



Sports by Choice or by Socio-Economic Status

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Abstract

Socio-economic status (SES) a model construct widely studied by researchers of all hues for categorization of families in various divisions. Though SES has been numerously correlated with other variables but correlating it with sportspersons is a unique endeavor, where the present study has been undertaken to verify the proposition that SES significantly influences the decision of the young prospective entrants' vis-à-vis type of sports they choose. A total 231 sportspersons [189 males and 49 females] belonging to 14 different sports disciplines were selected from the stadium and other sports academies spread across the Bhiwani district of state of Haryana. A performa (containing 13 items) especially so designed, based on the previous available intellectual material, was used to collect the data. The onsite data collection was bonus for the investigators in terms of live interaction with bodily strength of young India. The data analysis revealed interesting insight favouring the proposition. However, it is pertinent to mention here that the result of the study is required to be tested across the country with larger samples drawn from the population of interest prior to generalization and ascertaining its' validity and reliability. Constructive suggestions and criticism will be highly appreciated and in fact solicited.

Keywords: Socio-economic status, Sportspersons, Sports, Academies, Generalisation, Validity, Reliability..

Introduction

Mini-Cuba, Chotti Kashi and City of War Heroes are few soubriquets with which the dusty temple town of southern Haryana is honoured with, considering her unparalleled contribution in the field of *Sports, Spirituality* and *Armed Forces*. Irrespective of many feathers in her cap here we shall largely focus on her great role in nurturing sports culture within her bosom. Participation in sports from the people of Bhiwani is comparatively huge where games and sports is a culture. Men and women from this foothill town of *Aravalis* represented national and international events and won several prestigious accolades.

While working on an explorative project in the city a couple of years back the authors detected an interesting correlative trend between the *Choice of Sports* and *Socioeconomic Status* of the sports persons selected for the study. To substantiate the ad lib hypothesis scientifically, researchers undertook the present survey research. Our work is basically focused in-and-around the correlation between socioeconomic status (SES) and type of sports/game preferred by present-day younger lot of Bhiwani. Does selection of sports by contemporary generation is fundamentally guided by their SES or any other variable? Though several other factors such as, parents' education and occupation, family history of sports, family influence, role model, physical fitness status, access to sports infrastructure, sports aptitude, career prospects, do have their role in sports selection. "Sport means all forms of physical activity which,

through casual or organized participation, aim at expressing or improving physical fitness and mental well-being, forming relationships or obtaining results in competitions at all levels" Mehr Ali Hemmati Nezhad, Mohammad Mahdi Rahmati and Mohsen Manochchri Nezhad¹.

SES is a qualitative variable which is complex enough to be objectively transformed into quantitative terms. SES is a scientific construct used to classify general populace on the basis of social and economic status. Defining SES has been a great challenge for the psychologists, social scientists, health experts, educators, and all other stakeholders. However, few attempts have been made by luminaries from several disciplines. "SES is a construct that reflects one's access to collectively desired resources, be they material goods, money, power, friendship networks, healthcare, leisure time, or educational opportunities" Oakes and Rossi². Prosperity in terms of wealth and sustained income are the indicators of SES of an individual and family³.

SES being a multifaceted constructs, societal element is one of them, hence while measuring or constructing it the dynamics of the contemporary society ought to be considered. Society particularly Indian, is closely knit on the heels of rigid paradigms and parameters of the caste, a decisive feature of SES, where interaction is high and almost everyone is aware of each other's SES standing especially in rural set up. In the light of public awareness about SES, social stratification is enforced and intuitively practiced. Social hierarchy of beings and their

families is based on certain factors such as income from all sources, level of education achieved by, profession, material goods and role and authority in society studymode.com⁴. The hierarchical divide is maintained and observed by all components of the social set up. Traditional SES monitoring machinery has well established devices such as intra-caste marriage. Such devices ensure that members do not breach that datum line, “The caste [in Indian perspective] is intricately related to SES because caste tends to convey one’s social class, status, or position.

But unlike SES, or at times even social class, caste tends to convey a place in the hierarchy that is not surmountable by effort. Caste is set at birth and is rigid if not impenetrable. It is directly tied to the luck of one’s birth parents” Arrow, Bowles and Durlauf⁵. All animals who are naturally inclined to live in respective societies such as, whales, monkeys or human beings are likely to distinguish themselves on some kind of social strata along with demarcating their own level within this stratification^{6,7}. Presently, Pareek classification of SES is based on following nine characteristics i. Caste, ii. Occupation of family head, iii. Education of family head, iv. Level of social participation of family head, v. Landholding, vi. Housing, vii. Farm power, viii. Material possessions, and ix. Type of family.

These are widely used to classify Indian rural households. While BG Prasad’s classification have household income as a feature to assess the SES which is comparatively easy to gauge and can be applied to assess the socioeconomic status of both urban and rural population Shankar Reddy Dudala et. al⁸.

Methodology

Participants: The onsite survey of 231 sportspersons of Bhiwani district (182 Male and 49 Female) – of 14 different sports – was carried out on three consecutive days using a special survey performa, designed for the study by the researchers. The sports wise breakdown (see Figure-1) of surveyed sportspersons is as follows: Gymnastics (12), Badminton (03), Volleyball (8), Basketball (22), Athletics (37), Boxing (31), Archery (4), Kabaddi (07), Football (27), Hockey (20), Wrestling (12), Swimming (18), Table Tennis (5) and Cricket (25). The average age is 17.14 yrs (SD 3.3335).

Procedure: SES was assessed using a survey pro forma, containing 13 items based on characteristics defined by Pareek and BG Prasad classification⁶. Researchers also deliberated on the questionnaire, designed, developed and employed by IHDS in its 2004-05⁹ survey report before designing the survey questionnaire for the present study. The data were collected onsite – Bhiwani sports stadium and sports academies spread across the city – after obtaining verbal consent from the participating sportspersons. The researchers ensured that the participating sportspersons who are reluctant to reveal their caste status were neither forced nor coerced to reveal the same. However for assessing reliable SES, every effort was made to

convince the participating sportspersons for filling up the surveys pro forma at the best of their knowledge. Willing participants were permitted to carry the survey performa to their home for answering certain questions such as monthly income, farmland availability, and educational qualifications of their father. The purpose of the study was briefly explained to each participating sportsperson before handing over the SES survey form. For systematic data analysis sports are arbitrarily categorized [by researchers in consultation with coaches] into three following categories depending upon the extent of monetary investment – by players – involved.

