



E-ISSN: 2707-7020  
P-ISSN: 2707-7012  
[www.allsportsjournal.com](http://www.allsportsjournal.com)  
JSSN 2021; 2(1): 23-25  
Received: 04-11-2020  
Accepted: 18-12-2020

**KSHMVWW Senevirathne**  
Department of Education,  
Faculty of Arts, University of  
Peradeniya, Sri Lanka

## Participation of university students in sports activities: Developing a sports structure

**KSHMVWW Senevirathne**

### Abstract

Participation in sports has always been a great opportunity to develop their personality of the university students. Sports and physical education are the integrated parts of education and emphasizes the importance of participating in physical activities in promoting enjoyment, health and wellness of youth. According to the data indicated a consistent decline in interest and performances of sports among university students, especially Arts Faculty students of University of Peradeniya. Objectives of this study were to identify the perception of Arts Faculty students towards the participation of sports activities, perception of officials of the department of PE regarding improving student participation and to suggest some specific proposals to develop student participation in sports of the University of Peradeniya. A Cross-sectional survey method was used to identify the perception of students, officials of the departmental of PE regarding student participation. A research was carried out on purposively selected sample of 5 officials of the department of physical education and randomly selected 183 (N=83) students attached to the Faculty of Arts at the University of Peradeniya. Data were obtained from semi structured interviews, questionnaire and participant observation and were analyzed using qualitative and quantitative methods. Findings of the study shows various reasons for the decline of the participation of sports activities such as semester system effects (78%), poor motivation of the academic staff (55%), poor encouragement of the senior students (80%), financial problems and food habits (70%), inappropriate time allocation for fresher (90%) and lack of previous experience (40%). Meanwhile, the officials of the physical education unit viewed different perceptions. They pointed out student participation declined due to negative attitudes of academic staff. They made some suggestions to improve student participation in sports activities among university students. The research focuses to a new sport participation developing structure to the university system.

**Keywords:** Participation in sports

### 1. Introduction

Leisure, Sports and wellness have immersed as important social construction of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. (Edginton & Chen, 2008) <sup>[1]</sup>. Participation in sports has always been an ideal element to gauge the personality of the university students. Subramalam (2008) emphasizes the importance of participating in physical activities in promoting enjoyment of youth.

However, research findings indicated a consistent decline in interest of sports among university students, especially Arts Faculty students of University of Peradeniya. This decline has been partly attributed to lack of understanding of the processes that underline interest of sports.

During past two three years the department of Physical Education (PE) at the University of Peradeniya and the higher-level administration took several positive actions to improve student's participation in sports at the University of Peradeniya.

This research mainly focuses to identify the perception of Arts Faculty students towards the participation of sports activities and perception of officials of the department of PE regarding improving student participation. It also expects to suggest some specific proposals to develop student participation in sports of the University of Peradeniya.

### 2. Materials and Methods

A descriptive survey method was adopted to identify the perception of students, officials of the departmental of PE regarding student participation. A research was carried out on a sample of 5 officials of the department of PE and 183 (N=183) students attached to the Faculty of Arts at the University of Peradeniya. Data were obtained from semi structured interviews, questionnaire and participant observation. Data obtained from above sources were analyzed using qualitative and quantitative methods.

**Corresponding Author:**  
**KSHMVWW Senevirathne**  
Department of Education,  
Faculty of Arts, University of  
Peradeniya, Sri Lanka

### 3. Results

According to the statistical data obtained from University Hand Books and sports records books of student participation in 2016, 2017 and 2018 academic years.

The Faculty of Arts is among the lowest ratio of the student participation in sports at the University of Peradeniya. This was apparent in last couple of years.

#### 3.1 Perception of students regarding student participation in sports at the faculty of arts

According to the responses made by the students of the faculty of Arts the reasons for the less participation is given in table 1.

**Table 1:** Student perception of reasons for the less participation in sports activities

Reasons	Average
Semester system affect them badly to have free time to participation	78%
Poor motivation of the academic staff.	55%
Poor encouragement of the senior students	80%
Financial problems and food habits.	70%
Less time allocation at first year student's induction programme	90%
Inexperience of participation sports activities in their school time.	40%
Lack of Encouragement of student's union	55%

#### According to the semi structured interviews a third-year girl who is doing athletics stated

“We always want to participate in sports and wish to represent our university, but any academic didn't motivate me at least by one word, they said nothing to encourage me. They discourage us and always talk about academic performance”

(16/05/2019)

#### Meanwhile president of the faculty student's sports circle stated

“Most of the students are fed-up with this semester system. We have to work hard with lot of assessment and lectures from 7.30 am to 5.00 pm. We don't have time to practice in sport activities. Specially most of the arts faculty students come from poor family backgrounds from rural areas. Therefore, their nutritional levels are very low. How can they do sports? University doesn't have proper mechanism for these issues.”

(24/05/2019)

#### However, a second-year badminton player stated

“We have a university student union. They pay their attention on politics and other social issues rather than supporting and motivating student to participating sports. Their policies are very unusual. They prefer students do play netball, volley ball, Elle” (similar to baseball game) and prohibited to play Rugby and Cricket because of social class.”

