

**A STUDY ON ACCESS TO DIFFERENT SPORTS FACILITIES BY THE TRACK AND FIELD
ATHLETES-GENDER AND AREA WISE**

Dr. Ramachandra Patkar, Assistant Professor, Department of Physical Education, Government First Grade College and Center for PG Studies, Thenkanidiyur, Udupi

Abstract

The main objective of this article is to study the access to different sports facilities like athletic track, beach, courts, fitness centre/gym, park/playground, playing field, sporting shops store, walking/running/cycling track among the track and field athletes, which was broadly studied gender wise and area wise. This study is conducted on 528 athletes, which included 272 from rural area and 256 from urban area through a structured questionnaire. The sample for this study is randomly chosen from the track and field athletes who had participated in at least inter-collegiate level tournaments from different universities of Karnataka. We conclude that: The field athletes had more access to sports facility than the track athletes; the men athletes had more access to sports facility than the women athletes; the rural athletes had more access to sports facility than the urban athletes.

Keywords: Sports, Access, Track events, Field events, Rural, Urban.

INTRODUCTION

Sport, with its physical, social, economic, and personal bearings, aspects, plays a significant role in keeping the citizens of the State energetic and healthy. It helps build social ties in heterogeneous populations and social harmony of the state. At individual and society level, sports participation has several positive effects. Sports equipment and facilities are the “laboratories” for physical education. They are important and act as a facilitator for the achievement of the ambition in sports and physical activity. Sports participation is equally influenced by the environmental factors like availability of sports facilities (Prins et al. 2010¹). The studies regarding the factors affecting the youth physical activity can be found in the literature. The most studies are related to physical access of sports facilities at school/colleges, neighbouring surroundings like park or playground. Access to sports is measured in term of proximity and it has been observed that proximity to these facilities are associated with the improved performance in the physical activity among the children. In (Pascualet *et al.*, 2009)², the authors examine the influence of socio-economic environments like wealth and occupation on jogging, swimming and gym use. The main objective of the paper (Voset *et al.*, 2008)³ was to determine whether there is any influence of family (parents) income on the use of the sports facility. In (Limstrand, 2008)⁴, the main purpose of the article was to find the association between young people’s physical activity behaviour and sports facilities, to determine the status of examined and non-examined environmental factors and frame a conceptual model related to this. In (Grow *et al.*, 2008)⁵, the study finds different ways for access to recreation sites which children and adults use frequently for physical activity (PA), to find the association of active transportation to these sites and proximity and finally to find whether the environmental factor of the neighbourhood are associated with active transportation to these sites which are frequently used. In (Tucker *et al.*, 2009)⁶, the objective of this study was to “investigate the influence of the amount of moderate vigorous physical activity in the presence of neighbourhood recreational opportunities, land wise mix and percentage park space, objectively measured within a geographic information system”. It was also studied to find its Influence on parent’s perception of the presence of neighbourhood recreation opportunities.

OBJECTIVES: To identify various factors like access to different sports facilities in motivating the sportsperson.

HYPOTHESIS: There is a significant difference in access to sports facility among the track and field athletes.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY: The study was done to analyse the access to different sports facility like athletic track, beach (sand running), courts (e.g. Volleyball), fitness centre/gym, park/playground, playing field (e.g. Football, sectors), sporting shops store, walking/running/cycling track through a structured questionnaire. Each question had five options for the response like: *Never, Few times a year, Sometimes, Often and Regularly*. Responses to each question were recorded.

Distribution of Access to Various Sports Facilities Among the Athletes

• ATHLETIC TRACK

Being athletes who participate in track and field events, access to athletic track is a must for their consistent, efficient and good performance. About 88.6% of the athletes had *regular* access to the athletic track. Out of which, 89.6% of the track athletes and 87.7% of field athletes had *regular* access to the athletic track. Women athletes had accessed regularly more than the men athletes, and athletes from the rural area had accessed more regularly than the urban athletes. It is evident from the Table 1 that, about 87.7% men and 89.6% of women athletes, and 92.6% rural and 84.4% of urban athletes, had *regular* access to Athletic Tracks. It can be observed that, about 6.8% of the athletes had *often* accessed the Athletic Tracks, whereas 4.5% had only *sometimes* accessed this facility. Figure 1 gives a detailed representation of access to athletic tracks by the athletes.