Category I Sports - Sports which requires nil or minimal monetary investment (for sports equipment) i.e. Athletics, Kabbadi, Gymnastics and Wrestling etc.

Category II Sports - Sports which requires initial one time monetary investment (for sports equipment) i.e. Swimming, Volleyball, Basketball, Boxing and Football.

Category III Sports - Sports which requires recurring monetary investment (for sports equipment) i.e. Cricket, Hockey, Archery, Badminton, and Table Tennis etc.

Results and Discussion

Data Analysis and Findings: Female Participants: Females constitute 21.21% of the sample. The average household income is `15540.82. The 42.86% of female sportspersons have average family income ` 24809.52/- which is well above the average income of the group and out of this 76.19% picked up Cat III sports, whereas 57.14% having average household income of `8589.29/- and out of this 65.52% opted for Cat I sports. The available data clearly subscribes to the fact that SES is a major factor in sports selection decision making. 73.47% belongs to rural region while 12.24% have fathers whose educational qualification is Graduate or above and all opted for Cat III sports.

Sports Selection: The Cat I sports are seems to be favourite among the individuals who have been assessed as Class III in terms of SES where the average per capita income (monthly) of this grouping is `1993.87/- in comparison to Class I where it is `7572.60/- who mostly opted for Cat III sports. The average farmland holding is 1.57acres¹⁰ {Table-3 and Figure-2 (b)} defined as marginal farmers (A cultivator with a land holding of 1hectare or less (2.5 acres) whereas a cultivator with a land holding of 2 hectares (5 acres) or less are called small farmers (National Agricultural Policy 2000 and National Policy for Farmers, 2007). The data on lower caste – one of the detriments of SES – is highly skewed towards Cat I and Cat II sports as evident from Figure-3 (a). While sportspersons belonging to upper cast does not have special preference as such, the data from the study signifies, however a closer look at data reveals a slight skewness in favour of Cat II and III sports {Figure-3 (a)}, Archery and Badminton have full presence of this group, for

example. We are confident that this trend might be attributed to relatively high income, access to education, relative social prestige, agricultural income by virtue of higher farmland

holding {Figure-2 (b)} etc but caste as an independent factor might not be significant [hypotheses is open for testing].

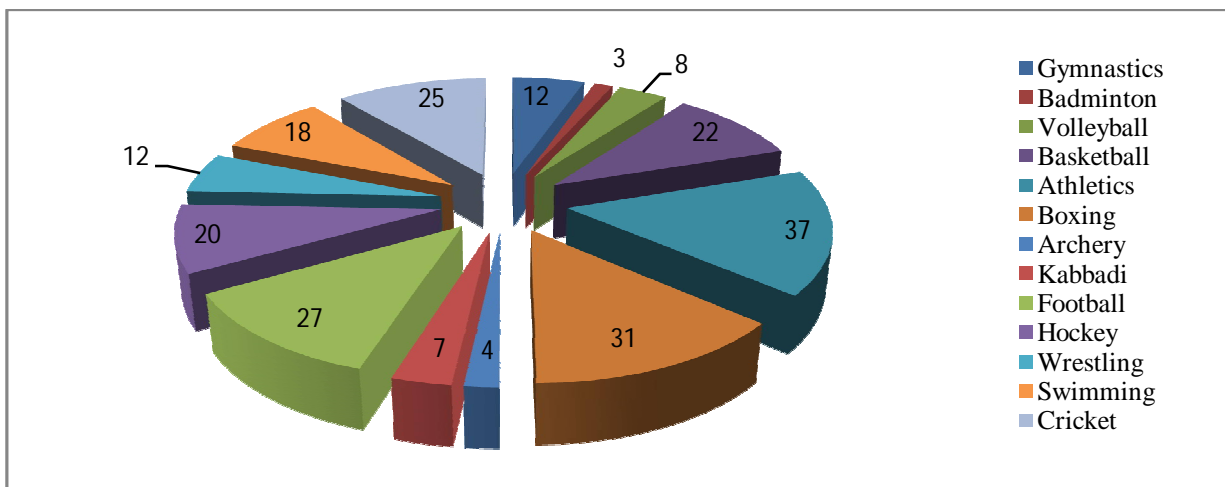


Figure-1
Composition of different sportspersons for the study

Table-1
Measurement table of SES by BG Prasad's Classification for the year 2013

Socio Economic Status: Class	BG Prasad's Classification of 1961	Modified BG Prasad's Classification for 2013
I	₹100 and above	₹5156 and above
II	₹50-99	₹2578-5155
III	₹30-49	₹1547-2577
IV	₹15-29	₹773-1546
V	Below ₹15	Below ₹773

Source: Shankar Reddy Dudala et. al 2013⁸

Table-2
SES assessment on the basis of per capita income [monthly] (Prasad Classification)

Sports	Per Capita Income (Monthly)	SES Class	Sports	Per Capita Income (Monthly)	SES Class
Athletics	2541.67	III	Basket ball	6134.85	I
Gymnastics	1313.89	III	Volley Ball	5895.83	I
Wrestling	1629.17	III	Badminton	11055.60	I
Swimming	2490.74	III	Hockey	7309.17	I
Kabaddi	3023.81	II	Table Tennis	5946.67	I
Boxing	4168.82	II	Archery	9625.00	I
Football	6087.04	I	Cricket	8526.67	I

I-Upper Class, II-Middle Class, III-Lower Class

Table–3
Comparative Data

Sports	Cat. of Sports	Average Age (yrs)	Average Household Income (pm)`	Per Capita Income (Monthly)`	Average Farmland Holding (Acres)
Athletics	I	17.94	11100.00	2541.67	1.57
Gymnastics	I	13.68	6666.70	1313.89	0.58
Wrestling	I	15.70	7750.00	1629.17	2.00
Kabaddi	I	21.16	13428.57	3023.81	2.14
Boxing	II	14.58	15677.42	4168.82	3.10
Basket ball	II	18.69	24409.00	6134.85	2.82
Football	II	15.41	23037.00	6087.04	4.07
Swimming	II	17.89	10111.00	2490.74	1.89
Volley Ball	II	17.84	21375.00	5895.83	2.63
Badminton	III	16.43	38667.00	11055.60	4.33
Hockey	III	18.12	28300.00	7309.17	7.45
Table Tennis	III	19.20	11800.00	5946.67	2.00
Archery	III	20.93	35500.00	9625.00	2.75
Cricket	III	18.40	33000.00	8526.67	5.96

