

Disadvantages in regard to leisure choices sociology essay



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Taking a thorough assessment of the society we live in, it is evident that women are in many ways disadvantaged as regards leisure choice compared to men. Leisure is itself seen as a psychological experience of enjoyment and satisfaction which occurs within the framework of time or activity. Leisure includes things like watching television, participating in sports, meeting friends, engaging in hobbies and going to events (Doughty, 2010). It requires plenty of time and psychological fitness for one have the best of it. Women are the most disadvantaged due to various constraints they encounter in society. Women's' access to free time and leisure opportunities are controlled by such factors as their work and domestic situation, their low income level together with age and ethnic group. These constraints may include structural factors such as family obligations, financial resources, weather factors and work time (Shaw 1994). In most societies, it is normally regarded as women's duty to take care of the family as well as looking after children.

As far as these constraining factors have assisted in understanding leisure participation among women, further adjustments can be reached through specific examination of their sub-groups. This is because the constraints are different to the various categories of women basing on their ages. For instance, girls between the age of fifteen and below have limited access to leisure activities since they have restricted time to engage in recreational activities (Kiefer, 2004). They face such constraints as lack of knowledge, lack of accessibility to recreational facilities as influenced by their parents, lack of interest in various recreational facilities and lack of partners (Rehman et al., 2003). At this age, girls are still in school and do not have time to

engage in those activities as tourism except during holidays where they can move around the world with their families, but for a very short period of time. Everything they do is influenced by their parents and it is usually difficult for them to decide for themselves. These girls may not necessarily be affected by those limitations such as the interpersonal and intrapersonal constraints since they are still young and have nothing to worry about. They engage in sporting activities in school as part of the co-curricular activities of any school which may not be regarded as leisure (Young people at Play, n. d.). Their weak physical situations discourage them from getting actively involved sports events. These girls are not affected by financial constraints since they are young and all their needs are met by their parents.

However, their participation may depend on their cultural background, that is, race and ethnicity play an important role in determining a family's influence on children's leisure. For example, those from the developing countries grow in hardship where there is hardly any money to take them to school. Therefore, they only resort in dropping out of school and engage in child labor to earn living for their parents and thus have no time for leisure or time to involve themselves in any recreational activities (Shaw 1994). In addition, girls from these developing countries such as in Africa and Asia do not have role models who can motivate them to engage in sporting activities such as football, athletics, volleyball etc. At the same time, their families cannot afford to take them around the world as tourists since they do not have enough money to cater for it. Those from Western countries are a bit different because their parents have the financial strength to finance their education and have role models in the society who encourage them to

involve themselves in sports. Some are even motivated to engage in music activities, for example, in the US where some girls become superstars at very tender ages. All in all, these girls are more dependent on parental consent and support for recreational activities.

On the other hand, young single ladies mostly of the age between 15 and 25 years have different experiences on leisure, sports and other recreational activities. At this age they can easily make mature independent decisions and they therefore face peculiar constraints as regards to their leisure involvement. Based on their perception of sporting activities, these women highly suffer from the limitations of low self-esteem and lack the belief that they may be talented or competent in any recreational activities (Goliath, 2002). Most of these women have just finished school and still looking for employment and therefore have high financial problems. This renders them unable to get involved in both leisure and recreational activities without the help of their parents. The constraints may also depend on the cultural background. Women from poverty stricken countries such as the developing countries experience those intrapersonal constraints such as stress, family attitudes and personal evaluations of the appropriateness of an activity (Goliath, 2002). Since these women may not have acquired the appropriate education as a result of their background, they may end up engaging themselves in activities such as prostitution and other criminal activities. As a result, they have no time for leisure, sports and other recreational activities. Additionally, they do not have the financial ability to visit other countries as tourists. Various interpersonal constraints such as relationships

with others and the ability to find partners as well as the influence of family obligations also affect their leisure involvement.

As a result of the societal stress, these women do not have the time enjoy recreational activities with their peers. In addition, they lack role models in the society who may encourage them to engage in productive activities and they therefore end up living desperately. Though women are normally strong physically at this age, inadequate education and lack of awareness about the benefits of participating in sports has been the main reason they never involve themselves. As a result, physical education is often not admired among the females in school (Goliath 2002).

Young women aged between 15 and 25 years from developed countries also experience intrapersonal and interpersonal constraints as regards their leisure involvement. These Western women have the constraints such as those of structural factors including financial resources and work time constraints. Those who have jobs do not have time for leisure and recreational activities and hardly get time to engage in sports. Those who do not have jobs have financial problems as well as low esteem and they do not have trust in themselves hence they cannot get involved in leisure activities. As far as sport is concerned, many governments have not taken the initiative to persuade women to participate. They have had less concern in terms providing sponsorship, coverage in media, awareness and the provision of opportunities for women in sport as compared to their male counterparts (Goliath, 2002). Some sports disciplines such as football is far widely considered to be for men yet some women have shown to be as equally talented in it.

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Furthermore, women with children have different limitations concerning their time for leisure. Some of the women in this category have limited time, money as well as limited access to leisure facilities. Most of these women are married and are mostly disadvantaged with regard to time for leisure.

Women with children are normally held by household obligations and family commitments such as child care together with economic constraints (Borg & Clark, n. d.). Due to male chauvinism in most societies, many women earn very little incomes which and this has proven to be constraining on their lives as well as on their leisure lives. Women who are employed are said to experience a double shift to their household obligations hence have no time for leisure participation as compared to their male counterparts (Martinson, Schwartz & Vaughan, 2002).