(24/05/2019)

#### The university officials organize induction program for first year students at the orientation program. A first-year student stated regarding this as follows.

“Faculty of Arts is the largest faculty of the university. Normally more than 1000 students were recruited in every year. But faculty officials have allocated only one day for introduction and selection for sports activities. Although, Veterinary faculty student intake is around 50, they allocated only one-month period to introduce their sports activities for freshers. So, how admirable were the attitudes of those officials comparing to our arts faculty. According to my knowledge faculty of arts sports participation is the lowest among faculties”.

(12/05/2019)

#### Another 2nd year student stated that

“When we were studying at our schools we did not do sports because we wanted to pass our exams. We believed that sports would deviate us from our studies. But at the university we could see the importance of sports for a balanced life. As we did not have school level sports experience, it is now difficult to do any sport. I am afraid to start any sport and do not have confidence for it....”

#### 3.2 Perception of the officials of the department of physical education

The officials of the Department of Physical Education emphasized that there was some significant trend of improving student participation in sports during recent years as a result of some positive actions taken to improve student participation in sports activities.

However, they emphasized that they have not still achieved their planned targets. It was able to identify the factors effecting for student participation through the semi structured Interviews with the PE officials.

They have mentioned that negative attitudes of academics towards sports are the major barrier for them.

One of the physical education instructors stated

“I can give you a fine example. Colors night is the second major event of the university highlights and appreciated the sportsmen and women of university. However, only the vice chancellor, Deputy vice chancellor and respective deans and very few academics participated in this event. This is the level of recognition paid by the academics for sportsmen and women at this university now”.

(12/05/2019)

The director of physical education at the University of Peradeniya stated that

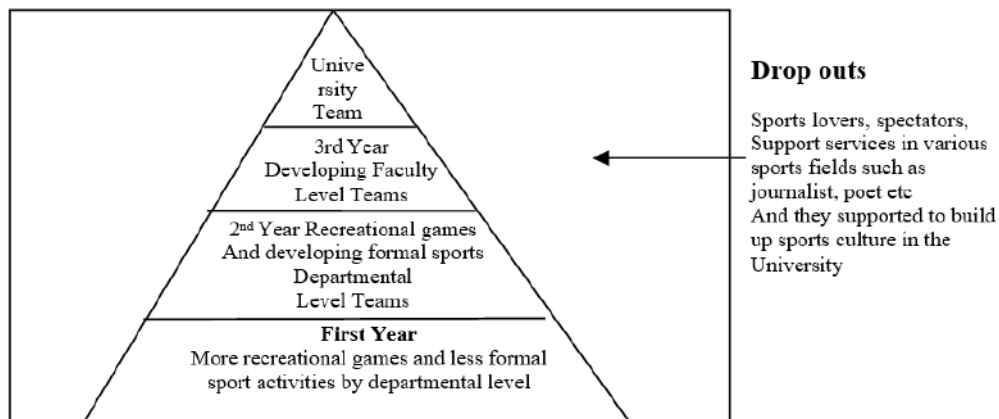
“The University of Peradeniya is one of the first ranking universities in Sri Lanka. But see, the present situation in sports is quite shameful here. Earlier, university of Peradeniya occupied the 1st or 2nd position in the inter university sport meets. But the

situation has changed in the past few years. We now occupy the 5th or 6th rank and I am clueless about this when the higher officers' question about the reasons for our failure...

The University of Sabaragamuwa and University of Sri Jayawardanapura have a sports Science department and there are national level sportsmen who represent that universities. As the University of Peradeniya does not have a faculty for sports we need to strengthen the sports structure and this will enable us to compete with the talented players of other universities."

(14/05/2019)

**4. Discussion:** Findings of the present study clearly show that ratio of student participation at the faculty of Arts is significantly low compared with other faculties such as Medical and Engineering. Recently, the Department of physical education has taken some deserving actions to improve student participation in sports activities. In this connection, this research brings some suggestions to improve student participation in sports activities among university students. The research focuses to introduce a new sport participation developing structure to the university system. The proposed structure for improving student participation is given in Diagram 1. (Senevirathne, 2004) [3].



**Fig 1:** Proposed structure to enhance student participation in sports activities

Introduction of recreational activities provides foundation or platform to improve formal sports activities. The department of education, faculty of Arts has introduced recreational games in the postgraduate courses and also for the undergraduate students (optional courses) and it was recognized as a good practice. Within these experiences the research suggests introducing recreational games for students and academic staff.

## 5. Conclusion

Recreational games, leisure and sports are dominant and powerful forces in societies and cultures throughout the world. (Edginton, 2008) [1]. These elements are very important to transform the monotonous life style of university students. The above developing sports structure helps to establish sports culture among university students in the University of Peradeniya.

## 6. Reference

1. Edginton CR, Chen P. Leisure as transformation. Champaign: Sagamore 2008.
2. Subramalam S. Participation in sports among the female population in Malaysia. 7th sports science conference, Universiti Sains, Kuban Kerian, Malaysia 2007.
3. Senevirathne W. A critical study of the implementation of sports and physical education in the secondary school curriculum of Sri Lanka. Unpublished M. Phil Theses, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka 2004.