Table–4
Comparative Data

Sports	Cat. of Sports	Participation of (In %)			Area Type (In %)		House Type (In %)	
		Lowest Caste	Lower Caste	Upper Caste	Rural	Urban	Semi-Pucca	Pucca
Athletics	I	13.51	24.32	62.17	78.38	21.62	Nil	91.89
Gymnastics	I	16.67	58.33	25.00	100	Nil	Nil	75.00
Wrestling	I	0	50.00	50.00	41.67	58.33	Nil	83.33
Kabaddi	I	16.67	16.67	66.66	83.33	16.67	Nil	100
Boxing	II	6.45	19.35	74.20	64.52	35.48	Nil	100
Basket ball	II	13.64	22.73	63.63	40.91	59.09	Nil	100
Football	II	7.41	7.41	85.18	70.37	29.63	Nil	100
Swimming	II	38.89	22.22	38.89	88.89	11.11	Nil	100
Volley Ball	II	Nil	37.50	62.50	62.50	37.50	Nil	100
Badminton	III	Nil	Nil	100.00	Nil	100	Nil	100
Hockey	III	Nil	9.09	90.91	35.00	65.00	Nil	100
Table Tennis	III	Nil	20.00	80.00	60.00	40.00	Nil	100
Archery	III	Nil	Nil	100.00	25.00	75.00	Nil	100
Cricket	III	Nil	28.00	72.00	32.00	68.00	Nil	100

The 60.60% {Figure-4 (a)} surveyed sportspersons belongs to rural area and representing almost all sports (barring Badminton, where sample was small) in respectable numbers. Higher rural participation in sports is good indicator for the health and

growth of sports in India. However, urban India seems to prefer Cat III sports also known as ‘clean sports’ (Sports which have almost nil physical contact with dust and earth).