However, leisure, recreational activities, and sport have different implications depending on the cultural background of women. Those from poor backgrounds have limited access to leisure activities and are mostly unemployed since job opportunities are rare. Most of their time is spent taking care of children and farming so as to sustain their families. It is usually very hard for them to think about touring other countries or engage in any recreational activities due to financial constraints. They are highly constrained by societal stress and have very low esteem to even think of participating in any sporting activities and they not only have little time for themselves, but they also never feel that they have a right to leisure for themselves (Martinson, Schwartz & Vaughan, 2002). Other women fear for violence especially in those leisure settings far from home. At times, they

regard taking care of their families as their prime duty since most of their husbands are jobless and never care about them.

Similarly, women with children from developed countries have little time for leisure and other recreational activities such as sports and tourism. Those who have jobs have are the ones said to have double shift, that is, have little time for leisure because they need to balance the time they spend with their family and that spend in work. These women spend much of their time either in job or at home. Most of them make use of computer-based technology for leisure designed to make them busy such as the internet and believe that time spent or even activities pursued with family are the most important (Kramarae & Spender, 2000). In most cases, especially at times when they are free from work, most women wish to recreate around the world together with their families but their children prevent them. This is because children are usually cumbersome to travel with.

Generally, women with children are usually unwilling to get involved in sporting activities. They only take part in body fitting exercises such as jogging in the mornings. Most of them think they cannot manage to participate in sports activities such as athletics, football etc. and regard nurturing their children as their key role in the society. They only watch their favorite soccer teams or even basketball teams on televisions during their free moments on weekends. The type of profession a woman is in may also act as a constraint to her leisure life. Nurses for example have the ethic of care in their minds all the time which is connected to the lack of a sense of right to leisure (Martinson, Schwartz & Vaughan, 2002). Women who are single parents and do not high paying jobs mostly encounter financial

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constraints which is normally constraining to life in general and to their leisure lives as well. This is due to the fact that they have to cater for the basic needs of their children. By meeting food, shelter, clothing and educational expenses for the children, the amounts that remain may be too little to cater for recreational activities.

Old women have various constraints to leisure participation as well. Their participation in various recreational activities is highly influenced by health related problems, poor performance quality and lack of companions (Leitner & Leitner, 2004). In general, older people are said to suffer from health problems more than young people. Particular health problems limit participation in specific leisure activities (Women Sports and Fitness Foundation, n. d.). Older women with sight problems cannot freely engage in activities such as tourism, exercises and other recreational activities that include work. Research has shown that older women like to engage more in inactive recreation such as watching television, listening to radio and reading newspapers rather than participate in active forms of recreation (Leitner & Leitner, 2004). This is due to the fear that they may get injuries resulting to their children putting them in nursing homes. Moreover, older women are seen to be economically disadvantaged and also tend to have more household and family obligations which make them have less free time to take part in leisure activities. Most of them like stay at home and take care of their grandchildren. These actions of care giving reduce their leisure activities due to lack of time, tiredness, and other intrapersonal constraints such as stress (Leitner & Leitner, 2004).

Older women leisure involvement is also influenced by attitude (Henderson & Bialeschki, 1990). These women only participate in those leisure activities which they consider as meaningful to them (Greer, 2006). Some leisure activities that are taken as being for fun but have no purpose are highly ridiculed by the elderly women. Most of these aged women view their old age negatively and have a feeling that they should not be involved in recreational and leisure activities because they think that people their age should not have leisure anymore (Leitner & Leitner, 2004). At their old ages, they have lost taste for most of the recreational activities such as swimming and look upon them as for the young and strong people. As regards to sporting activities, aged women are incapable of participating actively and can only watch on televisions since most of them have health related problems.

The level to which aged women are disadvantaged with respect to leisure involvement may also depend on their cultural background. Majority of women from developing countries spend most of their time taking care of their grandchildren and never have time to involve themselves in recreational activities (Leitner & Leitner, 2004). Most of them remain within their homesteads all day and have never visited a foreign country and even never think of activities like tourism. They do not even think of having leisure as their right and are most of the times stressed as a result of their children dropping out of school, lack of food due to drought etc. Most of the developing countries are faced with the problem of diseases and therefore a big number of the aged women have health complications hence they can hardly participate in any leisure or sports activities (Leitner & Leitner, 2004).

Older women from developed countries are quite different from their counterparts on how they perceive these recreational activities. As for them, they may like to tour other countries but factors such as health related problems, family commitments, among others hold them back (Leitner & Leitner, 2004). This is because they are unable get involved in those recreational events like mountain-climbing, skiing and skating. They have leisure by watching televisions and reading magazines unlike those from developing countries who are mostly too illiterate to read newspapers and have little access or interest in television. Their lack of leisure involvement is mainly affected by attitude. This is shown by the fact that they ignore some recreational activities that do not add value to their lives at those old ages. Most of them like sports events though their weak health may not be in a position to withstand them. Consequently, they follow these events on televisions or go to the venues where sports activities are held accompanied by other family members such as their grandchildren.

Though some women are good in sports, they never get the recognition they deserve (Stavropoulou, 2008). Some sports such as rugby and football are regarded as men's and women who shine in them get very little or no attention at all (Goliath, 2002). Governments can increase women participation in sports by encouraging wider media representation and giving rewards to the best personalities in the various sport categories. By doing so, young women will be encouraged to participate in sports regardless of their cultural backgrounds and earn money for themselves which may in turn increase their leisure participation.

In conclusion, it is evident that women are the most disadvantaged when it comes to leisure participation as compared to men. It has been seen that their lack of sports involvement is as a result of poor attention by most governments and the notion that most sports disciplines are better suited for men. However, it is clear that their access to recreational facilities is mainly influenced by factors such as time availability, household and family obligations, financial stability and cultural background. Women have also been found to be constrained differently depending on their ages.