journey started with initial opposition from her family, but eventually, they embraced her decision and provided strong support during her graduation, expressing their happiness through prizes. The role of coaches was also significant in her development. These underscore the vital impact of supportive family members and coaches in empowering individuals to pursue their passions, overcome obstacles, and achieve personal growth.

5.3.2 RESEARCH QUESTION 2

- ❖ What are the reasons that lead individuals to discontinue their participation in sports?

Theme - Reasons for Discontinuation of Sports Participation

Sub theme-1 - Financial Constraints

Ms. AN says about the incident that influenced her decision to drop out from the sports field; *"One significant incident was when my father fell seriously ill, and our financial situation worsened. It became difficult for me to focus on sports amidst family responsibilities and the burden of medical expenses."*

Ms. AN says; *"There were multiple reasons that influenced my decision to stop participating in sports. Firstly, financial issues arose as my family couldn't afford to support my sports expenses, including training and travel costs. Secondly, the societal expectation of getting married started pressurizing me to prioritize my family's expectations over my passion for sports."*

Ms. ABC says that; *"Throughout my participation in various competitions, my family has always supported me by contributing funds for team registration fees,*

individual registration fees, and traveling expenses. It has consistently been a financial challenge for my family to gather the necessary funds for these events. Given our middle-class background, I couldn't afford to allocate significant amounts to sports expenses.”

Ms. K says; The journey was never easy. The financial strains my family faced intensified during my college years. The costs associated with transportation, registration fees, and jerseys for competitions added pressure. Despite my family's encouragement, I began to feel the weight of these constraints. The thought of leaving behind my passion was heart-wrenching, and it led to many moments of contemplation.

Ms. K says; The decision to leave sports was one of the toughest moments of my life. It was emotionally draining because it meant giving up on something that had been an integral part of my identity. The realization that I had to prioritize financial stability for my family's sake was a bitter pill to swallow. I had to learn to navigate life without the adrenaline rush and sense of accomplishment that sports provided.

The sub theme "Financial Constraints" emerges as a significant factor impacting the decisions and experiences of Ms. AN and Ms. ABC in their sports pursuits.

Ms. AN share a poignant incident where her father's serious illness resulted in a worsened financial situation for her family. This unfortunate circumstance created immense responsibilities and increased financial burdens, making it challenging for her to continue focusing on sports. The need to prioritize family obligations and contribute to medical expenses became a hindrance to her sports aspirations.

Ms. AN reveals multiple reasons that influenced her decision to stop participating in sports. The foremost challenge was financial in nature, as her family could not afford to support the expenses associated with her sports involvement, including training and travel costs. The strain of societal expectations further exacerbated the situation, with pressure to prioritize marriage over her passion for sports.

On the other hand, Ms. ABC highlights the consistent support she received from her family in her sports endeavours. Despite this support, the financial challenges they faced were evident, as they struggled to gather the necessary funds for team registration

fees, individual registration fees, and traveling expenses. Coming from a middle-class background, allocating significant amounts of money to sports expenses posed a constraint for her.

Analysing these accounts, it is evident that financial constraints have played a significant role in shaping the decisions and experiences of these individuals in the sports field. For Ms. AN, the financial difficulties resulting from her father's illness disrupted her sports journey, whereas societal expectations added further pressure. In Ms. ABC's case, despite her family's consistent support, the financial limitations of their middle-class background restricted her opportunities and involvement in sports to some extent.

Overall, the sub theme "Financial Constraints" sheds light on the real-life challenges that aspiring athletes often face, particularly those coming from economically constrained backgrounds. The lack of financial support can hinder their progress and limit their ability to pursue their passion for sports to the fullest extent. It also emphasizes the need for more accessible and inclusive sports programs that can cater to individuals facing financial obstacles, ensuring that talent and potential are not stifled due to financial limitations.

Sub theme-2 - Societal Expectations

Ms. B says that; "my parents and my relatives had no interest of me doing sports. They said to me, sports are for boys and not for girls. If u want to do any extracurricular activities, u join for a dance class or other."

Ms. B says; I quit sports because I couldn't combine sports and the course that I 'am pursuing and the college I was studying in didn't encourage me. Also, because there is no support from home. Due to my health problems and my family's belief that sports are for boys and not girls, I decided to stop playing".

Ms. AN says; "There were multiple reasons that influenced my decision to stop participating in sports. Firstly, financial issues arose as my family couldn't afford to support my sports expenses, including training and travel costs. Secondly, the societal expectation of getting married started pressurizing me to prioritize my family's expectations over my passion for sports."