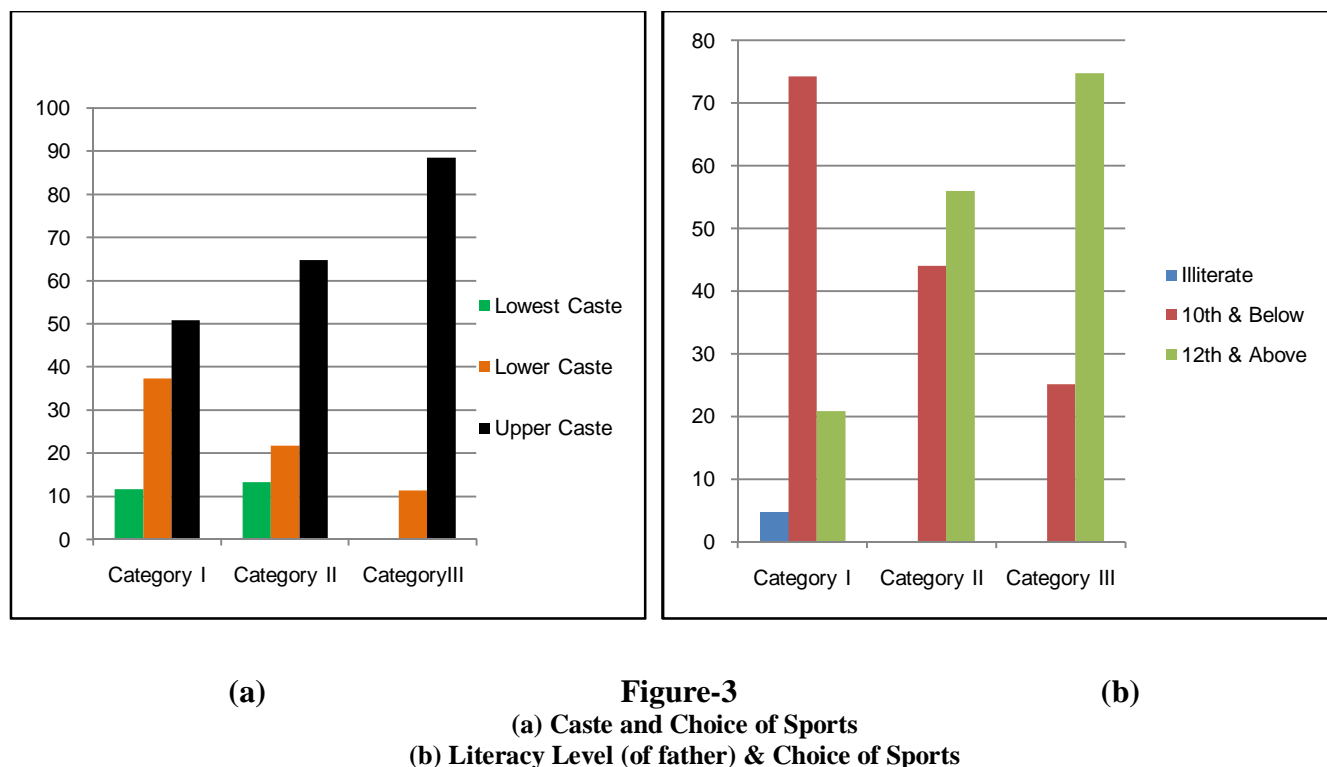
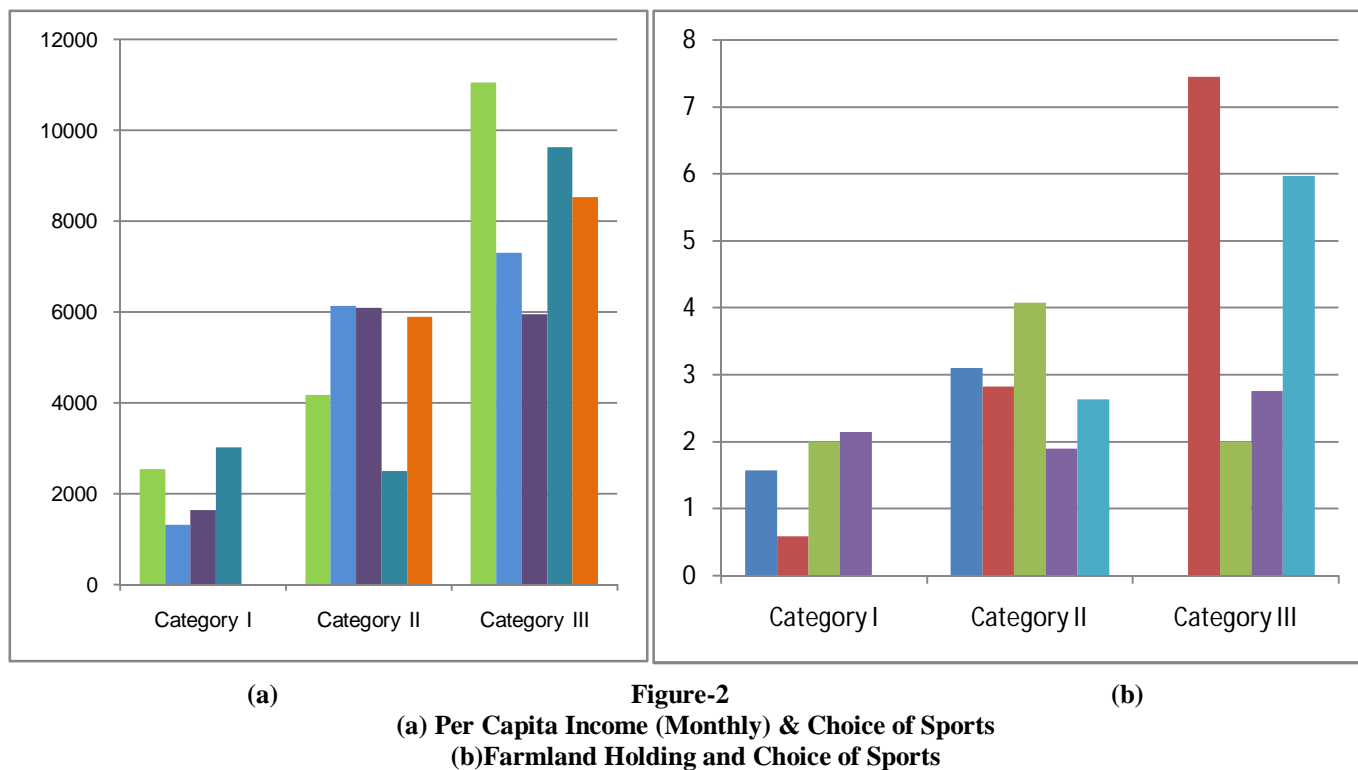
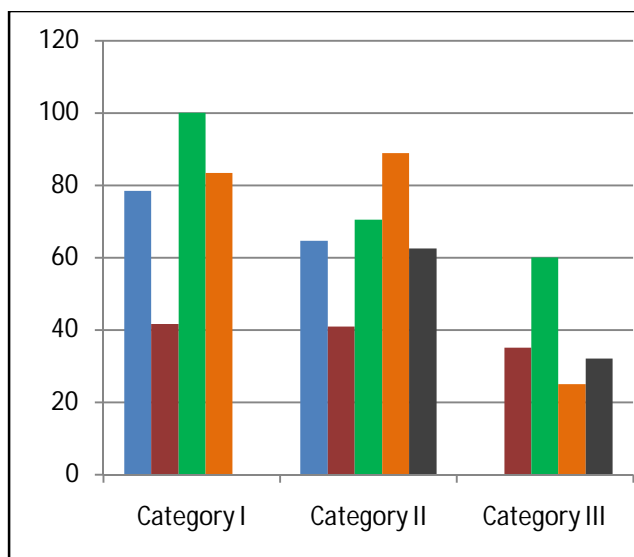
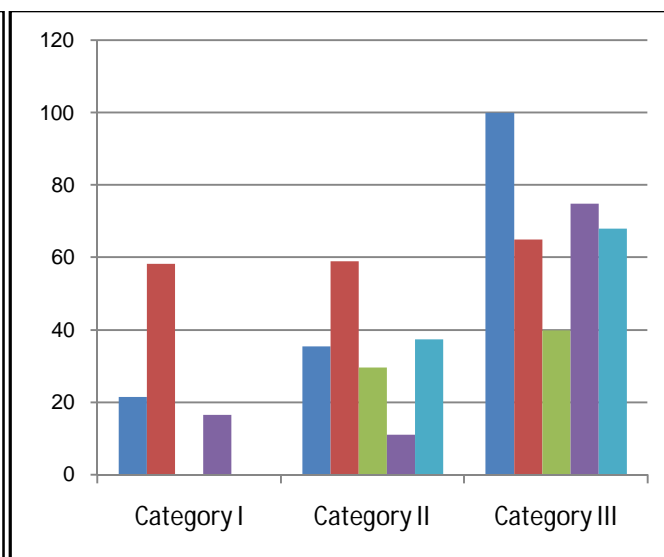


Table-5
Comparative Data

Sports	Cat. of Sports	Family Type (In %)		Job Type (In %)		Literacy Level of Father (In %)		
		Composite	Nuclear	Blue Collar	White Collar	Illiterate	10th or Below	12th or Above
Athletics	I	5.41	94.59	89.19	10.81	10.81	67.57	21.62
Gymnastics	I	Nil	100	83.33	16.67	8.33	75.00	16.67
Wrestling	I	Nil	100	91.67	8.33	Nil	83.33	16.67
Kabaddi	I	Nil	100	71.43	28.57	Nil	71.43	28.57
Boxing	II	16.13	83.87	32.26	67.74	6.45	61.29	32.26
Basket ball	II	36.36	63.64	31.82	68.18	Nil	31.82	68.18
Football	II	7.41	92.59	44.44	55.56	Nil	37.04	62.96
Swimming	II	5.56	94.44	77.78	22.22	Nil	77.78	22.22
Volley Ball	II	Nil	100	50.00	50.00	12.25	12.25	75.50
Badminton	III	Nil	100	Nil	100	Nil	Nil	100
Hockey	III	20.00	80.00	20.00	80.00	Nil	45.00	55.00
Table Tennis	III	Nil	100	20.00	80.00	Nil	20.00	80.00
Archery	III	Nil	100	Nil	100	Nil	25.00	75.00
Cricket	III	4.00	96.00	24.00	76.00	Nil	36.00	64.00



(a)



(b)

