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## Psychological status of marginalized children on the basis of sports participation

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### Abstract

This study investigates the psychological status focusing on social adjustment and self-concept of marginalized children in relation to sports participation. The research focuses on children aged 14-18 years, associated with a rehabilitation program, to assess whether structured sports interventions can enhance their psychosocial well-being. The study evaluated key dimensions of social adjustment-emotional, social, and educational and six dimensions of self-concept: physical, social, temperamental, educational, moral, and intellectual. Independent t-tests were conducted to differences between the group's sports participation and non-participants. Results indicate a significant positive effect of sports on the social adjustment of participants, with marked improvements in emotional and social aspects. The total social adjustment scores also demonstrated meaningful progress, reinforcing the role of sports in facilitating interpersonal and emotional growth. However, findings reveal no significant differences in overall self-concept or its dimensions, except for educational self-concept, which showed improvement. This study highlights the potential of sports as a rehabilitative tool, emphasizing its role in addressing the social challenges faced by marginalized children while advocating for a multidimensional approach to improving their overall well-being.

**Keywords:** Marginalized children, psychological status, social adjustment, self-concept, sports

### Introduction

Children from marginalized communities often face significant psychological challenges due to their socio-economic conditions<sup>[1-3]</sup>. Factors such as poverty, social exclusion, and exposure to adverse environments contribute to elevated levels of stress, anxiety, and depression among these children (Patel *et al.*, 2021<sup>[4-6]</sup>). Marginalization deprives them of equal opportunities for education, recreation, and personal development, which are critical for their psychological well-being and social integration (UNICEF, 2020).

Sports and physical activity can have a significant impact on the psychological well-being of children, particularly those who come from marginalized backgrounds. These children often face a range of challenges, including social exclusion, low self-esteem, and mental health issues, which can be exacerbated by the demands and pressures of competitive sport<sup>[7-10]</sup>. However, research has shown that with the right support and guidance, sports can also be a powerful tool for promoting resilience, self-confidence, and overall psychological health in these vulnerable populations. Research has demonstrated the transformative potential of sports in the rehabilitation and empowerment of vulnerable populations, including marginalized children. Participation in sports helps these children build a sense of belonging, enhances their social networks, and instills values like discipline and teamwork. This, in turn, contributes to their overall psychological well-being and aids in their reintegration into mainstream society. This study focuses on the psychological status of marginalized children, specifically analyzing the impact of sports participation on their mental health and social outcomes. By exploring the role of sports in addressing the unique challenges faced by these children, the research aims to provide insights into the potential of sports as a tool for psychological empowerment and social inclusion.

### 2. Materials and Methods

**2.1 Study design:** This research opted for an exploratory method to understand the experience of children living in Sonagachi, Rambagan, Sethbagan and Baruiapur red-light areas in Kolkata, West Bengal, India.

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The children involved are associated with key non-governmental organizations (NGOs) operating in the area: The Sanlaap, Durbar Mahila Samanwaya Committee (DMSC), New Light and Institute of Psychological and Educational Research (I.P.E.R.). These NGOs offer educational, social, and psychological assistance to children from underprivileged backgrounds, making them suitable partners for this study.

A qualitative research approach was selected to explore the social adjustment and self-concept of the children from the red-light area, as well as how they cope with these challenges. Qualitative research enables a deeper comprehension of personal experiences and often involves interviews and group discussions. In this case, semi-structured interviews were conducted, where key questions guided the conversation, while allowing for flexibility to explore certain topics further, depending on the responses of the participants.

## 2.2 Sampling technique

The present study was conducted two groups of 40 male children between the ages of 14 to 18 from marginalized

communities in Kolkata's red-light areas. One group of 40 children of sex workers resided with their mother and did not participate in any sports. While the second group participated in a sports intervention program facilitated by NGOs, residing in shelter homes or hostels. A purposive sampling method was used, selecting participants who had been involved with either The Sanlaap, Durbar Mahila Samanwaya Committee (DMSC), New Light and Institute of Psychological and Educational Research (I.P.E.R.) for at least six months. This ensured that the children had enough experience with the services offered by these NGOs, enabling them to provide meaningful insights into their personal experiences.

## 2.3 Research tools

The researcher visited the N.G.O. and red-light areas several times to build an affinity with the participants. Data was collected using two main tools: The Adjustment Inventory for School Students (AISS) by A.K.P. Sinha and R.P. Singh, which measured social adjustment, and the Self-Concept Questionnaire (SCQ) by Dr. Raj Kumar Saraswat, which assessed self-concept.