The statement from Ms. B and Ms. AN emphasizes on the societal expectations that significantly impacted their decisions to quit sports. Ms. B's experience reflects the gender bias prevailing in society, where sports are often considered a domain primarily for boys and not encouraged for girls. This outlook not only affected her family's support but also influenced her own decision due to health problems and societal pressure. On the other hand, Ms. AN faced financial constraint, which hindered her participation in sports. Additionally, societal expectations surrounding marriage further exacerbated her situation, as she felt compelled to prioritize her family's wishes over her passion for sports. These narratives demonstrate the adverse effects of societal expectations on individuals' choices and opportunities, discouraging them from pursuing their interests and potential. It highlights the urgent need for challenging and reshaping such norms to create a more inclusive and supportive environment, where individuals can freely pursue their passions and talents, irrespective of gender or financial backgrounds.

Sub theme-3 - Health Issues

Ms. B says that; "since my childhood I faced Dust allergy, breathing difficulty, after some years, I studied in 7th standard I had Thyroid, Double vision, Sensitive body texture and Extra born growth in the Rib of my body, so these health problems sometimes affected during my sporting career."

Ms. B says; I quit sports because I couldn't combine sports and the course that I 'am pursuing and the college I was studying in didn't encourage me. Also, because there is no support from home. Due to my health problems and my family's belief that sports are for boys and not girls, I decided to stop playing".

Ms. N admits; "Yes, I noticed a decline in my physical fitness after dropping out of sports. The lack of regular workouts and practices affected my stamina and overall health."

Ms. K says; Joining the workforce was a necessary step to provide for my family. While the stability and income were reassuring, I felt a void that I couldn't ignore. The physical inactivity and lack of the excitement I experienced during sports began to take a toll on me. I noticed weight gain and a decreased interest in daily activities that once brought me joy, making me realize how deeply sports had been ingrained in my life.

Ms. B highlights the significant impact of health issues on her decision to quit sports. From a young age, she faced various health challenges such as dust allergy, breathing difficulty, thyroid issues, double vision, sensitive body texture, and an extra bone growth in her rib. These health problems understandably had an adverse effect on her sporting career, making it more challenging to participate fully and perform at her best. Additionally, the combination of pursuing her course and the lack of encouragement from her college contributed to her decision to quit sports. Moreover, the absence of support from her family, coupled with the societal belief that sports were not suitable for girls, further reinforced her decision to stop playing. This narrative highlights the importance of recognizing and addressing health issues that can hinder individuals from pursuing their passions and showcases the need for a more supportive and understanding environment that accommodates and fosters the participation of individuals with health challenges in sports.

Sub theme-4 - Academic Pressure

Ms. ABC says; During my postgraduate studies, balancing academics and sports together was quite challenging. Often, I couldn't attend classes, which resulted in pending work and added pressure. The main reason for quitting sports was the academic pressure, financial constraints, and the need for a job."

Ms. B says; I quit sports because I couldn't combine sports and the course that I 'am pursuing and the college I was studying in didn't encourage me. Also, because there is no support from home. Due to my health problems and my family's belief that sports are for boys and not girls, I decided to stop playing".

The statements from Ms. ABC and Ms. B highlight the significant impact of academic pressure on their decisions to quit sports. For Ms. ABC, pursuing postgraduate studies while engaging in sports proved to be quite challenging, leading to difficulties in attending classes, pending academic work, and heightened pressure to perform well academically. The overwhelming academic demands became a major reason for her decision to prioritize her studies and quit sports. On the other hand, Ms. B also faced the challenge of balancing her sports activities with her chosen course of study. The lack of encouragement from her college and the absence of support from her family only compounded the pressure she felt. While Ms. B also had health issues and faced

societal expectations, the academic pressure was a crucial factor that influenced her decision to quit sports. These narratives underscore the demanding nature of academic pursuits and how they can sometimes clash with extracurricular activities like sports, leading individuals to make difficult choices. It emphasizes the need for educational institutions to be more accommodating and supportive of students who wish to participate in sports or other activities alongside their studies, fostering a more balanced and holistic approach to education.

Sub theme-5- less Job opportunity in sports

Ms. ABC says; Most sports quotas in job opportunities were restricted to sports like basketball, volleyball, athletics, etc. other sports events have less opportunity in sports quotas government job opportunity. Hence, the dream of pursuing a career in sports had fewer possibilities.”