Figure-4
(a) Rural Area and Choice of Sports
(b) Urban Area and Choice of Sports

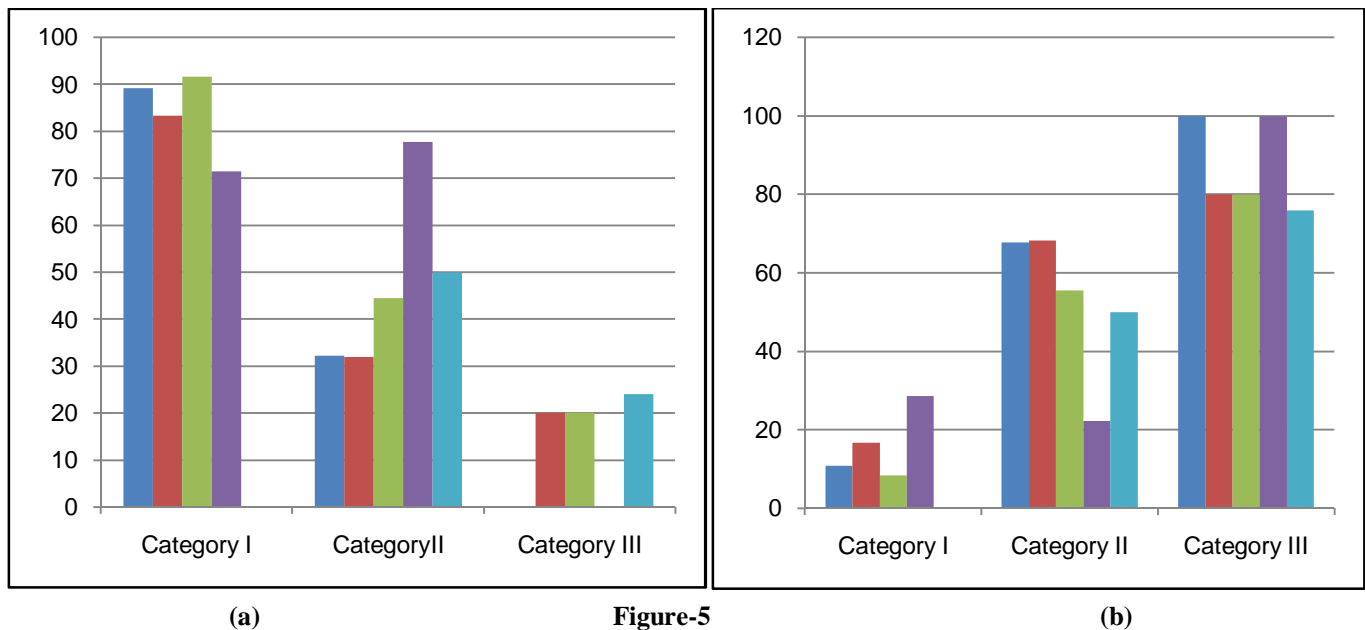


Figure-5
(a) Blue Collar Job and Choice of Sports
(b) White Collar Job and Choice of Sports

The 100% sportspersons, sample under study, possess 'Pucca' (Bricks and Concrete) house (Table-4), which somehow justifies six figures per capita income, at current prices, of the state ₹109064/-, Economic Survey of Haryana 2012-13¹¹. The family composition, in terms of combined and nuclear, does not seem to have significant bearing on the proposition under study. Only 9.52% sportspersons have combined family system (Table 5), however from the sociological point of view it is a good sign that the culture of Haryana could still retain and maintain the combined family system. Job type, by the head of the family, is one of the most important indicators in assessing the SES and determining the economic well being of the family. It is the major contributor in household income and chief variable in determining the living standard of the people. 45.42% sportspersons have their fathers (head of the family) engaged in marginal farming, labour, daily wages and other blue collar jobs, {Figure-5 (a)} hardly suffice for sustaining a family of 4 or more. Among the 45.42% blue collar job holders' families, the children of 65% {Figure-5 (a)} families opted for Cat I sports while 35% opted for Cat II and Cat III sports. The data in respect of job type from the study supports the proposition of the study. Children from blue collar job family are likely to opt for Cat I sports.

Level of education of traditional head of family is another significant indicator of SES. Education is strongly related to access to salaried work, and vast differences in education across different social groups are at least partly responsible for the income differentials across socio-religious communities (IHDS 2004-05). Education is a decisive factor in determining household income of the families. The traditional head of family (father) of 1.83% households are illiterate {(Figure-3(b)) with

low per capita income (monthly) (see Table 2 Sl. No. 1 and 2) while their children opted for Cat I sports.

Note: Figures at the end of this paper can also be referred for gaining deeper insight sports choice vis-à-vis SES.

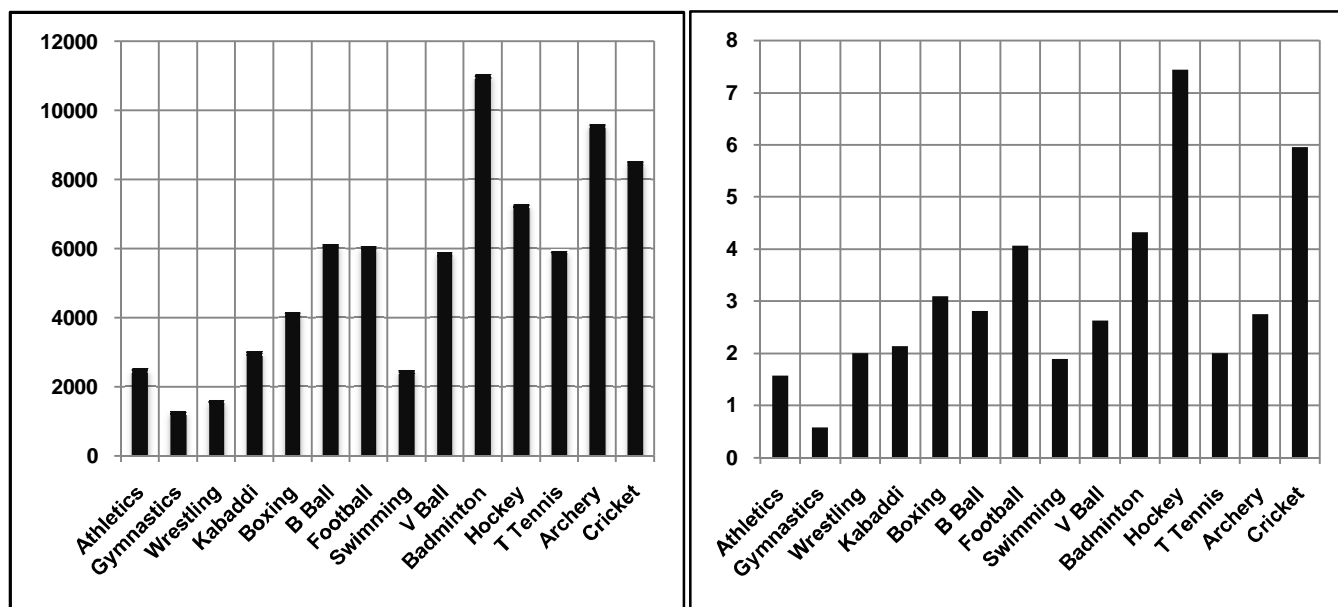
Discussion: The findings from the study present significant information regarding the choice made by the young prospective sportspersons concerning sports as career in the Bhiwani district of Haryana. The significant participation in almost all types of sports disciplines from the rural segment signifies the deep penetration of sports. SES is significantly dependent on the job of father (traditional head of family), level of father education, farmland holding and per capita (monthly) income. The available data points out that SES do significantly influence sportspersons' choice in selection of sports discipline. The access to modern sports infrastructure, techniques, and psychological support can address the issue with greater dividends. However, it is pertinent to mention here that the result of the study is required to be tested longitudinally across the country with larger samples drawn from the population of interest prior to generalization and ascertaining its' validity and reliability.