SL. No	Tests	Measurement	Equipment's	Unit
1.	Social Adjustment	Adjustment	Adjustment Inventory Questionnaire by AKP Sinha and RP Singh	Score (As per Manual)
2.	Self-Concept	Self-Concept	Inventory Questionnaire by Dr. Raj Kumar Saraswat	Score (As per Manual)

## 3. Results and Discussion

**Table 1:** Descriptive statistics of social adjustment in marginalized community children based on sports participation

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Skewness	Kurtosis
Emotional	Sports Participation	40	4.5000	1.81164	28645	1.073	1.199
	Non-Sports Participation	40	6.3000	3.63882	57535		
Social	Sports Participation	40	5.2500	1.97094	31163	576	-.086
	Non-Sports Participation	40	6.6500	2.17857	34446		
Educational	Sports Participation	40	7.5250	2.27571	35982	106	-.269
	Non-Sports Participation	40	7.4500	2.30885	36506		
Total Social adjustment	Sports Participation	40	17.2750	3.81621	60340	455	-.014
	Non-Sports Participation	40	20.3250	5.92425	93671		

The Table 1 presents descriptive statistics comparing social adjustment in marginalized community children participating in sports and non-participants. It measures adjustment across emotional, social, and educational dimensions, as well as total social adjustment. Each group comprises 40 children. For all parameters, non-sports participants display higher mean scores (e.g., Emotional: 6.30 and 4.50; Social: Total Social Adjustment: 20.33 and 17.28). Standard deviations (3.81 and

5.92) are higher among non-sports participants, indicating greater variability. Skewness and kurtosis values suggest moderate deviations from normal distribution in some cases. Overall, the data indicates that sports participation may influence lower but more consistent social adjustment levels in this group.

The t-statistics of the total social adjustment of marginalized community children is presented below in the table.

**Table 2:** T-statistics of social adjustment in marginalized community children based on sports participation

		T-test for Equality of Means		Significance		Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
		T	DF	One-Sided p	Two-Sided p		
Emotional	Equal variances assumed	-2.801	78	.003	.006	-1.80000	.64271
Social	Equal variances assumed	-3.014	78	.002	.003	-1.40000	.46451
Educational	Equal variances assumed	146	78	.442	.884	.07500	.51258
Total Social adjustment	Equal variances assumed	-2.737	78	.004	.008	-3.05000	1.11423

The Table 2 displays the t-test statistics evaluating the impact of sports participation on the social adjustment of marginalized community children. The analysis was conducted across three dimensions of social adjustment—emotional, social, and educational as well as the overall social adjustment. Key findings are as follows:

- **Emotional Adjustment:** The results indicate a statistically significant difference in emotional adjustment between groups  $T=-2.801$ ,  $P=0.006$ . The

negative mean difference (-1.80) suggests that participation in sports led to an improvement in emotional adjustment among children.

- **Social Adjustment:** A statistically significant difference was also found in social adjustment ( $T=-3.014$ ,  $P=0.003$ ), with a mean difference of 0-1.40. This result highlights that sports participation positively influenced the children's ability to interact socially and build relationships.

- **Educational Adjustment:** In contrast, no significant difference was observed in educational adjustment  $T=0.146$ ,  $P=0.884$ . The small mean difference (0.075) suggests that sports participation did not have a measurable impact on the children's adjustment in educational settings.
- **Total Social Adjustment:** The combined measure of total social adjustment yielded a significant result  $T=-2.737$ ,  $P=0.008$ , with a mean difference of -3.05. This finding suggests an overall positive effect of sports participation on the social adjustment of these children.

**Table 3:** Descriptive statistics of self-concept in marginalized community children based on sports participation

Descriptive Statistics								
	N	Maximum	Mean		Std. Deviation	Variance	Skewness	Kurtosis
			Statistic	Std. Error				
Physical	80	40.00	30.0500	.47264	4.22740	17.871	.514	-.194
Social	80	39.00	30.3875	.52576	4.70253	22.114	-.734	.677
Temperamental	80	40.00	32.2125	.50713	4.53592	20.575	-.719	1.468
Educational	80	39.00	29.4625	.64385	5.75874	33.163	-.436	-.311
Moral	80	40.00	31.4375	.57667	5.15787	26.604	-.779	.385
Intellectual	80	40.00	30.3000	.49791	4.45342	19.833	-.777	1.935
Total Self Concept	80	230.00	183.8625	2.09307	18.72096	350.475	.028	-.044
Valid N (List Wise)	80							

The Table 3 summarizes the descriptive statistics for the self-concept dimensions of marginalized community children. The self-concept is divided into six dimensions-physical, social, temperamental, educational, moral, and intellectual-along with the total self-concept score. Key elements of the table include: Physical Self-Concept: Mean: 30.05, Standard Deviation: 4.27, Indicates a moderate level of physical self-concept among the participants.