Ms. N admits; "Yes, I think that the belief that there is no future in sports is the reason why people stay away from the sport. I take myself as an example. Even though I worked hard and my family supported me in sports, I left the sports field because of my future. In sports field, government jobs are limited. Thats why, I left from the sports field. "

Ms. ABC's statement highlights the pressing issue of limited job opportunities in sports, particularly for athletes participating in less mainstream sports. Traditionally, sports quotas in government job opportunities have been primarily centred around popular sports such as basketball, volleyball, and athletics, leaving athletes from other sports with fewer chances to pursue their dreams of a career in sports. This lack of diversity in sports quotas not only hinders the growth and recognition of lesser-known sports but also restrains talented athletes from showcasing their skills and contributing to the sporting community. To promote a more inclusive and equitable sports ecosystem, it is essential for authorities to consider expanding job opportunities to encompass a broader range of sports, acknowledging and valuing the dedication and talent of athletes in all disciplines. By doing so, we can foster a thriving sports culture that encourages individuals to pursue their passion for sports, regardless of the sport they excel in.

Sub theme-6- Biased selection process

Ms. B mentioned that despite my accomplishments in sports, my achievements often go unacknowledged by society. For instance, *“when I was in 8th grade, even though I secured the 1st position in state-level badminton, preference was given to other children during the selection process. The coach, influenced by personal biases, selected kids with lower scores. Similarly, last year, the karate coach intentionally degraded my performance, ensuring their own children gained an advantage. To overcome these challenges, I needed strong support, be it from politics or my family, along with a competent coach and their assistance. Without such backing, it became difficult for me to continue pursuing sports. The lack of a solid support system made it challenging to sustain my involvement in the sports field. Ultimately, these circumstances led to my decision to discontinue my sports journey”*.

Ms. B says that; *“Talented individuals in sports are often overlooked, leaving only a privileged few selected. Frequently, deserving individuals are left behind due to biased favouritism from coaches and the intense competition they face. This exclusion denies them the rightful opportunities they deserve, hindering their progress and potential in the field. It is disheartening to witness the potential of deserving athletes being undermined by such unfair practices”*.

Ms. B highlights the concerning problem of biased selection processes in sports, which often result in the neglect of deserving and talented individuals. Her personal experiences serve as a prime example of the challenges faced by numerous athletes who excel in their respective sports but are unfairly overlooked during selections. The instances of her accomplishments in badminton and karate illustrate how coaches' personal biases can impact their decisions, favouring individuals with lower scores or even displaying favouritism towards their own children. Consequently, deserving athletes are unjustly deprived of the opportunities they rightfully deserve, impeding their progress and potential in the field. This unfair exclusion not only affects individual athletes but also weakens the overall sporting ecosystem by depriving it of diverse and gifted participants. To tackle this issue, it is imperative to establish transparent and merit-based selection procedures, where athletes are assessed solely on their performance and dedication, without any personal biases coming into play. By doing

so, we can foster a more inclusive and supportive environment for all athletes, motivating them to pursue their sports journey and unlock their full potential.

5.3.3 RESEARCH QUESTION 3

- ❖ What are the specific challenges faced by young women after dropping out of sports?

Theme - Challenges Faced by Young Women After Dropping Out of Sports

Sub theme-1 - Physical Health and Fitness Decline

Ms. ABC says; *“To be honest, when I decided to stop playing sports and concentrate on my studies, I didn’t think about physical problems.” About a month after I stopped, my body started to lose fitness, and my stomach started to gain weight, and my legs and arms started to gain weight. After doing all the practice, when the body became healthy, suddenly there were no illnesses. But when I stopped playing sports, I suddenly started getting sick.”*

Ms. B says that; *“After stopping sports, my health issues worsened. The breathing problem that I had before, the thyroid problem, when I stopped doing sports, I became physically weak.”*

Ms. AN says; *“Yes, I noticed a decline in my physical fitness after dropping out of sports. The lack of regular workouts and practices affected my stamina and overall health.”*

The statements from Ms. ABC, Ms. B, and Ms. AN highlight a significant subtheme concerning the decline in physical health and fitness after ceasing involvement in sports. Their statements indicate a common trend where discontinuing sports activities negatively impacted their well-being. Ms. ABC expressed how, shortly after she stopped playing sports and focused on her studies, her body started losing fitness, and she experienced weight gain in her stomach, legs, and arms. Similarly, Ms. B mentioned that her health issues, such as breathing problems and thyroid concerns, worsened when she stopped participating in sports, leading to physical weakness. Ms. AN also noticed a decline in her physical fitness and stamina after dropping out of sports. These underscore the importance of sports in maintaining overall health and well-being, as regular physical activity contributes to improved fitness levels, reduced illness, and enhanced stamina. The statements suggest that staying active and engaged in sports

plays a crucial role in supporting physical health, and discontinuing sports activities can have adverse effects on one's well-being. Therefore, it is crucial for individuals to consider the potential consequences on their physical health when deciding to discontinue sports and find ways to incorporate regular exercise into their lives to mitigate the decline in fitness and related health issues.

