

Position of Girls and Women in Physical Education in Pakistan

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Physical education and sport are closely related fields but can be separated on the basis of their objectives, types and outcomes. However, both related fields have their importance in the development, better prospectus and improvement quality of life without any discrimination of gender. It is a reality and fact that the male and female populations of the world are roughly equal but yet women face countless problems of inequality and concerning their rights to participate in all sorts of activities as men do, especially in the developing countries of the world. The right of participation in games and sports of girls and women is a global issue but it has been argued that women in Muslim countries are suffering disproportionately. It is quoted here that women have equal rights in Islamic society under the philosophy of Islam that set the true principles. Participation of women and girls is increasing gradually in Pakistan and in other Islamic countries.

Women's Sports

After the independence of Pakistan (August 14, 1947), the Father of the Nation (Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah) addressed to the organizing committee of the First Pakistan Olympic Games for the stage of these game. The Games were organized at Karachi from April 23-25, 1948, and he said in his inaugural speech these historical words:

"Remember, to win is nothing. It is the effort and the spirit behind the effort that counts. It is the tenacity of purpose and devotion to one's ideal and determination not to give up. To lose and rise again. This is the lesson that sports give us."

Prizes were awarded by his honorable sister Miss. Fatima Jinnah. A total of 140 men and women athletes participated from all over the country. The same games continue as National Games of Pakistan with the current participation of 998 women (21.94%) in 13 disciplines and 3,550 men (78.06%) with 28 disciplines at Karachi in 2007. Sport activities are part of women's and girls' daily life and have been increasing speedily since the 90s Domestic and international sports activities are overseen by National Federations, Pakistan Olympic Association and also promoted by federal/provincial ministry of Sports, Pakistan Sports Board. And national organizations, corporations, banks and forces of the Pakistan confirmed participation of their women athlete at National and International competitions like National championship, International Tournaments, Regional Competitions, Commonwealth Games, Asian Games, World Championship and Olympic Games.

The Islamic Women's Games have been regularly held in Tehran, Iran since 1993, demonstrating the potentials of Pakistani women in the field of sports and also serves as a way of increasing participation of girls and women in sports.

Women of the Pakistan are well aware of the importance and values of sports and their interests are further increasing day by day. A newly constructed women sports complex in the

metropolis of Karachi is a reflection of the efforts for promotion of women sports in Pakistan. Today women have the opportunity to compete at the national level in Cricket, Football, Gymnastics, Swimming, Track and Field, Hockey, Tennis, Table Tennis, Badminton, Basketball, Volleyball, Taekwondo, Handball, Netball, Squash, Chess, Karate, Shooting, Golf, Sepaktakraw and Skiing.

Physical Education

Physical Education is the first step for an individual to pursue sports. Since independence, physical education is an integral part of the education in Pakistan and contributes to the total development of students through its various activities. Girls and women have the opportunity to participate separately in physical activities from primary school to their higher studies at university level under the guidance of professionally trained women physical education teachers and directors physical education. Physical education has the status as:

i. Elective subject based on theory and practical classes (health and physical education) A new National Curriculum for health and physical education for grades, VI, VII, VIII, IX, X, XI, XII, is being finalized to meet out the needs of students by Government of Pakistan, Ministry of Education National Curriculum Committee, Islamabad. While Higher Education Commission has approved and revised curriculum for B.A, MH & PE, M/A, M.Sc, classes.

ii. Co-curricular subject as skill development and completion (Educational gymnastic, athletic and games and sports) The subject daily practiced in the educational institutions all over the country by the professionally trained staff with well organized co-curricular activity as following:

a. Compulsory program

b. Intra-mural / inter house program

c. Inter-school, inter collegiate, inter-educational board, inter university program

d. Service program

iii. Professional training subject (only adopted in teachers training institutions)

a. Diploma in Physical Education (D.P.Ed) one year duration after success of 12 years education

b. Bachelor in Physical Education (B.P.Ed) one year duration after success of 14 years education

c. Masters in Physical Education (M.P.Ed) one year duration after success of B.P.Ed

There are so many institutions and/or organizations engaged in promoting physical education activities for girls and women in the country. The Ministry of Education of Pakistan (Promoting Physical Education through National Education Policies), Provincial Government and the District Government are also implementing Physical education for women and girls in the educational institutions operating under their domain. Educational Boards and Higher Education Commission have competitive programmes at national level and also participate at international students games.

Pakistan is one of the leading Muslim countries regarding its citizenry. Women and girls of the country have the opportunity of participation in physical education and sports activities at various levels, unfortunately the standing or in terms of performance is not as high as it could be. The causes of this can be identified as inadequate funding, a low level of organization, a

lack of standardized facilities, sub-standard professional training, unavailability of centers of excellence, along with social/religious conditions. The position of girls and women in physical education and sports in Pakistan deserves comprehensive study in order to ensure a better future for the women of our country