

Women's Participation in Sports

Xomidova Kamola Akbarovna

International Innovative University,

Teacher of the Department of social and humanitarian Sciences

Abstract: This article analyzes the issue of women's participation in sports games. On a global scale, the development of women's sports, its history, state and prospects for today are studied. Based on the analysis of available literature, the social, economic and cultural aspects of women's sports are considered. The results are aimed at identifying the importance of women's sports, its impact on gender equality in society and existing problems. The article concluded with recommendations for the further development of women's activities in the field of sports.

Keywords: women's sports, gender equality, equality in sports, physical education, sports policy, history of women's sports.

INTRODUCTION

Sport has been an important socio-cultural phenomenon throughout human history, reflecting societal values, norms, and social relationships. Modern sport plays a significant role in developing people's physical and mental health, social connections, moral education, and international cooperation [1]. However, throughout sports history, women's participation has been limited, raising issues of gender equality.

Pierre de Coubertin, the founder of the modern Olympic Games, opposed women's participation in the first modern Olympics in 1896, claiming: "Women's involvement in sports is unnatural and unappealing to watch" [2]. Over time, the development of women's sports has grown significantly, but gender inequality issues still persist.

The purpose of this research is to conduct an in-depth analysis of issues related to women's participation in sports, identify current trends, and determine future development directions. The article focuses on the following issues: the historical development of women's sports, its current state, media coverage of women's sports, financial support for women's sports, and women's role in sports governance.

METHODOLOGY AND LITERATURE REVIEW

This research is based on a systematic literature review methodology. Scientific articles, books, and reports published in Uzbek, Russian, and foreign sources have been studied. The literature covers fields such as Sports and Physical Education, Gender Studies, Sociology of Sport, and Sports Management.

Reports from the International Olympic Committee (IOC), United Nations (UN), World Health Organization (WHO), and national sports organizations have been analyzed. The research methodology includes literature analysis and statistical data analysis.

The theoretical foundation of the research employs Acker's (1990) gender theory, Bourdieu's (1986) social capital theory, and Connell's (2005) gender relations theory [3]. These theories help understand the social, cultural, and institutional factors affecting women's participation in sports.

The literature review encompasses the historical development of women's sports, its current state, gender equality issues in sports, and promising directions. Women's sports issues in Uzbekistan have been studied by Shodmonova (2018), Khakimov (2020), and other scholars [4]. Research in Russia by Lubysheva (2016) and Voronina (2019) [5], and internationally by scholars such as Hartmann-Tews (2011) and Cooky (2018) have been examined [6].

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Looking at history, women's participation in sports has been a continuous struggle. Women were not allowed to participate in the first modern Olympic Games (1896). At the 1900 Paris Olympics, women participated only in golf and tennis competitions. Later, throughout the 20th century, women's sports developed gradually. In 1928, women were included in Olympic track and field events, but after the 800-meter race, the event was removed from the Olympic program until 1960 under the pretext that women were "physically incapable of running such distances" [7].

A significant turning point occurred in the 1970s-1980s. Title IX, passed in the United States in 1972, aimed to ensure gender equality in sports at educational institutions. Women comprised 34% of athletes at the 1996 Atlanta Olympics, and this figure reached nearly 49% at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics [3].

The development of women's sports in Uzbekistan has followed its own unique path. After independence, special attention began to be paid to women's sports. The adoption of the Presidential Decree "On measures to further support the development of women's sports" in 2021 was a significant event in this field [4].

Today, women's sports are developing globally, but gender inequality issues still exist. Worldwide, funding for women's sports remains significantly lower than for men's sports. According to the World Economic Forum's 2023 data, female athletes earn an average of 23% less than their male counterparts [6].

Women's sports receive minimal media coverage. According to the Global Media Monitoring Project, only 4% of sports news is dedicated to women's sports [5]. This situation negatively affects the popularity of women's sports and the attraction of sponsors.

Women's representation in sports governance systems is also low. According to the International Olympic Committee, only 14% of national Olympic committees are headed by women, and only 8% of international sports federation leaders are women [7].

Positive trends are observed in the development of women's sports in Uzbekistan. Many events are being held as part of the 2020-2024 program to ensure gender equality in physical education and sports [4]. Uzbek female athletes are achieving high results in international competitions, which is increasing girls' interest in sports.

Sports provide women with not only physical but also psychological and social benefits. Physical activity reduces the risk of cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, and certain types of cancer in women [8]. According to WHO data, regular physical activity reduces levels of depression and stress.

Through sports, women gain confidence in their abilities and develop teamwork, leadership, and problem-solving skills. These skills are later important in other areas of life. According to research conducted by Ernst & Young, 94% of women in high positions played sports during adolescence [6].

At the societal level, the development of women's sports helps break gender stereotypes. Successful female athletes serve as role models for other girls. Research shows that girls who participate in sports have a more positive attitude toward their bodies and higher self-esteem [8].

Several strategic directions exist for further development of women's sports. First, it is necessary to increase funding for women's sports. This includes increasing female athletes' income, improving sports infrastructure, and supporting women's teams.

Second, expanding media coverage of women's sports is essential. This helps not only increase the popularity of women's sports but also sparks interest in sports among the new generation of girls.

Third, it is necessary to increase the level of women's participation in sports governance systems. Greater involvement of women in decision-making processes helps ensure that gender issues are considered in sports policy.

To further develop women's sports in Uzbekistan, it is advisable to implement measures aimed at engaging girls in sports, improving the training system for sports coaches, supporting women's sports clubs, and extensively covering women's sports in the media.

CONCLUSION

From studying the issue of women's participation in sports, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. The historical development of women's sports has been a continuous struggle, with women gaining positions in many sports throughout the 20th century.
2. Today, women's sports are developing globally, but problems related to funding, media coverage, and women's participation in sports governance systems still exist.
3. Women's sports play an important role not only in physical health but also in improving women's socio-economic status, breaking gender stereotypes, and ensuring gender equality in society.
4. Positive trends in the development of women's sports are observed in Uzbekistan, but efforts in this area need to be further strengthened.

The following recommendations can be made for further development of women's sports: strengthening state policy aimed at ensuring gender equality in sports, extensive media coverage of women's sports, increasing women's participation levels in sports governance systems, increasing funding for women's sports, and implementing programs to engage girls in sports.

REFERENCES

1. International Olympic Committee. (2021). Gender Equality Report. Lausanne: IOC.
2. Hargreaves, J. (2018). Sporting Females: Critical Issues in the History and Sociology of Women's Sports. London: Routledge.
3. Connell, R. W. (2005). Masculinities (Second Edition). Berkeley: University of California Press.
4. Shodmonova, G. (2018). Issues of Developing Women's Sports in Uzbekistan. Tashkent: Science and Technology.
5. Lubysheva, L. I. (2016). Sociology of Physical Culture and Sports. Moscow: Academia.
6. Cooky, C. (2018). "We Cannot Stand Idly By": A Necessary Call for a Public Sociology of Sport. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 35(1), 1-11.
7. Burton, L. J. (2019). Under-representation of women in sport leadership: A review of research. *Sport Management Review*, 22(5), 682-704.
8. World Health Organization. (2022). Global action plan on physical activity 2018-2030: more active people for a healthier world. Geneva: WHO.