Sub theme-2 – Academic performance and focus

Ms. AN says; *"Yes, to some extent. Sports provided an outlet for stress, and without it, I sometimes feel overwhelmed."*

Ms. B says; *"The abrupt discontinuation of my long-term involvement in sports has had a significant impact on my mindset, making it difficult for me to focus on my academics. This single thought is greatly affecting my ability to concentrate and retain information".*

Ms. B says that; *"After stopping sports, my health issues worsened. The breathing problem that I had before, the thyroid problem, when I stopped doing sports, I became physically weak. Earlier, I used to be able to control my health issues by exercising. But now that is not possible. Likewise, mentally I am quite disturbed. There is nothing to concentrate on studies. I was able to juggle my academics and sports while practicing sports. But now it is not possible".*

Ms. ABC says; *"when we are traveling now, when we see the ground, when we see pillar practice there, we feel sad inside. Similarly, we feel like we have no interest in anything. A fresh mind that was there during the practice time was not there after the dropout".*

The statements from Ms. AN, Ms. B, and Ms. ABC highlight a significant subtheme concerning the impact of stopping sports on academic performance and focus. Ms. AN acknowledges that sports served as a stress outlet, and without it, she sometimes feels overwhelmed, implying that sports played a role in maintaining her mental well-being and focus. Ms. B's account emphasizes the substantial effect of abruptly discontinuing sports on her mindset, making it challenging for her to concentrate on academics and retain information. She used to manage her health issues and maintain mental clarity through exercise during her sports involvement, but without sports, she feels physically weaker and mentally disturbed, struggling to concentrate on studies. Similarly, Ms.

ABC expresses a sense of sadness and lack of interest in anything after dropping out of sports, indicating that the mental clarity and enthusiasm she had during her practice sessions are no longer present. These collectively indicate that sports not only served as a stress relief but also positively influenced academic focus and mental well-being. Discontinuing sports has led to challenges in maintaining academic performance and focus, underlining the significance of balancing sports and academics to support overall well-being and success in both aspects of life.

Sub theme-3 - Changes in Social Interactions

Ms. AN says; *"Yes, my social circle changed after leaving sports. I lost touch with some of my teammates, and the camaraderie we shared on the court was no longer present in my life."*

Ms. ABC says that; *"When participating in sports, during various competitions, we get to know a lot of people and develop good relationships with them. There is a bunch of individuals whom we come across and establish a solid connection with while competing in different matches. These relationships and connections used to be maintained even after the competition, just like before. However, once the drop-out happens, maintaining that same level of connection becomes challenging. The dropout affects not only the relationship but also the academic pressure, making it difficult to sustain the same level of interaction and commitment."*

The statements from Ms. AN and Ms. ABC reveal a change in social interactions after leaving sports. Ms. AN acknowledges that her social circle underwent changes as she lost touch with some of her teammates and co-players, leading to a shift in her social connections and interactions. On the other hand, Ms. ABC highlights how participating in sports facilitated the development of strong relationships with various individuals during competitions. These connections were typically maintained even after the events. However, once she dropped out of sports, sustaining the same level of connection became challenging, along with increased academic pressure. This dropout not only affected her relationships but also made it difficult to maintain the same level of interaction and commitment with others. These statements demonstrate that sports can serve as a platform for forming meaningful social connections, and leaving sports can lead to changes in social circles and a potential strain on relationships. It

underscores the importance of sports not just as a physical activity but also as a means of fostering social bonds and support networks, which might be affected when one disengages from sports activities.

Table 2 -Themes and subthemes

SL NO.	Specific objectives	Themes	Sub themes
1	What are the Motivating factors that influence individuals to participate in sports?	Motivating Factors to Participate in Sports.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passion and Love for the Sport • Support from Family and Coaches
2	What are the reasons that lead individuals to discontinue their participation in sports?	Reasons for Discontinuation of Sports Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial Constraints • Societal Expectations • Health Issues • Academic Pressure • Less job opportunity in sports • Biased selection process

3	What are the specific challenges faced by young women after dropping out of sports?	Challenges Faced by Young Women After Dropping Out of Sports	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Physical Health and Fitness Decline• Academic performance and focus• Changes in Social Interactions
----------	---	--	---

**CHAPTER VI: FINDINGS, SUGGESTIONS
AND CONCLUSION**

6.1. INTRODUCTION

The research which was focused on the reasons and challenges experienced by young women who have dropout from sports had been conducted and the data collected from Five participants. This chapter deals with major findings related to the collected data which had been analysed thematically. The chapter also put forward the suggestions to improve participation of women in sports after Certain age.

6.2. FINDINGS

Research question 1- What are the Motivating factors that influence individuals to participate in sports?