Applications in Real Life: The researchers envisage the comprehensive usage of the study vis-à-vis growth and development of sports in the region. A perspective player coming from low SES [Class I] – which is evident in 29.48 % of sportspersons under study – may have natural talent for Cat III sports but could not afford the costly sports equipment. She/he might end up selecting sports of not her/his liking which requires almost negligible or minimal one time initial

investment which is akin to offering milk in a wide mouthed saucepan to a bird with long beak. It will put up huge pressure on sports infrastructure while lowering the probability of success. The sportspersons ought to be tested for their sporting aptitude at the entry level itself and subsequently trained. A state level panel of trained sports psychologists can be formed for undertaking the task. This panel will visit the sports stadiums as well as academies across the state for psychological examination, recommendations, suggestions, and drastically needed sports counseling. It must be taken care of by the authorities that the probable sportsperson's SES should not come in the way while selecting sports discipline. We are

confident that it will help in bettering the overall sports performance as well as effective management of sports without straining the available limited state resources.

What Researchers Observed?: Surprisingly, unlike sportspersons belonging to reserved category; 23% (Urban) general category understudy sportspersons were reluctant to reveal their cast status (in writing) despite repeated assurance of data confidentiality from the researchers. However, they felt comfortable in verbal disclosure. For such a bizarre behaviour we couldn't construe any credible cause. Issue is still pending for want of reasonable interpretation?

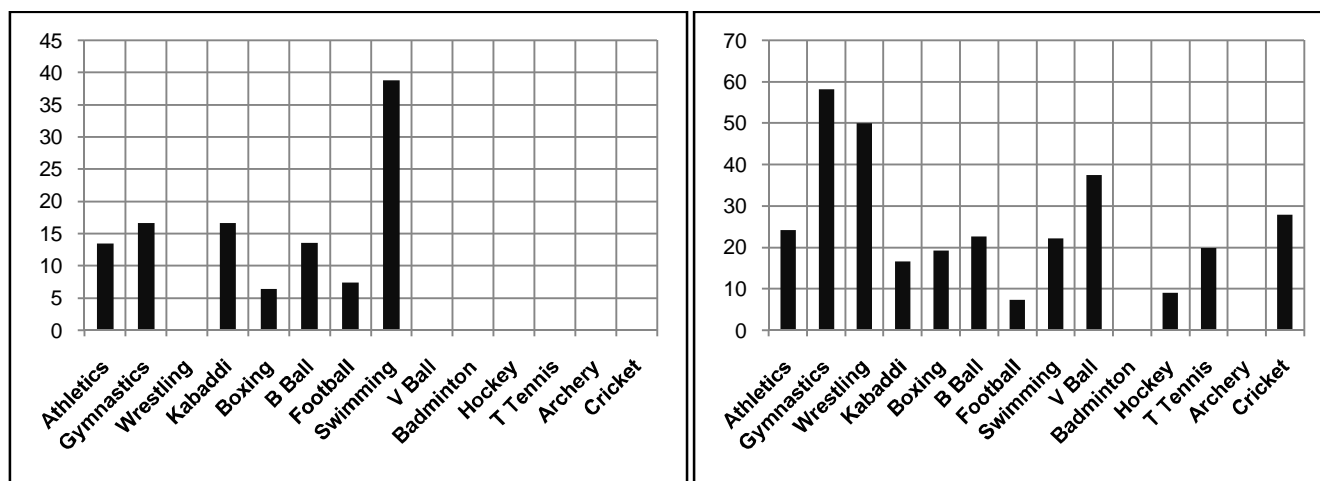


(a)

Figure-6

(b)

(a) Per Capita Income (Monthly)
(b) Average Farmland Holding (Acres)



(a)

Figure-7

(b)

(a) Participation of Lowest Caste (% points)
(b) Participation of Lower Caste (% points)