Social Self-Concept: Mean: 30.39, Standard Deviation: 4.70 Reflects the children's perception of their social abilities and relationships. Temperamental Self-Concept: Mean: 32.21, Standard Deviation: 4.35, Suggests slightly higher temperamental self-concept compared to other dimensions.

Educational Self-Concept: Mean: 29.49, Standard Deviation: 6.43, Demonstrates variability in how children view themselves academically. Moral Self-Concept: Mean: 31.43, Standard Deviation: 5.18, Represents the children's moral beliefs and values. Intellectual Self-Concept: Mean: 30.30, Standard Deviation: 4.45, Reflects how children perceive their cognitive abilities. Total Self-Concept: Mean: 183.86, Standard Deviation: 18.72, Provides an aggregate measure of the self-concept dimensions. Statistical Characteristics: Skewness values range from -0.734 (social) to 0.777 (intellectual), indicating mild asymmetry in the data distribution. Kurtosis values are close to zero, suggesting the distributions are approximately normal.

**Table 4:** t-test of self-concept in marginalized community children based on sports participation

		T-test for Equality of Means		Significance		Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
				One-side P	Two-side P		
Physical	Equal variances assumed	.474	78	319	637	45000	.94995
Social	Equal variances assumed	-1.216	78	114	228	-1.27500	1.04834
Temperamental	Equal variances assumed	.319	78	375	751	32500	1.02008
Educational	Equal variances assumed	-2.463	78	008	016	-3.07500	1.24827
Moral	Equal variances assumed	-1.151	78	127	253	-1.32500	1.15097
Intellectual	Equal variances assumed	.450	78	327	654	45000	1.00088
Total Self Concept	Equal variances assumed	-1.058	78	147	293	-4.42500	4.18298

The Table 4 presents the t-test results analyzing the self-concept dimensions of marginalized community children based on sports participation. The self-concept was examined across six dimensions-physical, social, temperamental, educational, moral, and intellectual-as well as the overall self-concept. The findings are as follows.

- **Physical Self-Concept:** No significant difference was observed  $T=0.474$ ,  $P=0.637$ . The mean difference (0.450) indicates minimal variation in physical self-concept between groups.
- **Social Self-Concept:** A no significant difference was found  $T=-1.216$ ,  $P=0.228$ , with a mean difference of -1.275, suggesting that sports participation did not significantly influence social self-concept.
- **Temperamental Self-Concept:** No significant difference was noted  $T=0.319$ ,  $P=0.751$ . The mean difference (0.325) indicates a negligible impact of sports participation on temperamental self-concept.
- **Educational Self-Concept:** A statistically significant difference was observed  $T=-2.463$ ,  $P=0.016$ , with a mean

difference of -3.075. This finding suggests that sports participation positively influenced the educational self-concept.

- **Moral Self-Concept:** No significant difference was observed  $T=-1.151$ ,  $P=0.253$ , the mean difference -1.325 indicates a slight, but not significant, improvement in moral self-concept.
- **Intellectual Self-Concept:** No significant difference was found  $T=0.450$ ,  $P=0.653$ , with a mean difference of 0.450, showing little impact on intellectual self-concept.
- **Total Self-Concept:** The overall self-concept showed no significant difference  $T=-1.058$ ,  $P=0.293$ , with a mean difference of -4.425.

#### 4. Conclusions

The findings suggest that sports participation has a positive impact on the social adjustment of marginalized community children, as evidenced by significant improvements in emotional, social, and total social adjustment scores. However, the analysis revealed no significant differences in

the overall self-concept or its individual dimensions, except for educational self-concept, which showed meaningful improvement. This indicates that while sports can enhance specific aspects of social adjustment and academic self-perception, its influence on broader self-concept dimensions may require complementary interventions. Overall, sports appear to be a valuable tool for fostering social integration and improving certain psychosocial outcomes in these children.

### **Conflict statement**

The authors confirm that they have no financial or personal conflicts of interest that could have influenced the work presented in this paper.

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