- The research reveals that individuals' motivation to engage in sports often stems from their passion for the activity and the sense of excitement it brings. This passion not only provides an escape from daily stresses but also gets fuelled by observing accomplished athletes.
- Furthermore, the study highlights the subtheme of "Support from Family and Coaches," it is evident that a supportive environment, encompassing family members, coaches, and peers, significantly influences an individual's sports journey.
- While some participants faced initial opposition from their families, eventually, they received encouragement and backing, leading to personal growth and achievement.
- The role of coaches is also emphasized in guiding and facilitating the participants' development in their sports pursuits.
- Overall, these findings underscore the importance of emotional connections, familial support, and coaching guidance in shaping individuals' motivation and success in sports.

Research question 2- what are the reasons that lead individuals to discontinue their participation in sports?

- **Financial Constraints and Societal Expectations Impact Participation:** Financial constraints emerge as a significant factor that affects individuals' ability to pursue their passion for sports. These constraints range from the

inability to afford training and travel expenses to societal pressures that prioritize other obligations, such as marriage. The lack of financial support and societal expectations can lead to the discontinuation of sports involvement.

- **Gender Bias and Societal Norms:** Societal expectations play a crucial role in shaping decisions related to sports participation. Gender bias is evident, as sports are often perceived as a domain primarily for boys, discouraging girls from pursuing sports. Societal norms surrounding marriage and traditional gender roles can hinder women's involvement in sports, as they feel compelled to prioritize familial and cultural expectations over their athletic pursuits.
- **Health Challenges as Barriers:** Health issues pose significant challenges to individuals' engagement in sports. Physical ailments, allergies, vision problems, and other health-related concerns can limit one's ability to perform at their best and contribute to the decision to quit sports. The lack of understanding and support from educational institutions, families, and society can exacerbate the impact of health challenges on sports involvement.
- **Academic Pressure and Balancing Priorities:** Academic pressures and the demands of pursuing higher education can clash with sports participation. The need to excel academically often leads individuals to prioritize their studies over sports, resulting in the difficult decision to quit sports activities. Educational institutions need to adopt more flexible approaches that allow students to engage in both academics and extracurricular pursuits like sports.
- **Limited Job Opportunities in Non-Mainstream Sports:** The job market for athletes is often skewed towards mainstream sports, leaving those in lesser-known sports with limited opportunities. Government job quotas favor popular sports, creating inequality in career prospects for athletes from different disciplines. A more inclusive approach to job opportunities in sports is needed to recognize and value athletes across various sports.
- **Biased Selection Processes:** Biased selection processes in sports lead to the unfair exclusion of talented athletes. Personal biases of coaches and administrators can result in deserving athletes being overlooked in favor of less deserving candidates. Transparent and merit-based selection procedures are essential to ensure that athletes are evaluated solely on their performance and dedication, promoting fairness and inclusivity.

The findings highlight the complex interplay of financial constraints, societal norms, health challenges, academic pressures, job opportunities, and biased selection processes in shaping individuals' decisions and experiences in the realm of sports. Addressing these challenges requires a multi-faceted approach that involves creating a more inclusive and supportive environment for athletes, challenging gender biases, recognizing health concerns, and establishing fair and transparent selection procedures. By doing so, the sports landscape can become more equitable, enabling individuals from diverse backgrounds to pursue their passions and excel in their chosen sports.

Research question 3- what are the specific challenges faced by young women after dropping out of sports?

- **Physical Health and Fitness Decline:** The analysis highlight a consistent pattern of declining physical health and fitness after discontinuing sports involvement. This includes weight gain, loss of stamina, and exacerbation of existing health issues. Regular participation in sports seems to play a pivotal role in maintaining physical well-being and preventing health deterioration.
- **Academic Performance and Focus:** The statements indicate that sports had a positive impact on academic performance and focus. Engaging in sports provided stress relief and mental clarity, contributing to improved concentration and academic success. Discontinuing sports, however, led to challenges in maintaining focus, suggesting that sports can play a role in supporting mental well-being and academic achievements.
- **Social Interactions and Relationships:** Participation in sports enabled the formation of strong social connections and relationships. The analysis reveals that leaving sports can result in changes in social circles, disconnection from teammates, and difficulty sustaining previous relationships. This underscores the social aspect of sports, emphasizing its role in building meaningful connections.
- **Holistic Well-being:** The overall analysis suggests that sports have a holistic impact on an individual's well-being, encompassing physical health, mental well-being, academic performance, and social interactions. Discontinuing sports can lead to a negative ripple effect across these domains, highlighting the interconnectedness of various aspects of life.