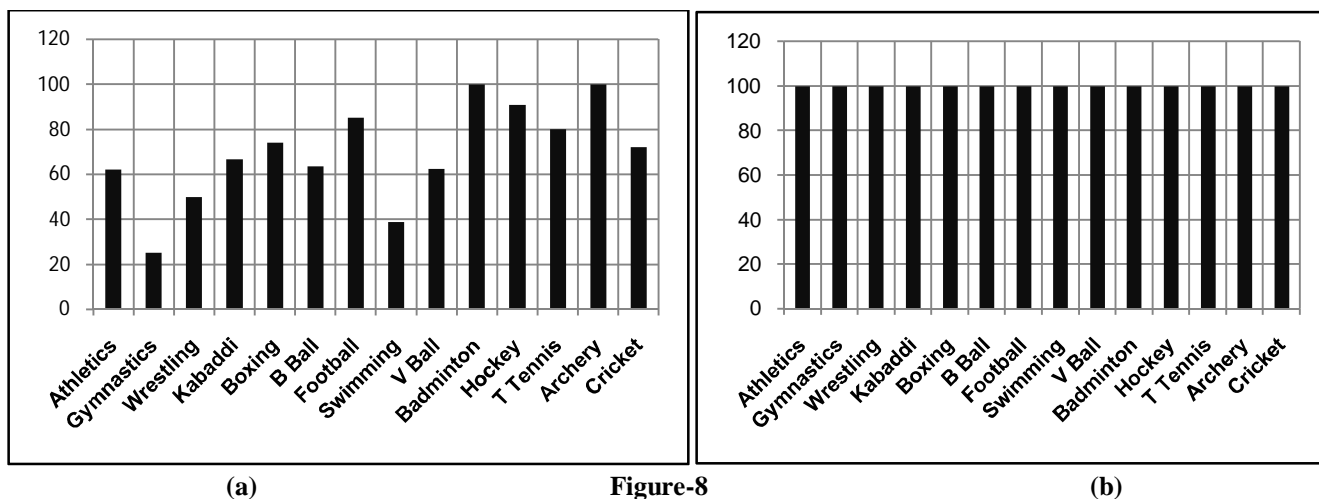


Figure-8
(a) Participation of Upper Caste (% points)
(b) Possession of Pucca House (% points)

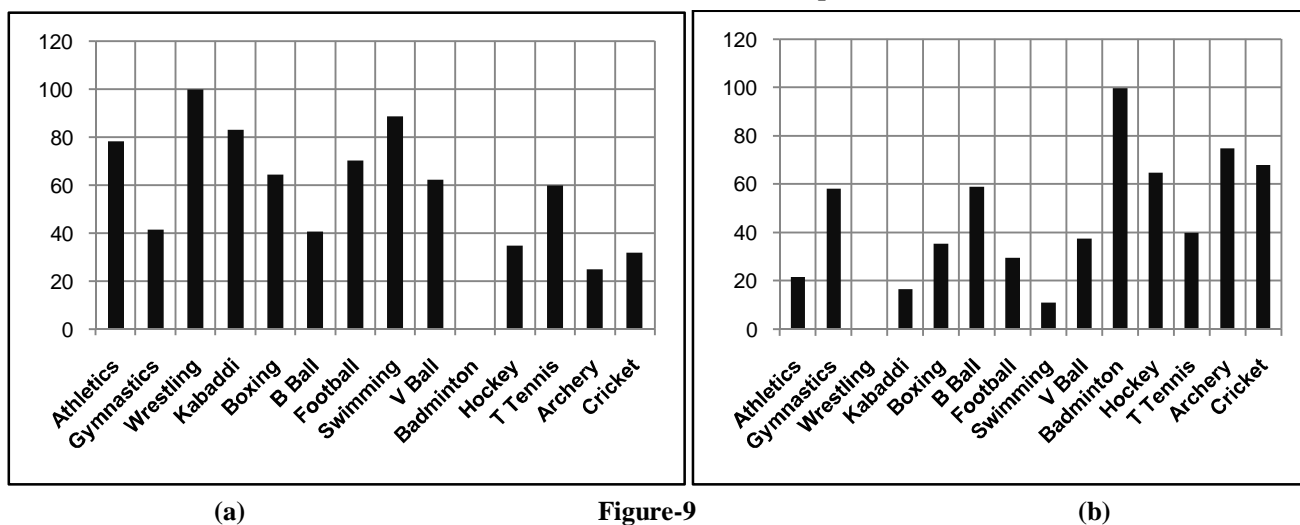


Figure-9
(a) Participation of Rural Segment (% points)
(b) Participation of Urban segment (% points)

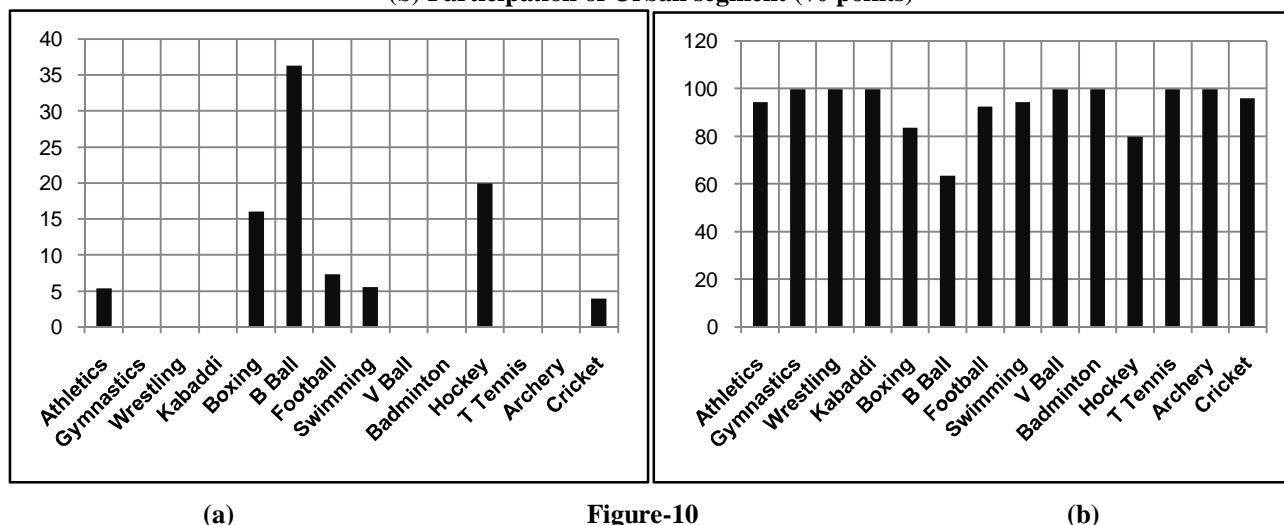
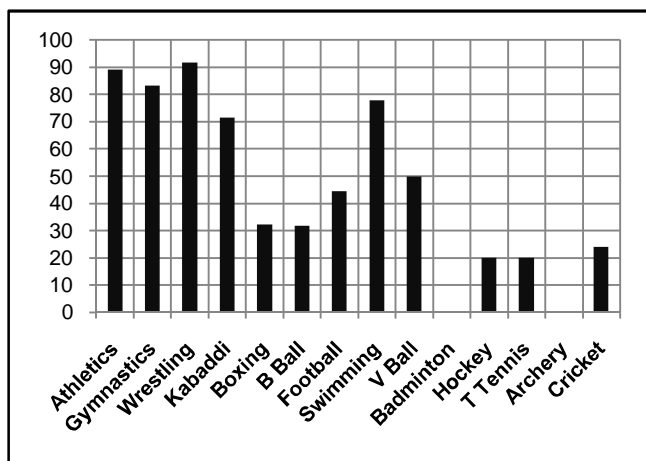