• BEACH RUNNING (SAND RUNNING)

Beach running (sand running) is area bound and hence its access to all athletes is not possible always. From the table 2, it is observed that 44% of track athletes and 31.5% of field athletes had access to beach running only *a few times a year* contributing to 37.9% of the total athletes. Men athletes and athletes from the rural area had accessed *a few times a year* more than the women athletes and athletes from the urban area. But 36.4% of the total athletes *never* had this access. About 14.4% had the access *sometimes* and 7.4% of them had *often* accessed it. But only 4% of the athletes had *regular* access to this facility. We tabulate these data in Table 2 and represent it in Figure 2.

• COURTS

Playing in courts is not a compulsory event but an optional interest towards other sports. Due to this factor, it is observed from Table 3 that 38% of the track athletes and 20.3% of field athletes had accessed courts *a few times*, which contributes to 29.3% of the total athletes. Men athletes and athletes from rural area had accessed *a few times* more than the women athletes and athletes from the urban area respectively. Only 19.9% of the athletes had used the courts *regularly*. About 26.6% had *never* accessed courts with 18.8% of them accessing *sometimes* and 5.4% had *often* access. These details can be seen in Figure 3 and Table 3.

• FITNESS CENTRE/ GYM

Getting into Gym for fitness and maintenance of the body is very essential for the athlete to perform efficiently. Nearly, 36.4% of the athletes had *regular* access to the fitness centres like gyms, out of which 29.9% are track athlete and 43.1% are field athletes. It was *regularly* accessed by men more than the women, and by the rural area athletes more than the urban area athletes. Access to this facility was used *a few times a year* by 26.5% of the athletes and used *often* by only 8.3% of the total athletes. About 23.7% of the athletes had gone to the fitness only *sometimes* a year and 5.1% of them had *never* accessed it. (Refer Table 4 and Figure 4)

- **PARK/PLAYGROUND**

Nearly, 32.3% of the athletes had *regularly* been to park and playground for their sporting events, out of which 27.5% are track athletes and 37.1% are field athletes. More men than women, and rural athletes than urban athletes had *regularly* accessed this facility. Nearly, 29.2% of the athletes had *never* been to park and playground and 25% of them only a *few times* a year. About 8.8% of them had been to playground *sometimes* and 4.8% going to the park and playground *often*. (Refer Table 5 and Figure 5)

- **PLAYING FIELD**

About 27.8% of the athletes had been to the playing field *regularly*, with 18.2% representing track athletes and 37.6% field athletes. About 43.1% of men athletes and 12.6% of women athletes, and 23.9% of rural athletes and 31.9% from the urban area had *regular* access. But, 30.8% of them had *never* been to the playing field with 26.1% of them accessing *a few times* a year. About 10.3% of them had *sometimes* and 5% of them had often been to the playing fields. (Refer Table 6 and Figure 6)

- **SPORTING GOODS STORE**

About 42.8% of them had *never* gone to sporting goods store, among them there were 47% track athletes and 38.6% field athletes. Nearly, 25.9% of men athletes and 59.5% women athletes, among them 36.5% rural athletes and 49.6% urban athletes had *never* been to sporting goods store. With only 11.5% of them visiting *regularly*, 4.4% had *often* visited the stores. About 35.2% of them had visited *a few times* a year and 6.1% of them have *sometimes* accessed the sporting goods store. (Refer Table 7 and Figure 7)

- **WALKING/RUNNING/CYCLING TRACK**

About 37.3% of the athlete had *regular* access to one or all of the walking/ running/cycling tracks. About 35.5% of track athletes and 39.2% of field athletes had *regular* access. Women athletes had more *regular* access than the men athletes, and rural area athletes had accessed more than the urban area athletes. With 25% of them had *never* accessed this facility, 17.9% of them had accessed *few times* a year and 11.7% of them had *sometimes* used this facility. Only 8.1% had *often* accessed to this facility.

- **CONCLUSION**

The main objective of this article was to study the access to different sports facilities like athletic track, beach, courts, fitness centre/gym, park/playground, playing field, sporting shops store, walking/running/cycling track among the track and field athletes, which was broadly studied gender wise and area wise. This study was conducted on 528 athletes, which included 272 from rural area and 256 from urban area through a structured questionnaire. The study concluded that: The field athletes had more access to sports facility than the track athletes; the men athletes had more access to sports facility than the women athletes; the rural athletes had more access to sports facility than the urban athletes.

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