- **Balancing Sports and Other Commitments:** The findings underscore the importance of finding a balance between sports and other commitments, such as academics. Engaging in sports seems to have contributed positively to both physical and mental aspects of the individuals' lives. Hence, considering this balance becomes crucial in maintaining overall well-being.
- **Long-term Effects:** the effects of discontinuing sports can extend beyond the immediate period of cessation. The decline in physical fitness, changes in social circles, and challenges in academic focus are not temporary but have lasting implications on well-being.

In summary, the analysis of the statements highlights the multifaceted impact of sports on an individual's life. Regular participation in sports appears to contribute significantly to physical health, mental well-being, academic performance, and social interactions. Discontinuing sports can result in adverse effects across these dimensions, indicating the importance of considering the broader implications before deciding to cease sports involvement.

6.3. SUGGESTIONS

The researcher finds suggestions from the analysis to address the issue of sports dropouts. These suggestions align with the fourth specific research question, which centres on proposing potential measures and advice for mitigating the rate of dropouts within the sports sector.

- **Promote Gender Equality and Challenge Societal Norms:** - Implement awareness campaigns and educational programs to challenge gender biases in sports and encourage equal participation opportunities for all genders.
 - Provide scholarships and incentives to girls and women to participate in sports, helping them overcome societal expectations and traditional gender roles.
- **Financial Support and Accessibility:** - Establish scholarship programs, grants, and funding initiatives to provide financial assistance for training, travel expenses, and equipment, especially for athletes from underprivileged backgrounds.

- Collaborate with corporate sponsors and community organizations to create sustainable funding opportunities for athletes pursuing non-mainstream sports.
- **Health and Well-being:** - Develop comprehensive health support systems within sports institutions, including access to medical professionals, physical therapists, and mental health counsellors.
 - Raise awareness about the importance of physical health and mental well-being within the sports community, emphasizing the long-term benefits of maintaining an active lifestyle.
- **Flexible Academic Approaches:** - Collaborate with educational institutions to implement flexible schedules and support systems that allow student-athletes to balance their academic and sports commitments effectively.
 - Encourage the integration of physical activity and sports-related coursework into academic curricula to emphasize the importance of both aspects.
- **Inclusive Job Opportunities:** - Advocate for equal job opportunities across mainstream and non-mainstream sports, ensuring that athletes from diverse disciplines have access to career prospects within the sports industry.
 - Lobby for government policies that promote diversity and inclusivity in sports-related job placements and opportunities.
- **Fair Selection Processes:** - Establish transparent and merit-based selection procedures for athletes, minimizing personal biases and ensuring that talent and dedication are the primary criteria for selection.
 - Provide training and education for coaches, administrators, and officials to recognize and address their own biases in the selection process.
- **Continued Sports Engagement:** - Develop programs and initiatives that encourage lifelong sports engagement, catering to individuals of all ages and skill levels.
 - Emphasize the long-term benefits of sports participation on physical health, mental well-being, and social interactions to motivate individuals to continue their sports journey.

- **Holistic Support Systems:** - Create comprehensive support networks that encompass physical health, mental well-being, academic assistance, and social integration for athletes.
 - Foster a sense of community within sports organizations, ensuring that athletes receive the necessary resources to thrive in all aspects of their lives.
- **Awareness and Education:** Conduct awareness campaigns, workshops, and seminars to educate athletes, families, coaches, and communities about the multifaceted benefits of sports participation and the potential challenges they might face.
- **Research and Data Collection:** Continuously gather data and conduct research to monitor the impact of various factors on sports participation and well-being, enabling evidence-based decision-making and targeted interventions.

6.4. SOCIAL WORK IMPLICATION

These social work implications encompass a range of actions to foster gender equality and inclusion in sports. Social workers can engage in advocacy efforts, collaborating with institutions to challenge gender biases and ensure equal opportunities. They can facilitate access to financial support, particularly for athletes from marginalized backgrounds, and establish comprehensive health services within sports institutions. Collaborating with educational systems, they can promote flexible academic approaches and the integration of physical activity into curricula. By advocating for inclusive job prospects and fair athlete selection processes, social workers help create diverse career paths. They can design programs promoting lifelong sports engagement, emphasizing its holistic benefits. Social workers also play a vital role in establishing support networks, raising awareness, conducting research, and promoting evidence-based interventions, enhancing the overall sports experience and addressing challenges faced by young women athletes.

6.5. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the study titled "SPORTS DROPOUTS AMONG YOUNG WOMEN: REASONS AND CHALLENGES" delved into the intricate aspects of young women's disengagement from sports within the age range of 18 to 26, focusing on participants

from Thiruvananthapuram. The general research question sought to uncover the reasons and challenges faced by these individuals who dropped out of sports. By gathering data from 5 young women sportspersons using an interview guide, the study shed light on critical aspects that impact the sports engagement of this demographic.