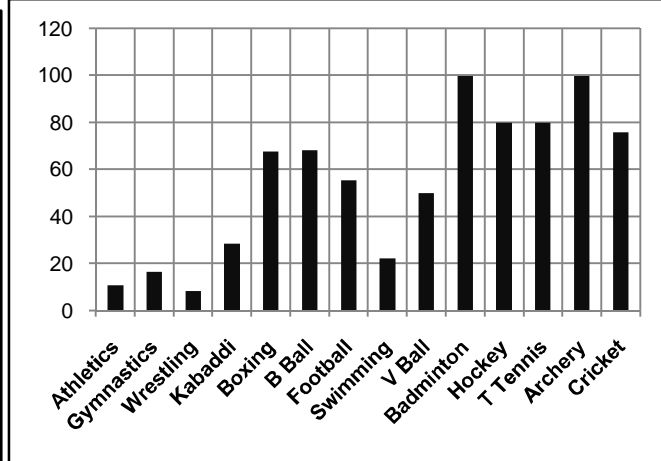
Figure-10
(a) Family Type (Composite) (% Points)
(b) Family Type (Nuclear) (% Points)



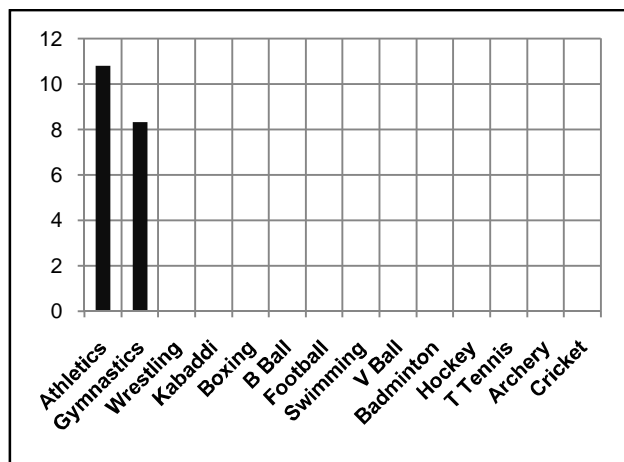
(a)

Figure-11

(a) Job Type (Blue Collar) (% Points)
(b) Job Type (White Collar) (% Points)



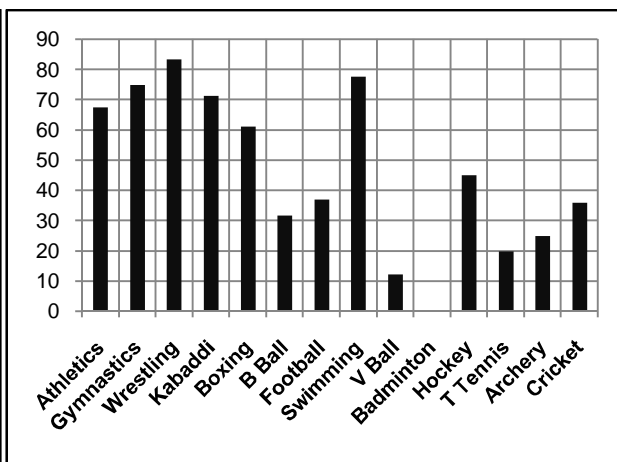
(b)



(a)

Figure-12

(a) Illiterate Father (% points)
(b) Father 10th or Below (% points)



(b)

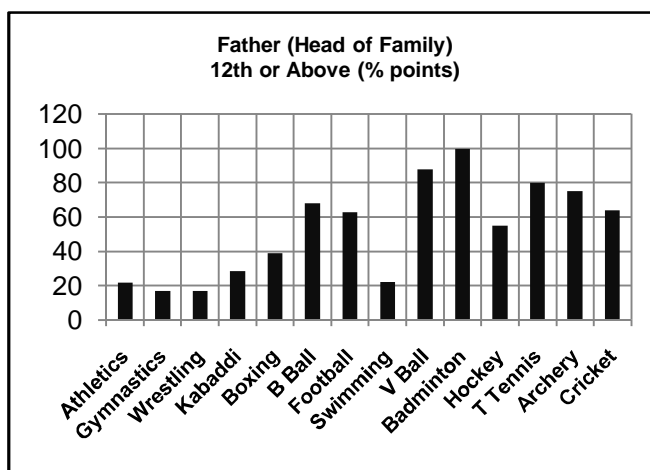


Figure-13
Epilogue

The sportspersons participated in the study have opted sports as alternative to the academics at first hand rather a career choice! Isn't it a recycled choice? It is another issue that later they made sports as their career. The choice was largely guided by consistent low grades in academics and the similar category peers [low grades] acted as strap-on thrusters.

Most of the participants firmly believe that sports offer better comprehensive status than studies. Physical exercise [Read Sports] is comparatively trouble-free than soul killing mental exercise [Read Academics]. Further they lament that the comparative uncertainties, job hunting, studying whole life, lifestyle diseases etc are some of the major [wrongly perceived] disincentives or negative rewards responsible for changing the tracks.

Few coaches and sports watchers of the district under study admitted that extensive electronic media – that is, promotional campaigns, coverage is instrumental in boosting the strength of sportspersons in stadiums and sports academies across the district. We hypothesize that the assumption might be true across the state and country as well. A hypothesis worth exploration!

Conclusion

The study provides ample proof of existence of a relation between SES type and selection of sports by young sports persons. We contend that SES is decisive factor where sportspersons are feeling intuitively compelled to select sports discipline based on the reality factor of their SES but aptitude. SES indicates one's access to collectively desired resources, be they material goods, money, power, friendship networks, healthcare, leisure time, or educational opportunities. And it is access to such resources that enable individuals and/or groups to prosper in the social world e-Sourceresearch¹². The discovery of interlink between SES and sports selection might be an important tool in the hands of policy framers.

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