The research findings underscored the profound impact of various motivating factors on sports participation, encompassing personal passion, inspiration from accomplished athletes, and familial, peer, and coaching support. However, the discontinuation of sports involvement was influenced by an intricate interplay of factors. These included financial constraints and societal expectations, which hindered sustained participation. The prevalence of gender bias and its discouraging effect on young girls, coupled with health concerns that impacted performance, was also identified as significant hurdles. Moreover, the clash between academic pressures and sports commitments emerged as another compelling reason for dropping out. Furthermore, the study highlighted the allure of mainstream sports due to perceived better job prospects, while biased selection processes were found to exclude deserving talent.

The consequences of discontinuing sports were observed to have far-reaching implications. This encompassed a decline in physical health, reduced academic focus, alterations in relationships, and overall well-being. On the flip side, the research emphasized the holistic benefits of sports engagement, extending to academics, mental well-being, and social interactions. To address these complex challenges and foster a more inclusive and balanced sports environment, the study suggested a multifaceted approach. This approach encompassed measures such as challenging gender biases through awareness campaigns, offering scholarships to underrepresented genders, establishing financial support systems, providing comprehensive health services for athletes, integrating flexible academic strategies, advocating for inclusive job opportunities, ensuring equitable athlete selection procedures, and promoting lifelong sports engagement.

In conclusion, the research underscores the necessity of a comprehensive strategy to overcome the multifaceted challenges that lead to young women's dropout from sports. By promoting gender equality, accessibility, health and well-being, academic balance, job opportunities, fair selection processes, and lifelong sports engagement, it is possible to create a more inclusive and beneficial sports environment that caters to the diverse

needs and aspirations of individuals from all walks of life. This study serves as a foundational step towards building a brighter and more equitable future for sports participation and engagement.

Bibliography

1. Akansha Rehani, Arti Thakur, Women Sports in India: Constraints and Challenges A Case Study Based on Indian Women's Cricket Team,2021. Retrieved from <https://events.rdias.ac.in/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Women-Sports-in-India-Constraints-and-Challenges-paper-and-certificate.pdf>
2. Anthony A Beaton, D. C. (2011). Sport Involvement: A Conceptual and Empirical Analysis. *ScienceDirect*, 126-140.
3. Baker, J., Horton, S., Robertson-Wilson, J., & Wall, M. (2003). Nurturing Sport Expertise: Factors Influencing the Development of Elite Athlete. *Journal of sports science and medicine*, 1-9.
4. Banerjee, S. (2009). National Policy for Women (with schemes and guidelines). *New Delhi: Arise Publishers & Distributors*.
5. Bertil, P. (1997). Swedish Sportsman. New York: *New York times*.
6. Bhargava, Deepti. Barriers to Women Participation in Sports and Physical Activity in Southern Rajasthan. *Journal of Commerce and Trade October 2017*; 12: 2; Pp. 89–97. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.26703/JCT.v12i2-14>.
7. Brady, M. (2005). Creating Safe Spaces and Building Social Assets for Young Women in the Developing. *New York: The Feminist Press*.
8. Brady, M. (2005). Creating Safe Spaces and Building Social Assets for Young Women in the Developing. In *Women's Studies Quarterly*, Spring - Summer (p. 16). *New York: The Feminist Press at the City University*.
9. Canadian Women and Sport. (2020). Canadian Girls Are Dropping Out of Sport According to National Study. Retrieved from <https://womenandsport.ca/canadian-girls-dropping-out-of-sport/>
10. Craike, M. J., Symons, C., & Zimmermann, J. A. (2011). Why do young women drop out of sport and physical activity? A social ecological approach. *Annals of Leisure Research*, 148-172.
11. Darren E R Warburton, C. W. (2006). Health benefits of physical activity: the evidence. *CMAJ*, 801-809.
12. Deelan, I., Ettema, D., M, C. B., & Kamphuis. (2018). Sports participation in sport clubs, gyms or public spaces: How users of different sports settings differ in their motivations, goals, and sports frequency. *Plos One*.
13. Enoksen, E. (2011). Drop-out rate and drop-out reasons among promising Norwegian track and field athletes: A 25-year study.

14. Hargreaves, J. (1994). *Sporting Females: Critical Issues in the History and Sociology of Women's Sport*. London: Taylor & Francis Group.
15. Klint, K., Weis, M. R. *Dropping in and dropping out: Participation motives of current and former youth gymnasts*. Canadian Journal of Applied Sport Sciences 1986: 11(2): 106-114.
16. Lindner, J. B. K. J. (2002). Withdrawal from competitive youth sport: A retrospective ten-year study. *J. Sport Behav*, 25(2), 7-8.
17. Lorenzo, A., Navandar, A., Navia, J. A., Valantine, I., & Kreivyte, R. (2019). Analysis of gender differences in dropouts in sports centres located in school campuses. *Transformations in Business & Economics*, vol. 18(2B), 47B, pp.921-933.
18. Murali, A., & Bagchi, A. (2020a). Study on the Broadcast of Women's Sports in India. *Annals of Tropical Medicine and Public Health* 23(17). Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.36295/asro.2020.231711>.
19. N J, Augustine., & N, Madhavan, (2020). DROPOUT REASONS AMONG EX JUNIOR TRACK AND FIELD ATHLETES OF KERALA. *International Journal of Creative Research Thoughts (IJCRT)*, 8, 3546–3553. Retrieved from <https://ijcrt.org/papers/IJCRT2005466.pdf>
20. R. Bailey, I. W. (n.d.). Girls' participation in physical activities and sports: benefits, patterns, influences and ways forward. *World Health Organisation*.
21. R. Bailey, I. W. (n.d.). Girls' participation in physical activities and sports: benefits, patterns, influences and ways forward. *World Health Organisation*.
22. Rajesh C. B, Hussain Sakeer, Cherappurath Nafih, *Role of socio-economic status and emotional intelligence on sports attainments: A cross-sectional study. With women athletes in Kerala*, 2021. Retrieved from <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S2214785320358661#preview-section-abstract>
23. Sáez, I., Solabarrieta, J., & Rubio, I. (2021). *Reasons for sports-based physical activity dropouts in university students*. International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 18(11), 5721.
24. Singh, M. K. (1990). *Indian Women and Sports*. Jaipur: Rawat Publications.
25. Sis-jord, M. K. Personal experiences from organized sport, comparisons between participants and drop-outs. *Norges idrettshøgskole*. (1993).

26. Skulkin, J. (2016). *Sport: A Biological, Philosophical, and Cultural Perspective*. New York: Columbia University Press.
27. *Sthathlon* (2022, August 26). Retrieved from <https://statathlon.com/the-evolution-of-women-participation-sports-events/#:~:text=But%2C%20in%20the%20latest%20Olympic,%25%20of%20the%20>
28. Swain, D. A. Withdrawal from sport and Schlossberg's model of transition. *Sociology of Sport Journal* 1991: 8: 152-160
29. Tansin Benn, G. P. (2010). *Muslim women and sport*. London: Routledge.
30. United Nations. (2007, December). *women, gender equality and sport*. Women 2000 and beyond, pp. 2-4.
31. Women's Sports Foundation Staff. (2020). *Do You Know the Factors Influencing Girls' Participation in Sports?* Retrieved from <https://www.womenssportsfoundation.org/do-you-know-the-factors-influencing-girls-participation-in-sports/>

ANNEXURE

Demographic details

1. Name of the Respondent:
2. Age:
3. Religion:
4. Education Qualification/ Job:
5. Type of family:
 - Joint Family
 - Nuclear Family

6. Type of community:
 - Rural
 - Urban
 - Semi urban

7. Year of start doing sports:

Research question- Why did you join for sports and their life journey in sports?

8. In which sport event you have excelled?
9. What motivated you to join in sports?
10. What are your major achievements in sports?
11. How was your training during the initial years? (Coach, place of practice, relationship with coach, motivation from coach)
12. Who was your back support in your sports field?
13. What were the major benefits received because of doing sports?
14. How did you balance the academic along with the sports?

Research question- What are the reasons behind leaving sports in their life?

15. Can you describe your life before and after sports?
16. Can you describe the reasons why you decided to stop participating in sports activities? Please provide details.
17. Were there any specific events or incidents that influenced your decision to drop out? If yes, please describe them.
18. Did you experience any negative or discouraging interactions or behaviours within your sports environment? If yes, please explain.

19. Did you face any challenges or barriers that made it difficult for you to continue with sports? If yes, please specify.
20. Were there any external factors (e.g., family, friends, societal expectations) that influenced your decision to drop out of sports? Please elaborate.
21. How their life went on without sport?
22. Did you ever want a turn back to the sports field?
 - a) If yes, state the reason?

Research question- What were the impacts/ challenges of the sports dropout in the life of young women?

23. How do you feel about your decision to drop out of sports now?
24. Have there been any noticeable changes in your physical health or fitness since you stopped participating in sports?
25. Do you feel that dropping out of sports has affected your mental well-being? If yes, please describe the impact.
26. Have you experienced any changes in your social interactions or relationships as a result of dropping out of sports?
27. Do you think that dropping out of sports has had any long-term consequences or effects on your life? If yes, please elaborate.